

Public Document Pack



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

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Monday 21 June 2021

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Corporate Parenting Board

The **Corporate Parenting Board** will meet in a **Virtual Meeting - online** at **10.00 am on Tuesday 29 June 2021.**

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 Fazila Loonat

Councillor Richard Smith

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Karen Allison

Councillor Carole Pattison

Gill Addy

Julie Bragg

Tom Brailsford

Keith Fielding

Stewart Horn

Colleen Kenworthy

Barry Lockwood

Sanna Mahmood

Elaine McShane

Mel Meggs

Sara Miles

Jo-Anne Sanders

Ophelia Rix

Janet Tolley

Christine Carmichael

Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities

Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers

Head of Corporate Parenting (Children in Care and Care Leavers)

Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

Kirklees Fostering Network

Head of Joint Commissioning, Children & Families

Kirklees Fostering Network

Kirklees Fostering Network

Looked after Children and Leaving Care

Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection

Director for Children's Services

Interim Head of Service (Child Protection & Review Unit)

Service Director for Learning and Early Support

Principal Social Worker

Virtual School Headteacher

Kirklees Fostering Network

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: **Membership of the Board/Apologies**

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

2: **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

1 - 8

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 23 March 2021.

3: **Interests**

9 - 10

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. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, questions should be emailed to executive.governance@kirklees.gov.uk no later than 10am on Monday 28 June 2021.

7: Children's Performance Highlight Report

11 - 22

The Board will consider a report giving key highlights from the latest Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service.

Contacts:

Ophelia Rix, Head of Corporate Parenting

Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher

Laura Counce, Head of Service - Children's Sufficiency Resources, Improvement & Partnerships

8: Overview of Number and Age of Children in Care

23 - 28

The Board will consider a report giving an overview of the number of children in care.

Contact:

Ophelia Rix, Head of Corporate Parenting

9: Children's Rights Team Annual Report

29 - 56

The Board will consider the annual report of the Children's Rights Team relating to the services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Contacts:

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding

Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager – Family Support and Child Protection

10: Overall Financial Policy for Care leavers

57 - 112

The Board will be presented with the refreshed Care Leavers

Support and Financial Guidance Policy.

Contacts:

Elaine McShane, Service Director – Family Support and Child Protection

Lisa Warnes, Programme Manager – Children's Services Improvement, Children and Families

11: Virtual School Governing Body Update

The Board will receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Virtual School Governing Body, Councillor Carole Pattison.

Contacts:

Councillor Carole Pattison

Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher

12: OFSTED and Improvement Board Update

The Board will be given a verbal update in relation to the OFSTED Improvement and Ambition Board.

Contact:

Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection

13: Membership of the Board

The Chair will verbally report a number of changes to the Boards Membership and the Board will consider and discuss its membership.

Contact: Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

14: Updates from Board Members on Interaction with Services

The Board will consider verbal updates from Board Members in relation to progress and key issues following interaction with Services and partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

Contact: Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

15: Corporate Parenting Board - Proposed areas of focus and activity for 2021/22

113 -
122

The Board will note the future meeting dates of the Board, and will consider the proposed areas of focus for the Board for the 2021/22 municipal year using the draft agenda plan.

Contact:

Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Present:

- Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
- Councillor Carole Pattison
- Councillor Richard Smith
- Councillor Karen Allison
- Councillor John Lawson
- Councillor Andrew Marchington (ex-officio)
- Stewart Horn, Head of Joint Commissioning - Children and Families
- Barry Lockwood, Kirklees Fostering Network
- Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher
- Sara Miles, Head of Service, Resources, Improvements and Partnerships
- Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection
- Sanna Mahmood, Care Leavers Advocate – Family Support and Child Protection
- Colleen Kenworthy - Kirklees Fostering Network
- Gill Addy, Designated Nurse Looked After Children
- Julie Bragg , Head of Corporate Parenting (Children and Care Leavers)
- Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Social Work Practice Lead – Children and Families
- Dale O'Neill – Children's Scrutiny Panel Co-optee

In attendance:

- Laura Caunce, Head of Service, Children's Sufficiency, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships
- Hazel Adams, Information Officer
- Ian Mottershaw, Senior Manager, Transitional Safeguarding

Apologies:

- Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director, Learning and Early Support - Learning and Skills
- Christine Carmichael - Kirklees Fostering Network
- Ophelia Rix, Principal Social Worker
- Keith Fielding, Kirklees Fostering Network
- Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

The Chair welcomed Board Members. Apologies had been received from Jo-Anne Sanders, Christine Carmichael, Ophelia Rix, Keith Fielding, and Tom Brailsford.

2 Interests

No interests were declared.

3 Minutes

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on the 13th January 2021.

RESOLVED- That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all agenda items would be held in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

7. Review of Terms of Reference of the Board

The Board considered the frequency of meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board as proposed in a draft amendment to the Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED - It was agreed that the Board will meet for a minimum of 6 times per annum, on a bi-monthly basis and that the Terms of Reference of the Board would be amended accordingly.

8. Children's Performance Highlight Report

The Board considered a report giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for Children's Services.

Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting, presented the performance data relating to 'children entering care' and 'children in care and placement stability'. It was reported the data up to February 2021 showed improvements across all performance indicators, which included a slight decrease in the numbers of children coming into care, a reduction in the number of placements outside of Kirklees, fewer placement moves and a decrease in the number of changes of social workers.

In response to a question from the Board concerning data relating to stability meetings, it was agreed that the possibility of reporting this information in the Children's Performance Highlight Report would be discussed at a briefing of the relevant portfolio holder.

Sara Miles , Head of Service, Resources, Improvements and Partnerships presented the performance data relating ‘Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews, Visiting, and Missing’. It was advised that the performance indicator showed that 98% of reviews were held within the designated timescales which was an improvement on the average for the proceeding 12 month period.

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Social Work Practice Lead, Children and Families, gave an update on children’s advocacy in relation to Looked After Reviews during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Feedback on the virtual process from those individuals who required an advocate had been mixed with some reporting that they had found it difficult to receive support virtually. It was advised that the feedback given by children and young people was to be central in developing the future approach.

In response, the Board highlighted that it was important to recognise that each child had different support requirements and suggested that multiple options were provided to ensure that individual needs were met. The Board also requested that the outcomes and decisions made in relation to this piece of work be presented at a future meeting of the Board.

Responding to a previous question asked by the Board relating to understanding missing episodes, Elaine McShane, Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection, suggested that the data relating to LAC and the different types of missing episodes be provided at a future meeting of the Board. The Board welcomed this suggestion and further requested that this information included a breakdown of the different types of placements in relation to LAC going missing.

Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher, briefed the Panel on the work of the Virtual School during the Covid-19 pandemic and the support provided to children through the transition back into education. It was noted that a blended approach going forward may be adopted and the key priorities of the Virtual School were:

- To continue the completion of termly Personal Education Plans with transition support, and support for working from home where necessary.
- Targeting Attendance/Persistent absence as a high priority whilst being sensitive to the emotional impact the pandemic will have had on young people.
- Maintaining a strong focus on pupils not in full time education provision.
- To reduce school moves and the number of young people with a break in educational provision whenever possible.

The Board noted the update and thanked Janet Tolley and the Virtual School for their work in supporting children with their education throughout the pandemic.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for LAC in Kirklees, presented the data relating to ‘LAC Health’. It was reported that:

- Dental registrations had begun to increase following the pause on all routine and non-essential dental work during the national lockdown.
- The Dental Commissioner for West Yorkshire was asked to circulate communications to dentists to ask them to prioritise vulnerable LAC children.

- The data relating to Substance Abuse was collected from the ‘review health assessments,’ but it was noted that this information related mainly to high level use.
- This data provided in the report was reliant on young people reporting a substance misuse problem during the health assessments.

The Board congratulated Gill Addy for her work in supporting dental registrations for LAC and it was agreed that further discussions would take place to identify a new way of collating data relating to substance misuse and LAC.

In relation to adoption, Julie Bragg advised that a report was being prepared for presentation at the Quality Assurance Panel, which would contain more detail around adoption. The Board requested that this report be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

Laura Caunce, Head of Service, Children’s Sufficiency, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships presented the data relating to new carers approved , de-registration’s and placements.

During the discussion to follow the Board asked questions about exit interviews and what had been learnt in order to reduce de-registrations.

Laura Caunce explained that it was important to focus on a combination of strengthening the recruitment process alongside improving the support to Foster Carers. It was agreed that information relating to exit interviews, the number that had taken place and any key findings be provided to a later meeting of the Board.

The Board further asked about the progress made on ‘the mockingbird model’ (a method of supporting Foster Carers in Crisis) which was put on hold during the pandemic. Julie Bragg advised that a Hub-Carer and Liaison Officer had been successfully recruited and the aim was for this to be implemented alongside the Fostering Modernisation proposals.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Board noted the Children’s Performance Highlight Report and thanked all presenting officers for their contributions.
2. It was agreed that ‘the inclusion of data relating to stability meetings in the Children’s Performance Highlight Report’ would be discussed during a subsequent briefing of the Cabinet portfolio holder.
3. It was agreed that multiple options for the approach to Children’s advocacy and Looked after Reviews would be provided and that these options and any decisions made be presented at a future meeting of the Board.
4. It was agreed that further discussions would take place to identify a new way of collating data relating to substance misuse and LAC.
5. That data showing the different type of missing episodes and a breakdown of placements types in relation to LAC going missing be provided at a future meeting of the Board.
6. That the adoption report for the Quality Assurance Panel also be presented at a future meeting of the Board.

7. It was agreed that information relating to exit interviews, the number that had taken place and any key findings be provided to a later meeting of the Board.

9. Overview of Number and Age of Children in Care

The Board considered the report 'Overview of Number and Age of Children in Care' which was presented by Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting. The report included information relating to the number and profile of children in care in Kirklees as well as the number of Children placed outside of the District.

RESOLVED – The Board noted the report 'Overview and Age of Children in Care' and Julie Bragg was thanked for her contributions.

10 Youth Offending Team, Annual Report

The Board considered the Annual Report from the Youth Offending Team , now known as the Youth Justice Service (YJS) relating to their work with children in care and the comparative data for 2016/17 , 2017/18 and 2018/19 which was presented by Ian Mottershaw, Senior Manager, Transitional Safeguarding.

The report set out information about the level of offending LAC and the improvements in outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) subject to an intervention from the YJS as well as the key next steps to continue improving the relationships with young people support services and to continue to improve the access to those services for users.

Ian Mottershaw highlighted the development of the Youth Engagement Service (YES) and explained that the YES integrated several support teams within children social care, including the YJS. The YES approach went beyond statutory interventions to deliver the right support to children and young people with the aim to provide flexible and responsive services that reduce the risk of exploitation and episodes of missing from home and care.

The Board asked what the data suggested in terms of the type of placement of a LAC in relation to youth offending. Ian Mottershaw advised that the majority of cases were from a residential setting. Elaine McShane, Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection added that it was important to note that some children become looked after due to the nature of their offences.

Though the Board noted many positives to the approach it was noted that it was important make sure that the effectiveness in terms of tackling antisocial behaviour and crime was not lost. In response, Ian Mottershaw understood the Boards concerns and advised that the YJS and YES carry out their work within the statutory framework.

The Board was interested in exploring how awareness of trauma and abuse is promoted with key Council partners ,such as the police, and asked what engagement had taken place, or was planned, in respect of this issue. In his response, Ian Mottershaw confirmed that he was attending a 3 day event which was to be attended by the whole of the local partnership in respect of awareness of trauma and abuse.

The Board welcomed this news and advocated the early intervention work and the integrated approach of the YES.

RESOLVED – The Board noted the Annual Report from the Youth Offending Team (now the Youth Justice Team) and thanked Ian Mottershaw for his contributions.

11. Proposal for Fostering Modernisation

The Board considered a verbal update on the Proposal for Fostering Modernisation from Elaine McShane, Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection and Laura Caunce, Head of Service, Children's Sufficiency, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships.

Elaine McShane gave an overview on the focus of the proposals and the developing approach. The Board were advised that this was still a work in progress and that a full report on the Fostering Modernisation would be presented to the Board at a later date.

The Board requested more detail in relation to the 'Staying Put' policy. Elaine McShane advised that the policy was in the final stages of development alongside the financial policy for care leavers. These policies were interlinked, and the aim was for these to be completed and presented to the Board at the same time.

Laura Caunce provided an overview on the planned developments to the Fostering Recruitment Process following the review, which took place in 2020, and focused on identifying where the process could be redeveloped to make services more efficient. Once this work had been concluded it was agreed that an update would be given at a future meeting of the Board.

Work had also been undertaken to improve the quality and accessibility of information on the website. As a part of this, enquiry forms had been added to the website with an auto respond feature to make sure that information about applying to be a foster carer was provided to prospective applicants quickly.

The Board emphasised the importance of timely responses to prospective Foster Carers. Laura Caunce agreed with Board members and advised that a target was in place to ensure responses to enquiries were made within 24 hours of receipt. However, there were clear expectations that if the enquiry was received within the working day that it should be responded to within that day.

In the discussion to follow, issues were raised about foster carer retainment. The Board requested that the details of how many foster carers the Council were losing to other organisations was included in the next report presented to the Board.

Laura Caunce advised that work was to be undertaken around the promotion of the Kirklees Fostering offer which included the formation of a marketing strategy which was in the late stages of development.

The Board felt that it was important to make sure the offer was promoted in a way that was honest but also brought into discussion the option to offer benefits to foster

carers to make the offer more attractive and suggested that research into the fostering offers of other local authorities was carried out to identify possible areas for improvement.

Laura Caunce agreed to provide a report at a future meeting of the Board once the work around developments to the Fostering Recruitment Process had been concluded. This report would contain the additional information on the number of carers lost to other organisations. It was also agreed that Laura would start work on researching the fostering offers of other organisations. The Board also advised that any information on these pieces of work as they developed would be welcomed.

The Chair reiterated the issue of the recent de-registrations of Foster Carers as described by one of the Boards representatives from the Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) under Item 8. It was requested that the matter be discussed with the relevant member of the KFN to identify the key themes and reasons behind the issue.

RESOLVED:

1. The Board noted the Proposal for Fostering Modernisation and thanked Laura Caunce and Elaine McShane for their contributions.
2. It was agreed that once the work around developments to the Fostering Recruitment Process had been concluded that an update report would be provided at a future meeting of the Board.
3. The Fostering Proposals update report would also contain the additional information on the number of foster carers lost to other organisations.
4. It was agreed that research would be carried out in respect of the fostering offers of other organisations.
5. It was agreed that any information on these work streams as they developed would be provided to the Board.
6. It was agreed that the relevant member of the KFN would be identified to hold discussions around the key themes and reasons for de-registrations.

12. OFSTED and Ambition Board

Elaine McShane, Service Director for Family Support and Child Protection explained that the Ambition Board continued to receive reports around the progress in respect of the recommendations made following the last inspection.

It was suggested that it would be useful to identify which reports might be presented at both the OFSTED and Ambition Board and the Corporate Parenting Board where there were matters of joint interest.

RESOLVED:

1. The Board noted the OFSTED and Ambition Board update
2. It was agreed that a discussion would be held to decide which reports planned for presentation at the OFSTED and Ambition Board would also be presented to the Corporate Parenting Board.

13. Updates from Board Members on Interactions with Services

The Board considered verbal updates from Board Members in relation to progress and key issues following interaction with Services and Partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

A Board Member asked about the issue of settled status in relation to LAC following the UK leaving the EU. Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting, responded to advise that all the data relating to Kirklees LAC had now been submitted to the Government.

During the school half term holidays, the Chair of the Board had been invited to several virtual activities. This included virtual visits to 'Timestep studios', who provide dance and movement activities, and 'Wacky' a programme including a variety of activities such as quizzes and live virtual sessions on Microsoft Teams. Both virtual sessions were aimed at providing activity for children particularly those with complex needs during the holidays and the Chair highlighted that the virtual sessions were of great enjoyment to all who took part. The Chair also met with a representative who was researching the Council's improvement journey working alongside Leeds on behalf of the Department for Education.

A member of the Board highlighted the good work of the Mirfield Community Centre in supporting children in that area during the half term holidays. This included providing innovative and creative learning activities. Thanks, was also given to the Kirklees Fostering Network for their work in supporting carers throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED- The updates from Board Members on interactions with Services were noted.

14. Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 2020/21.

The Board considered the work plan for 2020/21 and were invited to put forward suggestions for the 2021/22 period.

RESOLVED –

The Board noted the Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 2020/21 and the items listed for consideration by the Board for 2021/22.

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.

Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report

Date of Board: 29 June 2021

Data is as at 31 May 2021, unless stated otherwise.

* Benchmarking Source: Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMt) V3.10. Benchmarking data is from March 2020 unless stated otherwise. SN = Statistical Neighbours average, Eng. = England average. Where no equivalent published data is available, "N/A" is shown.

Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
4.02.01 Children in care - numbers in care per 10,000 of age 0-17 population.	Per 10,000 population aged 0-17	68.8 (689)	66.5 (666)	67.6 (677)	65.8 (659)	92.2	67.0
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.02.04 Children in care by placement within and outside the LA boundary: Total placed outside Kirklees and more than 20 miles from home address	% (number)	12.0% (83)	11.1% (74)	10.8% (73)	11.2% (74)	12.9%	16.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - LAC with three or more placements	% (number)	7.8% (54)	6.2% (41)	6.1% (41)	5.3% (35)	10.3%	11.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of LAC in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	293	193	196	215	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.63	0.39	0.39	0.42	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- There is currently a decreasing trend in the number and rate of children in care from 68.8 (689 children) in Aug 20 to 65.8 (659 children) in May 21. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 67.9 (679 children), above our 31 March 2020 published rate of 67.0 and the England 2020 rate of 67.0, but well below our Statistical Neighbours 2020 rate of 92.2.
- Of the 74 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering.
- Legal Gateway and Permanence Panel takes place on a weekly basis and chaired by the Head of Service. The panel meetings continue to oversee, and quality assure, consistency in regard to decision making and planning around Placement moves, and care planning for children and young people. An External Placement Review Panel is now in place, and is held every 2 weeks, chaired by the Service Director. The purpose of the panel is to ensure better oversight of children who are not placed in Local Authority provision.
- A further review of External Residential Placements will be undertaken by 31st August 2021, of all children who are placed out of Local Authority to consider their care planning and explore options of returning to the local area, if this is in line with meeting the children and young person's needs. We have already made progress reducing this number placed outside of Kirklees and more than twenty miles away from Kirklees.
- For Placement Stability the Placement support team are very active, and we have implemented innovative solutions to support several Placements to limit unplanned moves in that, where a foster

carer or Placement is given 28-day notice, the Team Manager will coordinate a stability meeting within 5 working days to look at what can be provided to avoid Placement breakdown and to maintain the current Placement.

- Whilst the data shows improvement in certain areas, we are focusing on the data relating to children and young people who have had three or more Placement changes in the previous 12-month period.
- As at the end of February 2021 there had been 235 social worker changes in the previous 12 months with a further reduction to 215 by the end of May 2021. Whilst social work change data has improved a focus needs to remain on reducing this number further, as we are mindful of the impact this has on our children and young people and will continue to focus on staff retention and consistency in case allocation.

What do we want to improve?

- Work to continue in relation to improving placement stability for our children and young people and will focus on lessons learned to inform practice. We are currently in the process of reviewing our model of practice and have established much better links with our supervisory social workers to help with better support to our foster carers. We are currently reviewing our placement support so that we are able to enhance our offer to foster carers.
- Further worker needs to be undertaken to improve allocated social worker stability.
- Reduce number of children placed more than 20 miles from their home address. We aim to recruit more local foster carers to provide more local placement options.
- We are planning to review all of our external foster placements to consider whether children and young people who are placed more than twenty miles from Kirklees, in line with their care planning and meeting the children and young person's needs, are able to return to more local placements.

Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	96.5%	99.0%	98.9%	99.0%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory time-scale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	91.6% (637/ 689)	93.8% (623/ 666)	89.9% (606/ 677)	91.4% (602/ 659)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.09.02: Missing children: a. No. of CLA having at least one Missing episode per month	% (number)	3.0% (21)	2.4% (16)	2.5% (17)	2.7% (18)	9.3%	11%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
b. No. of LAC that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	42.9% (9)	37.5% (6)	29.4% (5)	66.7% (12)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.09.03: Independent Return Interviews for CLA offered within 72 hours of the child being located	% (number)	86.5% (32/ 37)	73.9% (17/ 23)	85.0% (17/ 20)	78.1% (25/ 32)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 9 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit in May 2021 relating to 12 children in total – 9 of whom remain Looked After as at end May 2021. For all the referrals received, children and young people were allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer

(IRO) within 24 hours and Initial Child Looked After Reviews were arranged within 4 weeks of the children and young people becoming Looked After.

- In May 2021, the Child Protection and Review Unit held 158 Looked After Review Meetings for children, with over 98% of these being held within timescales
- Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained and improved upon, whilst a clear rationale is recorded on a child's file if there are circumstances which result in a child's review meeting not being held within statutory timescales.
- In May 2021, 8 children and young people were supported by an Advocate from the Children's Rights Team at their Looked After Review, including 1 young person living in host local authority area.
- At the end of May 2021 30 Children Looked After were receiving support from an Independent Visitor.
- The timeliness of CLA visits has fluctuated with a 12-month low of 87.7% in Jan 21, and a high in Jul 20 of 94.6%. Performance in May 21 was 91.4%, just below the 12-month average of 91.7%.
- There has been an increase with regards to the number of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards, we continue to monitor the visits as part of our service performance meetings to address and increase the timeliness of visits to children and young people.
- *Missing CLA:*
 - All children's homes are being encouraged to review missing reporting strategies with the placing Local Authorities to ensure they are fit for purpose and have a clear expectation on the home to try all avenues to locate the child before reporting them missing.
 - The Philomena Protocol documents are being used by all children's homes and semi-independent providers in Kirklees (introduced in July 2020). A number of meetings have been held with providers recently to consider the protocol, the information within it and expectations that all providers use it. Feedback showed that children's homes and semi-independent providers like the protocol and that the information held means that children are located more quickly and that it aids the Police to do this. It was recognised by the police that more work need to take place with the police call operators who receive the information as they are not all familiar with the protocol.
 - Provider meetings are run 3 to 4 times per year. During 2020 these have focussed on the Philomena Protocol and support through Covid-19. Meetings have continued to take place and attendance has been good, but more work is required, to increase understanding and fully implement the protocol across the partnership.

What do we want to improve?

- The Service Managers are increasing focus on statutory visit compliance to improve the performance. Regular performance meetings are held within the service to ensure that we can improve our performance.
- Independent Reviewing Officers to continue to liaise closely with Social Workers and the Children's Rights team to ensure that children are enabled to participate in their Reviews and that their voice is heard. IROs are Linked to Social work team and Clusters to share updates about Services and highlight any themes and issues that may be contributing to delays for children.
- Children's Rights Service have liaised closely with IRO Service and will shortly be relaunching updated online versions of Children's consultation documents for Looked After Reviews. These include children's consultation and feedback forms for Reviews and an Information about Reviews 'Booklet', for two ranges. Once finalised they will be shared with children and young people when they first come into care. The aim is to help children and young people gain understanding of what a Review meeting is, what they can expect, why it is important that their views are heard, the different ways they can make sure this happens, and to encourage improved participation in Reviews.
- The Children's Rights Service has sought the views of children who have an Independent Visitor to gain an in depth understanding of their experience during Covid-19. The feedback received has informed a service action plan focused on ensuring continuous service delivery improvement.
- Increase the numbers of Independent Visitors; a recruitment campaign is planned and information regarding the scheme recently been shared with existing adult volunteers.

Children Looked After Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Autumn Term 20/21	Spring Term 20/21	Summer Term 20/21	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age LAC with PEP in the last term)	%	100%	100%			
	Direction of Travel	-				

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	90%	100%	100%	96%	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
4.10.05 LAC Persistent Absentees	%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.5% (2018/19)	10.9% (2018/19)
	Direction of Travel						
LAC with a mid-year school move	%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel						

NB: We are unable to report on the Persistent Absentee measure because of the COVID-19 lockdown and the resultant changes to the educational offer.

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 100% of PEPs have been completed within the Spring Term in-line with the new termly processes.
- The Virtual School is currently leading on all PEPs since the Covid-19 lockdowns began in March 2020. These are all currently virtually held meetings.
- 96% of initial PEPs have been completed within 10 school days of child coming into care since 01/09/2020. 4 were held out of timescales
 - 2 were due to the CLA start date having changed in Liquid Logic to an earlier date
 - 1 was due to Covid-19 (positive case in education setting – PEP had to be meeting rearranged)
 - 1 was due to being cancelled by SW
- We continue to work with social work teams to improve both PEP and initial PEP completion and the quality assurance of PEPs. We have successfully moved to termly PEPs to meet statutory requirements.
- 80% of school moves have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision, with 91% within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.

What do we want to improve?

- Our initial focus was the transition back into education following the Covid-19 school closures (vulnerable offer) with a continued focus on supporting young people who are having to work at home e.g. isolation / bubble closures. This will continue to be our priority following the current return to school for all pupils.
- We will continue to have a focus on termly PEP completion with transition support and support for working at home where necessary as key focus areas.
- Attendance / Persistent Absence (PA) remains a high priority and all pupils with attendance less than 90%. We will need to be mindful of some of the emotional issues for our young people as they return and respond creatively where there are issues or concerns. The attendance information is not

comparable with previous data due to the impact of Covid-19 e.g. illness, self-isolation, bubble closures

- We will continue to maintain a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education provision.
- We will continue to work across service to reduce the number of school moves (2018-19 (82), 2019-20 (64)) and to reduce the number of young people with a break in provision whenever possible.

Children Looked After Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	75.2%	24.2%	27.3%	34.5%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	87.1%	91.2%	90.8%	92.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
4.11.13 Annual health assessments: a: Under 5's 6 month Developmental Assessments -percentage up to date	%	79.6%	93.2%	86.1%	93.3%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	83.0%	89.0%	89.1%	90.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.11.16 No. of LAC in care more than 12 month and identified as having a substance misuse problem during the last year	% (number)	0.43% (2)	0.20% (1)	0.20% (1)	0.19% (1)	2.4%	3.0%
	Direction of Travel		↔	↔	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- **Initial health assessments:** Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data shows in May that **92.9%** were completed in timescales. The assessments continue to be completed by telephone as pre-Covid clinic areas are not available. New sites and arrangements are being discussed for a future model, due to the number of people required to input into the assessments and in line with the new restrictions.
- **Review health assessments:** Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **93.3% & 90.9%** of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales. The timescales have improved as a near normal service has resumed. The use of virtual telephone assessments can be used in extreme cases where a face-to-face appointment is not possible i.e. Covid-positive household or if young people decline to engage face-to-face, but willing to engage by phone.
- **Dental Checks within last 12 months:** Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that in May, **34.5%** of children had attended the dentist when asked at their RHA. This is an improving picture from times when the closure/limited availability of dentists during the Covid lockdown, prevented routine checks. A letter circulated by the WY Dental Commissioning Manager at our request, and encouragement for foster carers to contact their dental practices for appointments, may have had an impact locally. The monthly comparison data from Locala from April 21 for children aged 18 months to 18 years, showed that 75% had seen a dentist since their last RHA, therefore the picture may be more positive.
- **Registered at dentist (Data only from Locala – May data unavailable at time of this publication):** Children 'new into care' have been affected greatly during the pandemic, as they have generally not been able to register with a dentist. At the end of Quarter 4 it was evident that there was an improving picture.

- **Substance misuse:** Only 1 young person (**0.19%**) has admitted or is known to use substances that significantly affect their life, when asked at their RHA. It is dependent on admission, the illegality of it and they may not wish to admit their use. There may be a more accurate source for this information, possibly through social workers and substance misuse services. Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support. Young people who refuse support, are discussed with the local Substance Misuse Service, to try to offer an alternative response e.g., group work or access through other agencies.

Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				*Benchmarking
		Apr-Jun 20/21 Q1	Jul-Sep 20/21 Q2	Oct-Dec 20/21 Q3	Jan-Mar 20/21 Q4	
4.12.01 Number of young people who have been looked after continually for 12 months or more aged between 10 and 17 who have offended and received a substantive outcome (Youth Caution/ Conditional Caution or a Court Order)	%	1.24% (4/321)	1.87% (6/321)	1.24% (4/321)	1.24% (4/321)	Eng.: 3.00% SN: 3.43% Y&H: 3.00%
	Direction of Travel	↑	↑	↓	↔	

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the previous year is a decrease of 10% but is however a much-improved picture from 3 years ago when less than 30% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions. For the 4th quarter of this year (Jan to March 20) 93.7% of Children Looked After successfully completed their orders- a huge improvement on the same period in 2018/19 where only 50% completed successfully.
- For the year 2019/2020 90.9% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the last year is an increase of over 25% (65.8%).
- For the year April 20 to March 21, 87.7% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions. Whilst this performance is slightly worse than the same period of the previous year, it remains in line with that of the general population successfully completing their intervention.
- Whilst the numbers of Children Looked After offending remain small in the cohort, we are seeing a increase in the numbers compared to the same period last year. In the year to date we have seen a rise in the percentage of CLA offending from 3.17% (19/20) to 5.6% (20/21).

What do we want to improve?

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 21/22 year is bigger than the 20/21 year (364 compared to 321), but through continued interventions by the YOT, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will continue to fall.
- To maintain the high level of successful outcomes achieved by Children Looked After, through creative interventions, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and the continued development of the Youth Engagement Service.

Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	85.5%	80.0%	95.5%	87.5%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	87.3%	89.6%	90.4%	90.6%	94.0% (2019)	93.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	79.9%	83.3%	83.3%	84.8%	89.3%	85.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	46.7%	51.4%	49.6%	51.3%	49.1%	53.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	93.9%	86.8%	84.8%	85.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- *Contact with care leavers* – There has been increase in relation to the number of Care Leavers we were in touch with during April and May 2021. This has to be viewed in the context of this group all being aged 18 plus. In some situations, young people do not wish to keep in contact with their Personal Advisor. The team work innovatively to keep in touch, we have a best practice protocol in place.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* - Despite the recent pandemic there has been a significant impact on the increasing demands for tenancies. However, we have worked closely with our housing colleagues who have agreed to prioritise the properties for our young people and this has helped to improve our performance in May 2021. We continue to maintain strong links with KNH and Housing and the Housing Panel is enabling us to ensure that suitable accommodation is available. We have strong links with private housing providers and are considering how collectively we can improve our skills for independence training. We have continued to provide virtual life skills and pre-tenancy training during COVID19.
- *Kirklees Commitment to Care Leavers* – Unfortunately during the year our drop-in centres at N°11 and N°12 have been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as part of our recovery plan we are hopeful that we will be in a position to reopen N°11 in April 2021 and N°12 in June 2021.
- *Children in Care aged 17 years and 4 months with an allocated Personal Advisors* – There has been decrease in performance on this indicator from 95.3% in April 2021 to 87.5% in May 2021. Work to be undertaken with the team to address Personal Advisor (PA) allocation, but it is important to note that all the young people do have either an allocated PA or an allocated Social Worker.
- *Education Employment Training* – Our performance in relation to Employment, Education and Training (EET) indicator is a focus for improvement. We have a C&K Careers Advisor in the Leaving Care Service. We have a pro-active multi-agency group to improve opportunities in partnership working and there is a real desire to ensure our young people are afforded the best of opportunities in relation to EET. Due to the COVID19 pandemic some of our young people have unfortunately been in a situation where they have either been furloughed or made redundant from their employment. In order to offer support to our young people we have recently established a virtual clinic where extra support is available from our Careers Advisor. In May 2021 we have seen an increase in the number of young people who are either in employment, education or training.
- *Pathway Plans* – We have seen a slight improvement in the numbers of young people who have an up-to-date pathway plan. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of

the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings. This is monitored at our performance meetings chaired by the service manager.

What do we want to improve?

- *Number of young people with a pathway plan* – The number of young people with a pathway plan has increased. Work is currently ongoing within the service and it is expected that the measure will improve further. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings.
- We have recently reviewed our financial offer to our care leaver along with our staying put policy and they will be launched following approval. We aim to review our commitment to care leavers and both will significantly improve and enhance our offer to our young people.
- To improve the allocation timeliness of Personal Advisors.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	11.2% (24)	5.1% (12)	4.8% (11)	4.8% (11)	19.0%	12.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↔		
5.02.03 A1 Average timescale (days) between the child coming into care and being placed with the adopter (Financial year to date)	Number	528.6	610.5	591.1	588.1	512.4 (15-18)	486.0 (15-18)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
5.02.05 A2 Average timescale (days) between Kirklees council receiving court authority to place a child and the council deciding to match the child with an adoptive family	Number	253.4	236.3	233.8	236.3	215.3 (15-18)	201.0 (15-18)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- At the end of May 2021, 4.8% of children leaving care in a 12-month rolling period had been adopted, equating to 11 children. At the level of performance to May 2021, Kirklees is significantly below the England rate of 12.0% (2020) and the Statistical Neighbours rate of 19.0% (2020)
- The average timescale has been increasing and stood at 614.6 in December 2020 before decreasing to 588.1 by May 2021. This remains well above the Statistical Neighbours average of 384.7 days and the England average of 376.0 days from the Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2019). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 388 days, so the average timescale has increased since this time.
- The average timescale decreased slightly to 236.3 days in May 2021. Overall, this remains above the Statistical Neighbours average of 168.9 days and the England average of 178.0 from the Adoption Scorecard (3-year average outcome to March 2019). Kirklees performance on the Scorecard was 132.0 days, so there has been an increase in the average timescale since this time.
- We have established weekly clinics to support children's Social Workers who are undertaking child permanence reports, sibling assessments and considering whether a plan for adoption is appropriate. This is a joint initiative between the Assessment & Intervention Service and One Adoption and will be supported by regular training and workshops. One Adoption continue to attend

Legal Gateway and Permanence Panel on a weekly basis in order to track children with a plan for adoption and to ensure a family finder is allocated.

- If an adoption Placement ceases, then One Adoption have a 'disruption review' and their new procedure is on our procedures website. They will be working with Kirklees staff on the implementation of this process. We have a structured Agency Decision Making process in relation to adoption planning. This includes legal and medical advice as well as advice from One Adoption West Yorkshire.
- Adoption Support Fund offers funding for ongoing support to adoptive families and children. There has been an increase in successful applications for Kirklees children that resulted in an increase of support, training and therapeutic input.
- The progression of Adoption cases is now monitored by Head of Service at the monthly permanence tracking panel ensuring a more robust approach to avoiding drift and delay.
- During the recent COVID19 we have had some difficulties in relation to being able to progress transition plans however as restrictions have been lifted we are now in a much stronger position in being able to progress these plans to be able to move children into their potential adoptive Placement. As a result of the CODID 19 pandemic we have experienced delays in relation to court hearings for application for adoption orders again has restrictions have lifted this is now an improving picture.

What do we want to improve?

- To continue to develop working relationships between One Adoption West Yorkshire and Kirklees social workers and managers, to ensure we maximise the potential benefits of the regional adoption agency in Kirklees. Regular meetings between the Service Managers in One Adoption and Assessment and Intervention have been established which will improve areas of communication and partnership working to assist timely adoption for our children.

Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Jun 20	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total New Carer Approvals in Month:	Number	5	4	2	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	4	4	2	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
In-house Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	3	5	1	3	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	233	243	248	245	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
b. Family and friend placements	Number	118	102	105	101	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	193	186	184	181	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- April 2021 saw 4 recorded in-house approvals and May 2021 saw 3 (including Family and Friends carers). The rolling 12-month total to May 2021 was 36 households. There were 3 in-house de-registrations in May 2021. The rolling 12-months total for in-house de-registrations is 34. This gives a net gain of 2 households.

- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers decreased to 245 at the end of May 2021 compared to 248 in April. This is just above the 12-month average of 243.
- The number of Family and Friends Placements decreased to 101 in May 2021 from 105 in April 2021. This is well below the 12-month high of 118 in Jun 20 (Note that this figure includes Reg 24 Placements). The 12-month average is 105.
- The May figure of 181 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements is a decrease over the 184 seen in April 2021. The 12-month average is 193.
- The forward plan in terms of foster placements is to grow internal fostering capacity reducing the use of fostering agencies and residential placements. The work undertaken so far has a clear focus on this, and we are seeing a net gain of 2 fostering households as opposed to months of net losses. A review is currently underway of the last 12 months resignations so we can be clear about the reasons for carers resigning and identify learning we can take forward.
- The fostering recruitment process and team functions have been reviewed; this is still somewhat a work in progress as the new Liquid Logic pathway hasn't gone live; once this is live we will have accurate recruitment data to support the improvement work showing how many enquiries, expressions of interests and live assessments. We currently have 8 fostering households in formal assessment with another 2 to allocate.

What do we want to improve?

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority as is reducing the use of fostering agency care. We are focussed on recruiting foster carers who can help us to meet our sufficiency needs around placements for older children, children with complex needs, offering long-term placements and emergency placements. Alongside recruitment we want to ensure that new foster carers receive the right level of support particularly in their first year of fostering; induction, training and support from a Supervising Social Worker are all essential aspects of supporting and retaining new foster carers.
- A piece of work is being undertaken to review and compare Kirklees fostering fees with other LAs and the White Rose IFA arrangements. On top of this we will be looking at annual leave entitlements and other non-monetary benefits so that an accurate comparison can take place. Other LA fostering benefits will be collated and compared with the Kirklees offer. The Kirklees offer then needs setting out so that existing and new carers are clear about the Council's offer to foster carers.
- We are currently working with the National Fostering Network to implement Foster Carer Mockingbird hubs in Kirklees. This model facilitates additional support to specific carers. We have recruited the first Hub carer
- We are currently in the implementation stage of the modernisation of the Fostering Service. The Recruitment and Connected Persons Assessment Team have moved across to Resources, Improvements and Partnerships to sit under Sufficiency. The Supervisory Social Work Teams have joined Family Support and Child Protection under the Placement Support Team. There has been some management realignment to accommodate the changes which will enable us to achieve our aspirations of all children being placed locally in suitable placements and that when support is needed, it is timely and effective and ensures placement stability is achieved.
- Under the wider sufficiency agenda, we are opening a new children's home in Huddersfield to support bringing children back to Kirklees and/or reducing external placements. We are also opening an MST-FIT residential provision which supports reunification with family using an evidence-based model. Support is provided to the young person and their family with intensive support provided once the young person returns home (after 12 weeks in the residential unit).

Appendix – Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
A&I	Assessment & Intervention (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (for a newly qualified Social Worker)
BSM	Business Support Manager
BSO	Business Support Officer
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CIC	Child(ren) in Care (see also CLA and LAC)
CIN	Child(ren) in Need
CLA	Child(ren) Looked After (also see CIC and LAC)
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CPRU	Child Protection & Review Unit
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CWD	Children with a Disability
D&A	Duty & Advice (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
DCS	Disabled Children's Service / Director of Children's Services
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHC	Education, Health and Care (Plan)
EITS	Early Intervention and Targeted Support
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Form F	Assessment form for approval of Foster Carers
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HOS	Head of Service
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
IHA	Initial Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KNH	Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child(ren) (also see CIC and CLA)
LAIT	Local Authority Interactive Tool (DfE tool for access to nationally published data)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
PA	Personal Advisor (to Care Leavers)
PEP	Personal Education Plan (for a Looked After Child)
PLO	Public Law Outline
QSW	Qualified Social Worker
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RHA	Review Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
S17	Section 17 of the Children Act – Relates to Children in Need
S20	Section 20 of the Children Act – Relates to a child accommodated by the LA
S47	Section 47 of the Children Act – Relates to Child Protection
SDQ	Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire

Term	Description
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SM	Service Manager
SN	Statistical Neighbours (closest match Local Authorities for benchmarking)
SW	Social Worker
TM	Team Manager
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
Y&H	Yorkshire and the Humber
YOT	Youth Offending Team



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 29 June 2021
Title of report: Number and Age of Children in Care

Purpose of report

To provide information to the Panel on a regular basis relating to the number and profile of children in our care. Including information related to the number placed outside of the District.

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	Signed off by Elaine McShane, Service Director (Child Protection and Family Support) on behalf of Mel Meggs (Director for Children's Services) – 18.06.2021
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	NA
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	NA
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick Children's Portfolio

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?)

Yes GDPR has been considered. The information in this report does not identify any individuals.

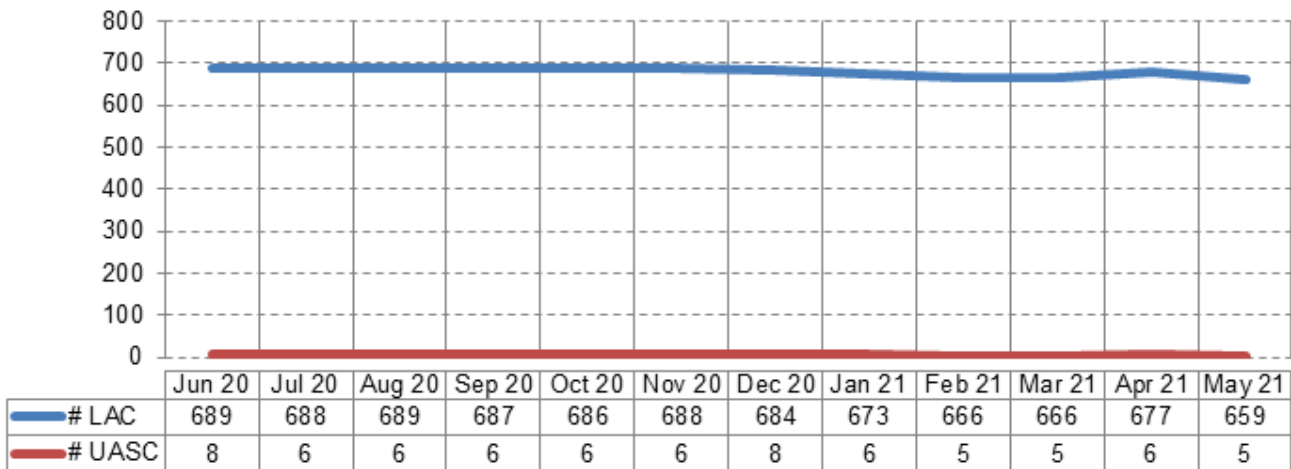
1. Summary

This graph shows the number of children in care (659 excluding any looked after children receiving only S20 short term breaks) alongside the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

The current number of CLA equates to a rate per 10,000 population aged 0-17 of 65.8. This compares to a statistical neighbour average of 92.2 and a national average of 67.0 based on published data for March 2020.

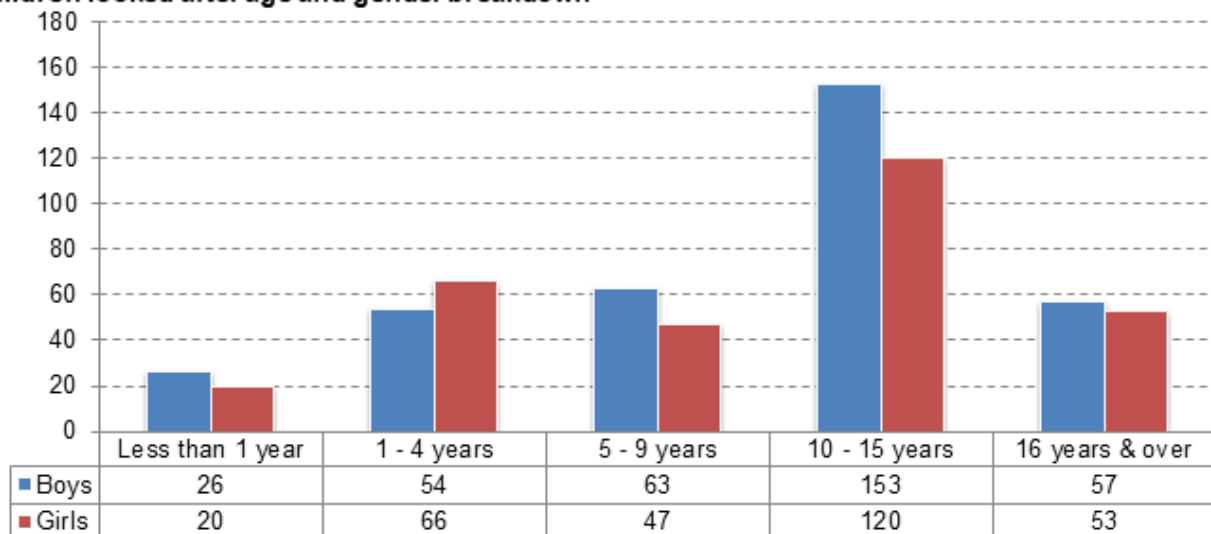
- Kirklees (May 21) = 65.8
- Statistical Neighbours (2020) = 92.2
- England (2020) = 67.0

Children looked after and number of UASC



This graph shows the breakdown by age and gender of the children in care. The largest age group for boys is 10 - 15 years with 153 children and the largest age group for girls is 10 - 15 years with 120 children.

Children looked after age and gender breakdown



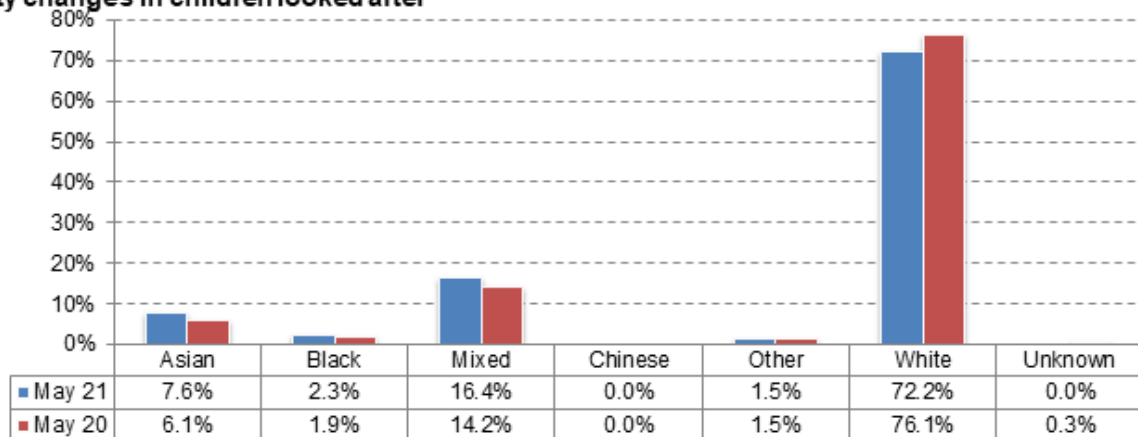
Statistical Neighbours

Local Authorities that the Department for Education regard as similar and close socio economically to Kirklees, not measured by population size.

Local Authorities "Very Close"* to Kirklees (* Source LAIT)
Kirklees Council
Rochdale Borough Council
Bolton Council
Calderdale Council
Bury Borough Council
Dudley MBC
Derby City
Lancashire Council
Stockton-on Tees Borough Council
Leeds City Council
Telford & Wrekin Council

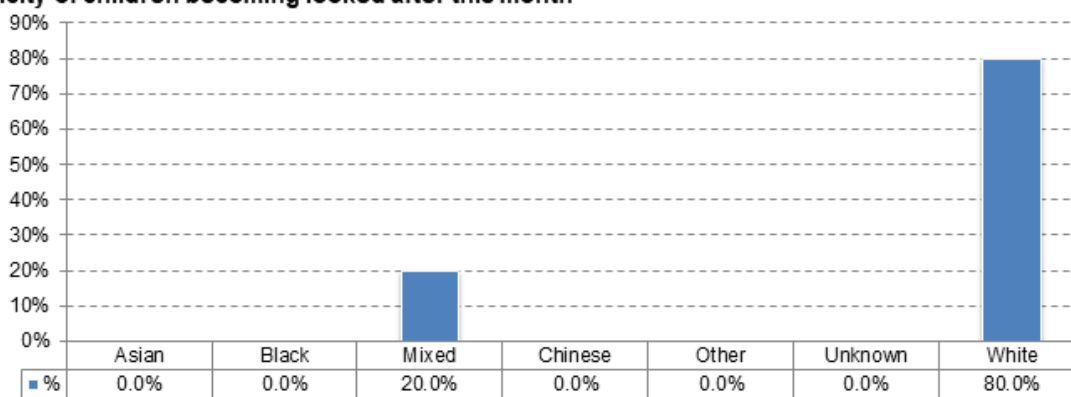
This graph shows the ethnic breakdown of the children looked after population at the end of May 2021 and the same point 12 months ago. There has been an increase in the percentage of CLA who are of Mixed ethnicity in this time period.

Ethnicity changes in children looked after



This graph shows the percentage breakdown by ethnicity of children entering care this month. Note that this outcome is based on small numbers. In May 2021 there were 5 young people who were recorded as entering care in the month at the point of data extraction of whom 4 were White and 1 of Mixed ethnicity.

Ethnicity of children becoming looked after this month



Children and Young People placed more than 20 miles outside of Kirklees

The number of looked after children placed outside Kirklees District and 20 plus miles from their home address was 74 on 31/05/2021. This follows a continuum of decline from 127 in 2017. This equates to 11.2% of the total CLA cohort. The majority of our children and young people placed out of area are placed in foster care, the remainder are placed in children's homes, semi-independent homes, a small number in youth custody or other specialist settings. The recent historical position is detailed below:

	31/03/2021		30/04/2021		31/05/2021	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Placed outside Kirklees & over 20 miles from home address	74	11.1%	73	10.8%	74	11.2%

Semi Independent Accommodation aged 16 plus

On 31/05/2021 there were 23 young people accommodated in semi-independent accommodation, 17 within District and 6 of our young people placed outside of the Kirklees District as detailed in the following table:

Placements outside of Kirklees in semi-independent living accommodation (not subject to Children's Home regulations) - as at 31/05/2021			
LA of Placement	Aged 16	Aged 17	Total
Bradford		3	3
Calderdale	1	1	2
Liverpool		1	1
Total	1	5	6
Legal Status	Aged 16	Aged 17	Total
Full Care Order	1	1	2
S20 CA 1989 - Single Placement		4	4
Total	1	5	6

2. Information required to take a decision

No decision is required, this report is submitted at the request of the Board to monitor the number of children in care. This report is also shared with the Children's Scrutiny Panel on a monthly basis.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners

Not applicable

3.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

3.5 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.

3.6 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

3.7 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps

A similar report will be presented to future meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Ophelia Rix, Head of Corporate Parenting

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Previous reports to the Children's Scrutiny on number and age of children in care.

10. Service Director responsible

Elaine McShane, Service Director (Child Protection and Family Support)



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 29th June 2021

Title of report: 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 2020 to 31st March 2021 (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 If yes give the reason why
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u>?	Not Applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	16 June 2021; Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships. Children's Services. No No
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: N/A

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

The Kirklees Children Looked After Independent Service (Children's Rights team) offers advocacy support to, and shares the views and opinions of, children Looked After to ensure that the voice and experiences of children Looked After is heard and influences policy and service delivery development and design. Additionally, the service also provides advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over who are subject to the Child Protection process.

The Children's Rights team also works with children and young people to support them to use the Children's Services complaints process, to be active participants in the recruitment of professionals, i.e., Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, and operational and strategic managers, and 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 years old) 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, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Within the Children's Rights team, one full time officer co-ordinates the Independent Visitor's Scheme. This scheme matches children Looked After with volunteers, who offer support and guidance and opportunities to engage in positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for the scheme which is included within the Children's Rights Annual Report at Appendix 2.

This report outlines the challenges and opportunities of the last 12 months during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The Service works with children and young people, families and carers, and across the council and wider partnership. Adult volunteers in the Independent Visitors provide a valuable service to children and young people Looked After by the local authority.

3.2 Working with Partners

The Service works with partners to deliver outcomes for children and young people, within the Council and across the wider partnership

3.3 Place Based Working

Not Applicable

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not Applicable

3.5 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 relation to decisions that are made which affect their lives, and that service delivery and provision is influenced by the voice and experiences of children and young people.

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. If it is not possible for a child or young person to achieve the outcome they sought, their Advocates support children and young people to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes for children and young people achieved in 2020/21 included:

- Access to savings
- Support for driving lessons
- Stability of placement
- Move of placement
- Support in making applications
- Finance for equipment

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Not Applicable

4. Next steps and timelines

Key Priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Increased children and young people's participation in Looked After Reviews and Child Protection conferences.
- Increase membership of and improve accessibility for both the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum, to help ensure the voice and influence of children and young people informs practice and service delivery.

- To work with others across Children's services to capture children's voices and experiences and to help support participation inform service development and design.
- Introduce improved quality assurance mechanisms, to support the development of the Children's Rights Service and the team.
- Develop the Independent Visitor Scheme to provide a consistently high-service to children, young people, and volunteers.

4 Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

5 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not Applicable

6 Contact officer

Melanie Tiernan, Children's Rights Team Manager– 01484 225288 email: melanie.tiernan@kirklees.gov.uk

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding– 01484 221000 extension 71493 email: anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

7 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not Applicable

8 Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships



Annual Report

Looked After Children Independent Service Children's Rights Team

April 2020 to March 2021

Melanie Tiernan

Anna Gledhill

Dated

Manager - Kirklees Children Looked After Independent Service
(Children's Rights Team)

Service Manager, Quality Assurance, Children and Young People
Service

June 2021

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11. Quality Assurance
12. Young people's voice
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16. Key areas of development for the next 12 months
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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 Children Looked After Independent Service (Children's Rights Team) offer advocacy, advice and representation to children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority.

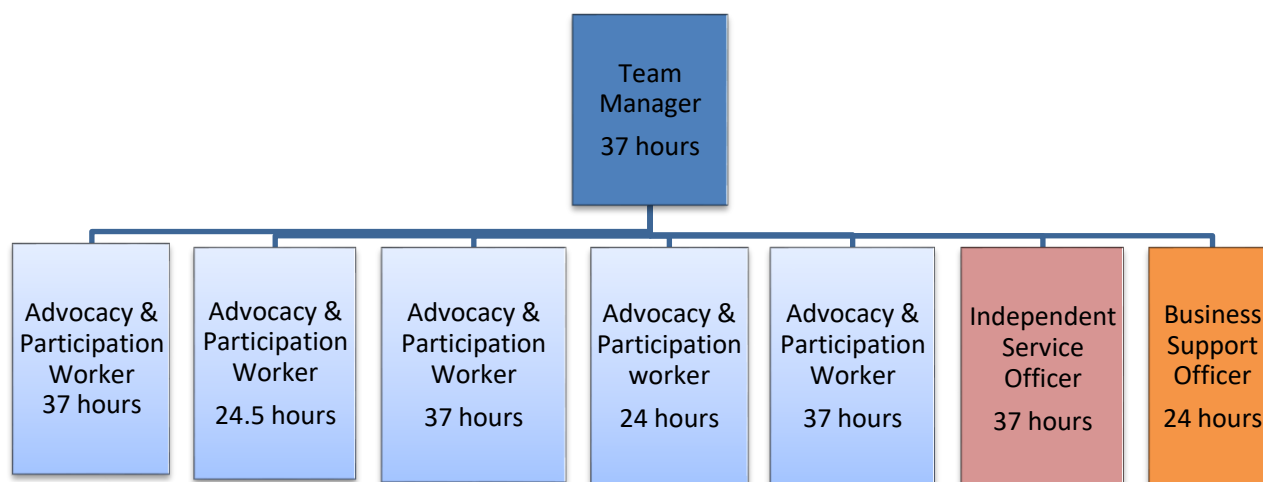
This report covers the period from 1st April 2020 through to 31st March 2021.

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 to assist them to engage in meaningful participation in respect of decision-making which affects them, both individually and collectively.
- Provide a quality assurance function in respect of services received by children Looked After.
- Support children and young people subject to the Child Protection process to enable them to voice their thoughts, wishes and feelings.

3. Children's Rights Team Structure



4. Children's Rights Team Overview

- 4.1 The team works collaboratively with Children's Social Care /Children's Services to ensure that the views, wishes, feelings and opinions of children Looked After are heard and considered in respect of service delivery and policy development. The team also supports children and young people over the age of ten, if they are subject to the Child Protection process. Additionally, the team supports children and young people to use the complaints process, and works with children and young people by training and supporting them to undertake a meaningful role in the recruitment process of professionals and to deliver

their own training session to practitioners and professionals (Total Respect Training); this helps practitioners and professionals to consider what the barriers for participation of children are, and why it's important to listen to what children and young people say.

- 4.2 Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7) receives an 'Initial Visit' from an Advocacy & Participation Worker, to share information about the team, what support that they can receive, and what participation opportunities they can become involved in.
- 4.3 An Advocacy & Participation Worker in the team coordinates and supports the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF). The CiCC and CLF enable children and young people Looked After and 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. Appendix 1 of this report provides an outline of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum activities undertaken during 2020 to 2021.
- 4.4 The team also has a full-time officer who co-ordinates the Independent Visitors Scheme. The scheme matches children and young people who are in the care of the local authority with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with, supporting, and listening to them, together with undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report for the Independent Visitors Scheme can be found at Appendix 2.

5. Covid-19 Impact

5.1 Challenges

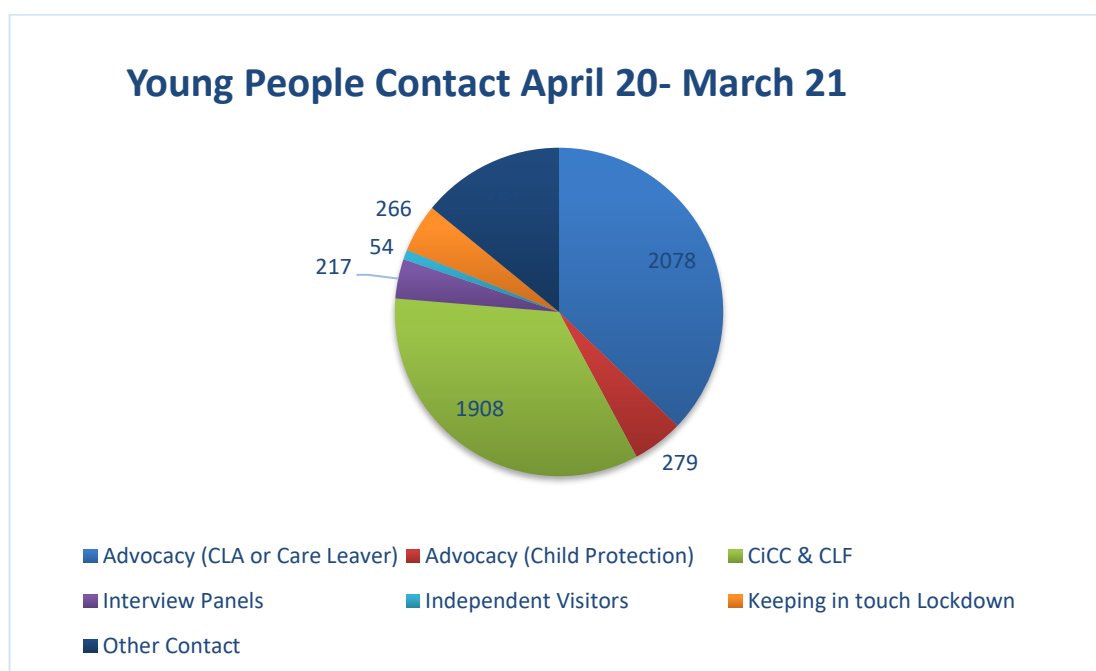
- 5.2 This reporting period has been different for the service due to the challenges and opportunities created by Covid-19. The service has continued throughout the pandemic; however, delivery methods have been adapted, with the service moving from in person service delivery to employing new mechanisms for engaging with children and young people. All requests for advocacy have been actioned in line with the Government guidance and restrictions. When possible, priority has been given to visits and advocacy taking place in person, and currently the service delivery model is a combination of both virtual and in person. Whilst children Looked After and Child Protection Review meetings remain virtual, the service is developing an offer where children and young people will be supported in person by an Advocate at their virtual Conference/ Review, should they wish this.
- 5.3 The team established that a high proportion of children and young people did not feel able to engage positively with virtual advocacy; this particularly related to children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan and initial visits. When visits could be resumed children and young people in this cohort were prioritised for an in person visit. Each visit is fully risk assessed in line with Government and Kirklees Covid-19 guidance.
- 5.4 Supporting children and young people in virtual meetings has been a challenge due to Advocates not being able to provide the level of nuanced support as they would in person, and as indicated above many of children and young people the team received a Conference Advocacy support request for, chose not to attend a virtual meeting. Additionally, some children and young people who had previously attended their Looked After Review meetings chose not to attend a virtual meeting; where this was the case Advocates continued to attend Review meetings on the child/young person's behalf to represent their wishes and feelings. Feedback from young people who attended virtual

Review meetings indicated that young people preferred to participate virtually via a video call, however technology has presented some issues with this, as carers have not always had the appropriate equipment or software to enable video calls.

- 5.5 The team works closely with the Child Protection and Review Unit which as part of a recovery model is revising consultation documentation and seeking to increase the offer and choice for how children and young people can access their Conferences and Reviews.
- 5.6 Children and young people's participation in the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum has been impacted on by Covid-19, with some members not wishing to participate in virtual meetings, however during the pandemic both groups have attracted new young people. Both the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum would like to resume in person meetings as soon as practically possible.
- 5.7 Covid-19 restrictions have had an impact on the Independent Visitors Scheme, when in person visits have not been able to occur in line with Government and Council guidance; despite this, some volunteers have undertaken creative good practice to ensure relationships were maintained. (Please see Independent Visitor Scheme full report at Appendix 2 for further details).
- 5.8 **Opportunities**
- 5.9 The use of telephone and video calls has been successful in keeping in touch with some children and young people, i.e., holding the Care Leavers forum meetings virtually has enabled young people who reside outside of Kirklees to attend and participate.
- 5.10 With a focus on well-being, in March 2020 the Children's Rights Team wrote to all children and young people Looked After over the age of 7 and care leavers to ensure they were aware that the service was functioning and that they could get in touch at any time. Additionally, children and young people with an allocated Advocate at that time were contacted to establish if they would like more contact, this resulted in some children and young people having increased levels of contact which has improved some Advocacy relationships, particularly with several children and young people who live outside of Kirklees.
- 5.11 Between April 2020- July 2020 the team set a weekly challenge with the opportunity to win a prize. The challenge was promoted on the Children's Rights Team social media platforms which raised the profile of the service, resulting in children and young people who had not previously accessed the service regularly participating in the challenges set. An end of project report was completed, and a summary article appeared on the intranet with examples of work completed by children and young people.
- 5.12 The Annual Achieve Awards to celebrate the achievement of children Looked After over the age of 16 and Care Leavers which took place on 22nd October 2020 featured young people and was broadcasted virtually through YouTube. Dual planning for the 2021 Achieve Awards is in place, the aim is to hold the Awards in person, however planning involves a contingency plan for virtual delivery if needed.

6. Contact with young people

- 6.1 Every child Looked After by the local authority has the right to an independent advocate, as defined in the Children Act 1989 which 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, including 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 affects their lives. The Children's Rights team also works with children and young people in connection with the other functions that the service provides.
- 6.2 The service recorded 5585 contacts with children and young people throughout the reporting period, for a total of 663 individual children and young people. The chart below shows the highest proportion of contact related to advocacy for children and young people Looked After (CLA) or Care Leavers, 2075 in total, with 1437 relating to children Looked After and 636 to care leavers. 1908 contacts were made in relation to the CiCC / CLF, this includes distribution of information as well as attendance at meetings.



- 6.3 The team received 79 referrals for advocacy support for children and young people from professionals and carers. This is double the number in April 2019-March 2020. Most referrals were made by social workers (32) and foster carers (23).
- 6.4 A large proportion of the children and young people have received support on more than one occasion; the most common support accessed was in relation to Children Looked After Reviews (CLA Review) or other meetings.
- 6.5 The service has supported 20 children and young people in care, who have a physical or learning disability, on 53 separate occasions. 36 occasions involved support at a CLA Review. For a small number of these children / young people the support offered was non instructed advocacy. This is provided when a child/young person does not have the capacity to clearly communicate their wishes or feelings or have an appropriate level of understanding. For these children / young people their Advocate gathers information from a range of sources such as parents / carers / professionals, to assess if the best interests of the child are being considered in any decisions that are made. The Advocate also ensures that the rights of the child are being upheld.

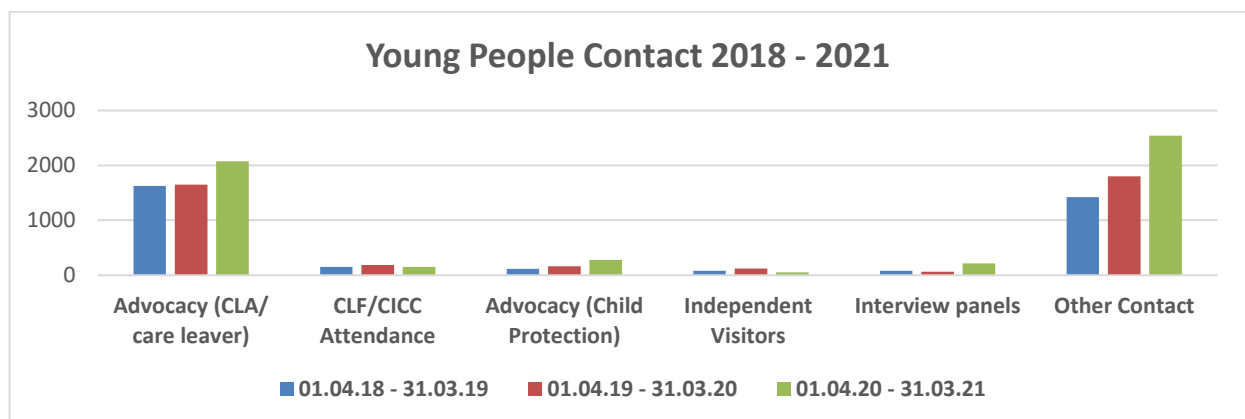
- 6.6 The service continues to receive more requests for advocacy in relation to girls and young women; in this reporting period advocacy support was provided to 307 girls and young women compared with 178 boys and young men.

7. Comparison over a 3-year period

- 7.1 The chart below shows the contacts made by the Service; highlighting that advocacy provided to children Looked After and Care Leavers continues to be the highest proportion of work that the team undertakes, whilst in this reporting period there has been an increase in the amount of advocacy undertaken with children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan and a decrease of contact with the Independent Visitors Scheme due to the impact of Covid-19 on in person visits.

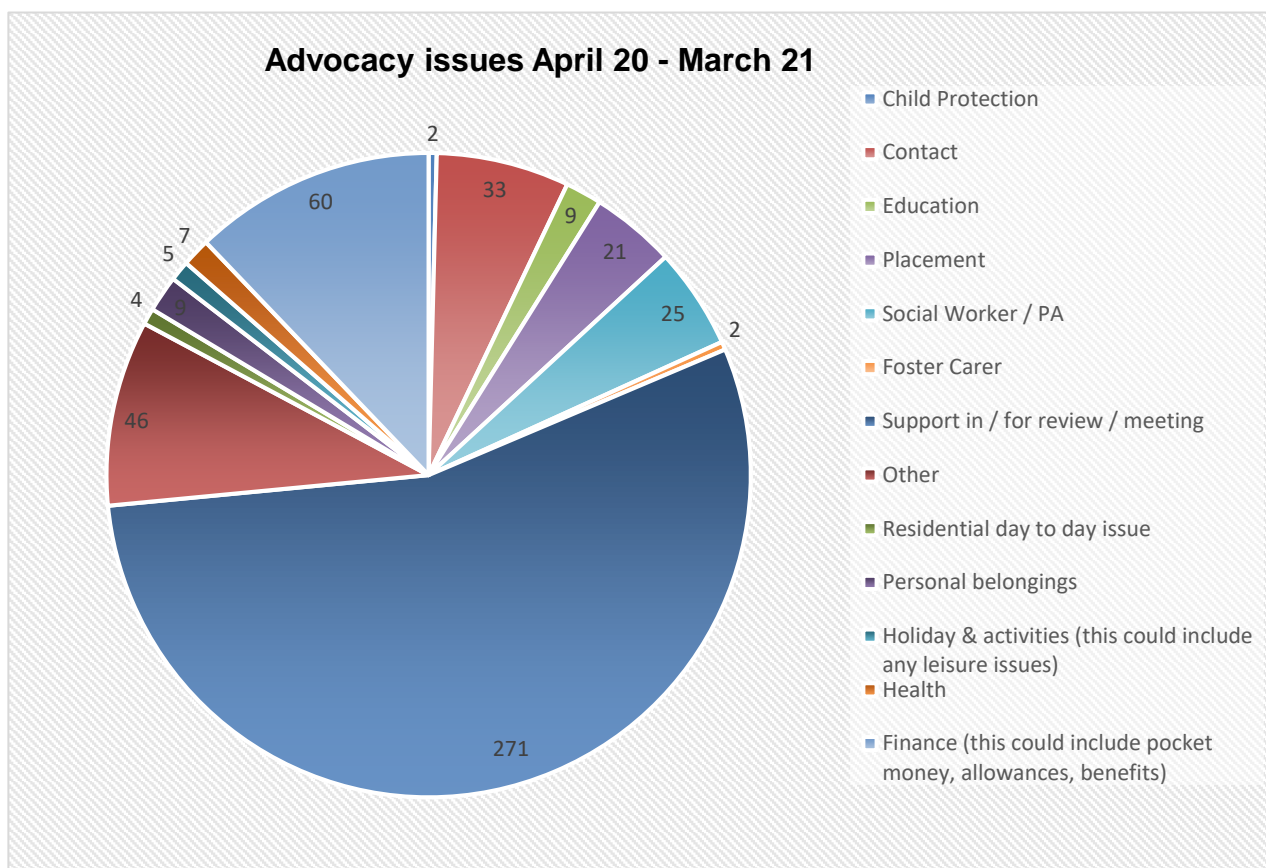
- 7.2 Work undertaken under the heading of 'other' includes:

- Conversations with children and young people who did not want advocacy support, but did want information or guidance
- Children and young people who received a birthday card and Christmas card (these are sent to all Looked After children and young people over the age of 7)
- Information packs sent to children and young people who have come into care
- Contacts to offer support throughout the pandemic



8. Advocacy Issues for children and young people who are Looked After

- 8.1 494 advocacy contacts related to 162 individual children and young people; the majority of contacts were with children Looked After (366) with the remainder being advocacy provided to Care Leavers. The pie chart below shows that advocacy support was provided at a CLA Review meeting on 271 occasions, whilst other advocacy support related to finance (60) family time (33), Social Worker or Personal Advisor (25) and placement (21). The 'other' section relates to several individual issues that children and young people have raised such as requests for body piercings, dental work, name change.



- 8.2 87 individual children and young people were supported with a total of 233 stand-alone advocacy issues, and on 161 occasions a satisfactory outcome was achieved and a compromise on 38. This indicates that in most cases the voice of the child / young person was listened to and advocacy support resulted in a positive difference being achieved.
- 8.3 In the reporting period the team provided support to 70 individual children and young people who live outside of the Kirklees area in 189 instances. 92 of these related to a CLA Review (48 individual young people), the remaining 97 instances related to stand alone advocacy issues (33 individual children and young people). 66 instances resulted in a satisfactory outcome for children and young people, and for 10 a compromise was achieved.

Themes and Patterns

- 8.4 There were 60 issues relating to finance, 52 concerned young people over the age of 16 and 39 related to children and young people living in a host local authority area. Of the 52 relating to young people over the age of 16, 25 were queries about financial support or request for support, i.e., the Leaving Care grant, support at university, bursaries, and support to make applications for maternity grants or Universal Credit. 8 issues related to young people accessing their savings and 5 related to driving lessons. Positive outcomes were achieved for 43 of these young people including access to savings, support in making applications, finance for equipment, allowances being granted and financial support for driving lessons. 4 young people felt that they had received a compromise, whilst 2 young people were not satisfied with the outcome.
- 8.5 33 advocacy support requests related to see family or friends of which, 16 were raised by children and young people living in a host local authority area. Of the 33 requests, 21 young people were satisfied with the outcome and 5 felt they had achieved a compromise.

- 8.6 In terms of the 25 issues raised in relation to professionals (Social Worker / Personal Advisor) 9 were raised by children and young people living in a host local authority area. 11 of the total 25 issues raised related to a request of a change of Social Worker or Personal Advisor, and 4 related to children /young people unhappy with the level of contact or support they were receiving. 17 of the 25 issues resulted in a child /young person achieving a positive outcome and 8 feeling they had achieved a compromise.
- 8.7 There were 21 instances of advocacy support provided in relation to where young people live, 9 of which related to young people living in a host local authority area. Of the 21 issues, 8 related to children or young people requesting a move, with 3 wanting to return to their family home. For 13 children or young people a satisfied outcome was achieved, and for 5 a compromise was reached.
- 8.8 Whilst Advocates endeavour to resolve issues for children and young people quickly by using an informal process, on occasion this has not led to the outcome the child or young person sought, and /or from the outset a child or young person has sought advocacy support to make a formal complaint. In this reporting period, 31 advocacy cases have involved supporting a child or young person to make a formal complaint, this is 7 more than in the previous reporting period. The main issues children and young people have been supported through the complaints process related to finance (14) and request for change of Social Worker or Personal Advisor (10). Of the 31 complaints 25 children or young people said that they had achieved a positive or compromise outcome.

9. Child Protection Conference Advocacy

- 9.1 Whilst the Children Rights team have been notified of over 50% less Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) during this reporting period compared to the previous period (126/307) the service has supported more individual children at a conference. The team contacted children and young people on 150 occasions, 50 of these related to individual children subject to an ICPC. Of the 150 occasions children and young people were contacted, 27 children declined the support offered and 60 were not seen for the following reasons:
- Parents declined support - 13
 - Unable to contact parents - 11
 - No referral received from Social Worker -16
 - Conference was cancelled – 6
 - Team capacity -11
 - Not appropriate for the child or young person to attend - 3
- 9.2 When the team have been unable to support a child or young person at an ICPC, a letter is sent to the child/young person's parents asking them to contact the team if they would like their child to receive support at their Review conference.

10.Participation Opportunities

- 10.1 The Children's Rights team works with children and young people in several ways to support participation opportunities, these include:

- Children in Care Council (CiCC): The council is for children and young people Looked After aged between 12 and 16. The council meets to consider issues relevant to being Looked After and to work with professionals to promote the views of children and young people to inform change and best practice. See appendix 1 for more details.
- The Care Leavers Forum (CLF): is for young people aged 16 and over to support young people to work with professionals to ensure that their views are heard regarding Care Leaver service delivery and provision. See appendix 1 for more details.
- Professional Recruitment Panels: The Children's Rights Team support services to help ensure that children and young people are involved in the recruitment of professionals, i.e., Social Workers, team, service or senior managers and Independent Reviewing Officers. This has continued throughout the pandemic by utilising creative methods and conducting virtual interviews, however the team have struggled to meet the demand for interview panels and timescales are often a factor in relation to this.
- Total Respect training: Due to the Covid-19 restrictions delivery has not taken place in this reporting period. However, it is envisaged that this will resume in 2021.

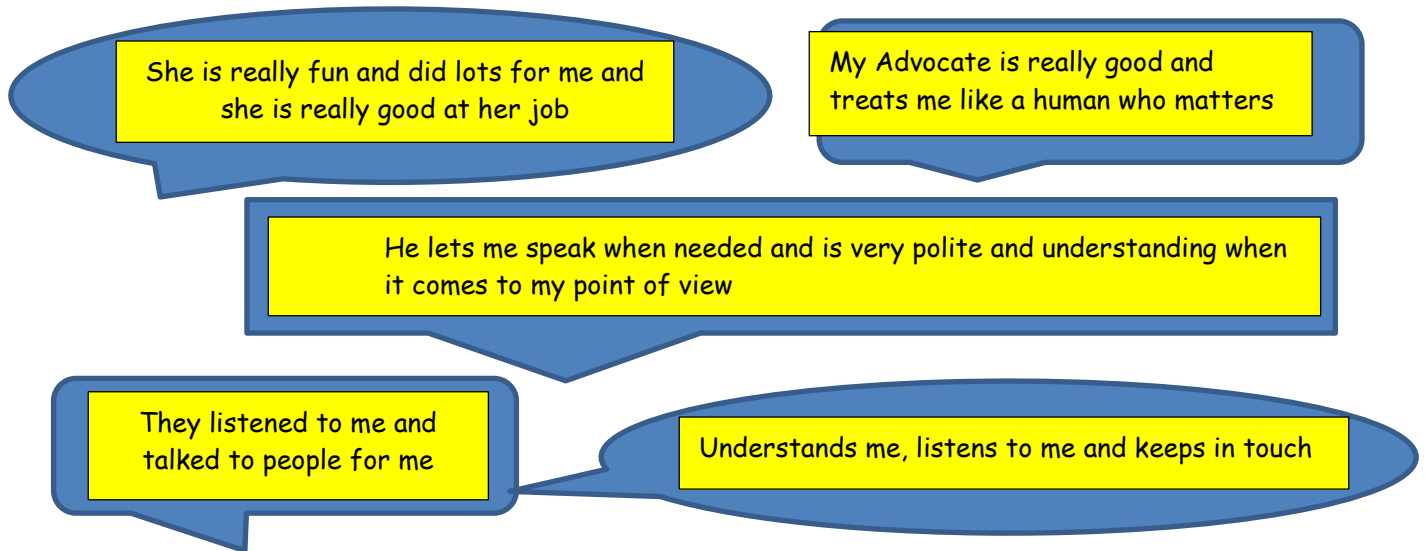
10.2 Skills to Foster training: In person delivery input by young people has not occurred in this reporting period because of the pandemic; however, a video was made by children and young people sharing their experiences of being in care, for a commissioned company who delivered the training package virtually.

11. Quality Assurance

- 11.1 The Children's Right team works closely with the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) to share information such as themes from advocacy, to support positive outcomes and service delivery improvement. The Children's Rights team manager also works closely with the Children's Complaints team to discuss ongoing complaints and cater for joint working to resolve these.
- 11.2 A Children's Rights team monthly report is completed regarding data, including themes and patterns relating to advocacy issues, and in this reporting period a report has been presented to the Children's Services Quality Assurance Panel.
- 11.3 An internal quality assurance audit has been undertaken by the team manager and service manager to assess the standard of service delivered in relation to CLA / care leaver advocacy and the Independent Visitors Scheme. Both these audits identified areas of good practice, whilst action plans have been developed support continuous improvement.
- 11.4 On a quarterly basis the Children's Rights team seek feedback from children and young people who have received advocacy. The returned feedback continues to indicate that children and young people are satisfied with the support and services that they receive.

12. Young People's Voice

- 12.1 Following the completion of any advocacy provision, children and young people are asked to complete an evaluation feedback form to share their views on what went well, and how or if the service could be improved.
- 12.2 In addition to the 'formal' feedback route, how much children and young people value the service they receive can be measured in other ways, such as direct comments to Advocates and /or thank you cards, or by what children and young people say about the service to others. Some direct quotes from young people can be seen below:



13. Independent Visitor Scheme

- 13.1 Whilst this scheme is one of the functions of the Children's Rights Team a separate annual report is prepared which is available at appendix 2.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Within this reporting period most issues raised by children and young people were resolved informally, rather than through the formal complaints process.
- 14.2 There has been an increased level of support provided to children subject to a Child Protection Plan
- 14.3 Young people have continued to be actively involved with professional recruitment
- 14.4 The Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum has seen fluctuating numbers, with a small core group of members. With the aim to increase membership and ensure children and young people views inform service delivery and provision, representatives from the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Service, Fostering Service, Virtual School and the Child Protection and Review Unit are to form a task and finish group.
- 14.5 During the reporting period demand for the Independent Visitor Scheme has continued, however, several volunteers have left the scheme and as a result, a recruitment campaign is planned to occur in the summer.
- 14.6 The team will face some changes later in the year, with the current long-standing manager undertaking phased retirement and reduced working hours (18.5). Succession

planning will involve a full-time temporary manager post to work alongside the current manager to ensure minimal negative impact.

15.Key areas of development (2020 to 2021) – What was achieved

- 15.1 To ensure that virtual methods of communication were developed and are used effectively with children and young people. - **The team consistently use virtual methods of communication and service delivery methods now includes Microsoft Teams and Whatsapp.**
- 15.2 To update social media platforms regularly with relevant and interesting information to enable the service to reach more children and young people. - **Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) are regularly updated, and information is re-tweeted.**
- 15.3 To develop a young people's Challenge project to be undertaken throughout the Covid-19 lockdown period to help maintain contact with children and young people. - **Challenges occurred throughout lockdown and are now set during school holidays.**
- 15.4 To increase the membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum and to also to develop virtual methods to help capture the views of children / young people who do not attend the groups, to influence service development and provision including those who live out of the Kirklees area. – **During the pandemic, the groups have been held virtually which has supported the participation of young people who reside outside of Kirklees. Over the forthcoming months, the aim of the Task and Finish group is to increase membership and sustain a virtual group offer alongside holding in person meetings.**
- 15.5 To increase the offer of advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over, subject to a Child Protection plan. - **An additional 50 children /young people have received support compared to the previous 12 months.**
- 15.6 To develop the Independent Visitor training package to make it relevant to delivering training to smaller groups / or individuals virtually. - **A virtual training package has been developed which incorporates opportunities (when possible) to meet in person.**

16.Key areas for development

- To promote and improve children and young people's participation in their Looked After Reviews
- To promote and improve children and young people's participation at Child Protection conferences.
- To ensure the Independent Visitor Scheme is robust and provides a high-quality consistent service for children, young people, and volunteers.
- To develop the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum; including increased membership and improved accessibility, to ensure the voice and influence of children and young people informs service delivery and design.
- To work with others across Children's services to capture children's voices, experiences, and help support participation inform service development
- Introduce improved quality assurance mechanisms, to support the development of the Children's Rights Service and the team.

Appendix 1

Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF)

The Children in Care Council meets bi-weekly. The aim of the group is to discuss the issues for children and young people who are in care, and to work with professionals to improve services to best meet the needs of children and young people.

The Care Leavers Forum is for young people aged 16 to 21 (or 25 if still in full time education) and the remit is to discuss the issues that young people face as they prepare to leave care and move into independence. Young people work with professionals with the aim to improve services and ensure that these meet their needs. The group also meets bi-weekly.

Both the CiCC and CLF have continued to meet throughout the pandemic, although virtually. A small number of core members have continued their involvement, and although some young people have not participated during the pandemic, they have indicated that they may re-join when meetings can occur in person. Both groups have seen a small increase of new members, including young people who live outside of the Kirklees area who have been enabled to join the meetings virtually. During this reporting period the groups have been involved in the following:

- Discussions around the impact of the pandemic including lockdown experiences
- Information / consultation about the Mockingbird Fostering Project
- Discussion and input into children Looked After health assessments
- Discussion and consultation about youth provision in Kirklees
- Discussion and consultation about the planning of the 2020 Achieve Awards
- Climate Change Festival – the groups worked with the Voice & Influence Team in setting up a virtual Climate Change event which was attended by individual young people and school groups
- Meetings with the Director of Children's Services
- Attendance at Regional events which included activities and consultations
- A music project, this was started just before Lockdown in March 2020; one virtual session subsequently took place during which the children and young people confirmed their lyrics and approved the background music. It is hoped that this project will be completed by September 2021 subject to Government restrictions.

What do we want to improve?

- To increase the membership of both the Council and the Forum, to ensure that both are representative of all groups of children and young people.
- To re-introduce in person meetings as soon as possible.
- To complete a music project which was started before lockdown
- To establish virtual sessions for young people who live in a host local authority to enable them to share their thoughts / views / ideas into the two groups.
- Continue to develop links with the managers of services, to ensure that there is an effective mechanism for communication and the development of services which are led by children and young people, whilst also providing a forum for managers to consult children and young people.

Appendix 2

Kirklees Independent Visitor Scheme (IV)

Children Act 1989 Section 23ZB requires that:

(1) A local authority looking after a child must appoint an independent person to be the child's visitor if—

(a) the child falls within a description prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State or

(b) in any other case, it appears to them that it would be in the child's interests to do so.

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 eight years ago; it is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer and day to day administration is provided through the Looked After Children Independent Service.

The scheme provides independent adult volunteers who befriend children/ young people in the care of the local authority; to spend time with them on a one-to-one basis, undertake activities and develop a positive relationship with a trusted, responsible adult. Volunteers provide children/young people with the opportunity to talk to someone independent, seek advice, guidance, and support from and have fun with, in an informal setting.

Volunteers undergo a recruitment and selection programme which includes, submitting a formal volunteer's application, an adult and young person interview panel, and a 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.

Children and 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 child's/ young persons' Looked After Review. Young people are also encouraged to express an interest themselves in having an Independent Visitor and can apply through the Children's Rights webpage or they can discuss it directly with the Scheme Coordinator, their Social Worker, key worker or carer.

1.1 Current position

There are currently 32 trained volunteers. 31 Independent Visitors are matched with a child/young person on a one-to-one basis. One volunteer is currently undergoing the training to become an Independent Visitor and 2 Independent Visitors who were not matched have been matched with a young person during this reporting period. One further match is envisaged once a in person

meeting can be arranged between the Independent Visitor and the young person. There have been 3 recent enquiries about becoming an Independent Visitor, however no applications have been received.

11 Independent visitors have left the scheme in the past 12 months. Independent Visitors who have chosen to leave are encouraged to have an exit discussion. Analysis of the reasons for leaving did not highlight a pattern which can influence the development of the scheme. The main reasons provided were, work pressures, change of employment and moving area. Although the number of Independent Visitors leaving the scheme has increased slightly this year, this is not significantly higher than in previous years.

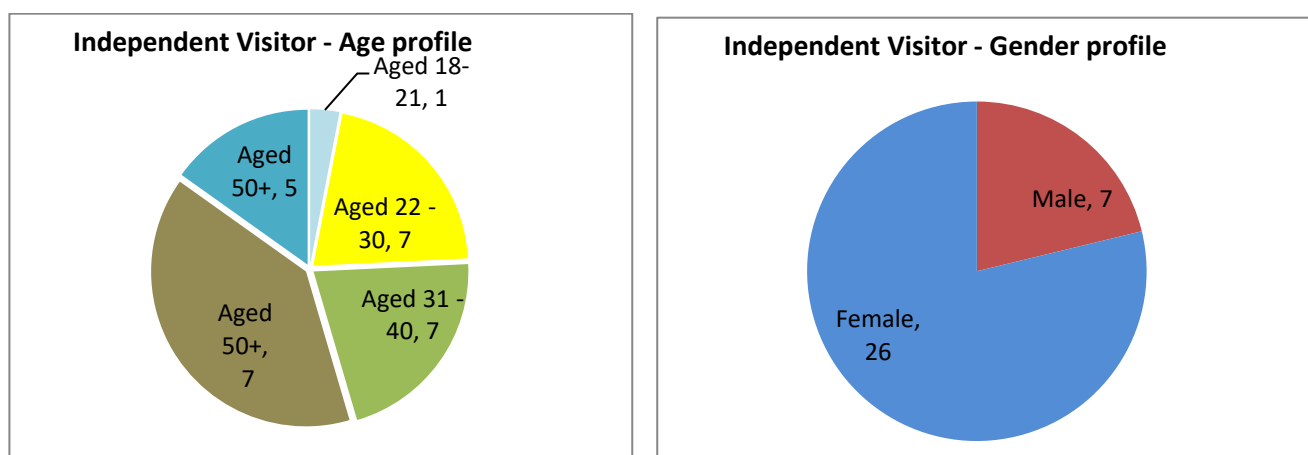
The last recruitment drive was between November 2018 and January 2019 and 11 volunteers completed training in April 2019. Due to the loss of 11 volunteers over the past 12 months, and the increasing waiting list of children/young people, a recruitment campaign will be undertaken during the summer of 2021. Information regarding the scheme has also recently been shared with existing adult volunteers for Kirklees.

There are currently 22 children/young people waiting for a match with an Independent Visitor of these, 10 currently live in a host local authority area a number of miles away, 5 reside in a nearby host local authority, and 7 live in Kirklees. The waiting list is reviewed regularly to ensure the referrals remain appropriate.

2 Volunteers and Young Person Profile

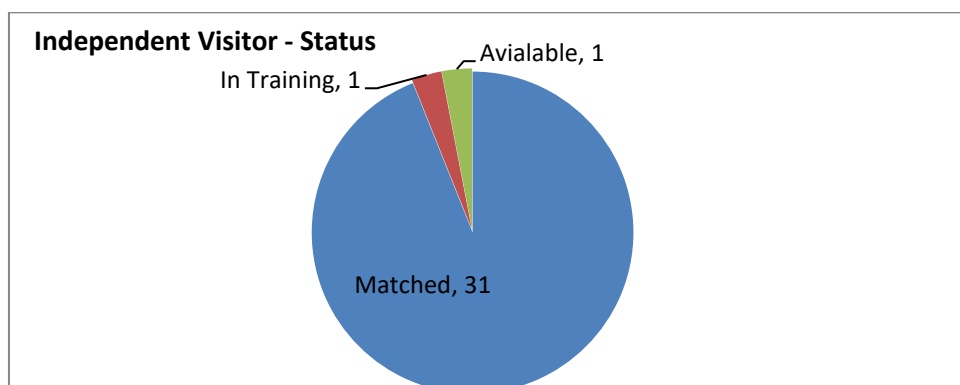
2.1 Volunteer profile

The Independent Visitor scheme has a diverse range of volunteers. Volunteers must be aged 18 or over, with a minimum 5-year age gap between the adult volunteer and the young person they are matched to. Volunteers in the youngest age range are accepted only if they are able to demonstrate a degree of maturity appropriate to managing the challenges which young people may present.



79% (26) of the current volunteers are female and 21% (7) male. This is a similar cohort as seen in other regional schemes. Previously, attempts have been made to specifically identify and recruit more male volunteers with targeted advertising however, this has not been successful. In practice, although some young people have specified that they would like a male volunteer, many have been matched with a female volunteer and these relationships have been sustained.

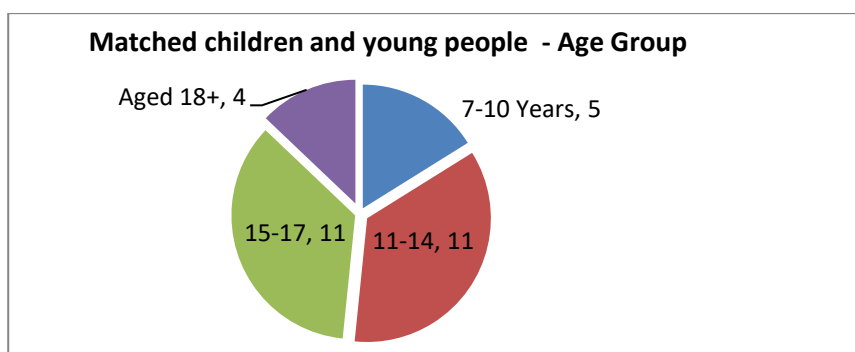
The scheme seeks to match volunteers within 8 weeks with a child/ young person who meets their preference in terms of placement, location, age, and gender. This has however, not been achieved in the past year due to restrictions of Covid-19, which impacted on volunteers being introduced in person to children /young people. Furthermore, there has been only one volunteer available to be matched over the past 12 months.



2.2 Profile of children and young people

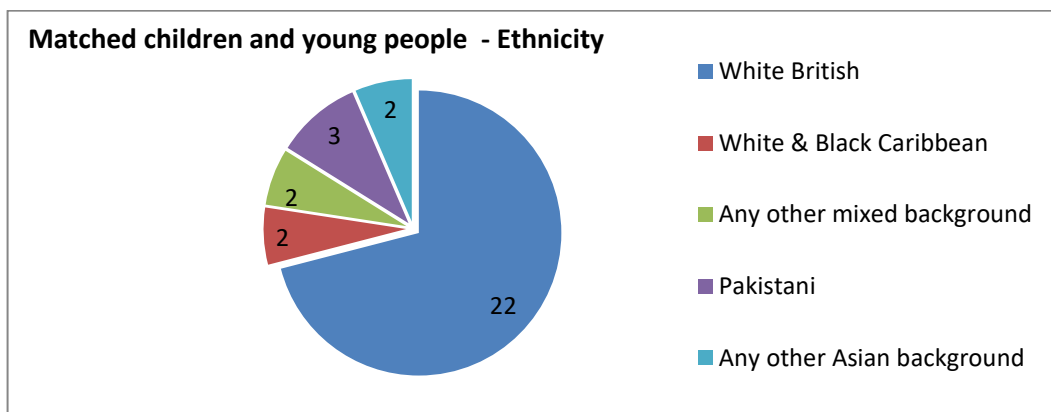
There are currently 31 young people matched with an Independent Visitor. There are more girls (68%) than boys (32%) benefitting from the scheme.

With regards to age, 11 older teenagers (15-17) and 11 young people (11-14) currently have an Independent Visitor. There are also 5 children under 11 years old and 4 young adults over the age of 18 being supported. Whilst some volunteer / young person relationships have ended shortly after the young persons' 18th birthday, the 4 young adults over 18 have each had their Independent Visitor for several years and continue to benefit from their support and guidance.

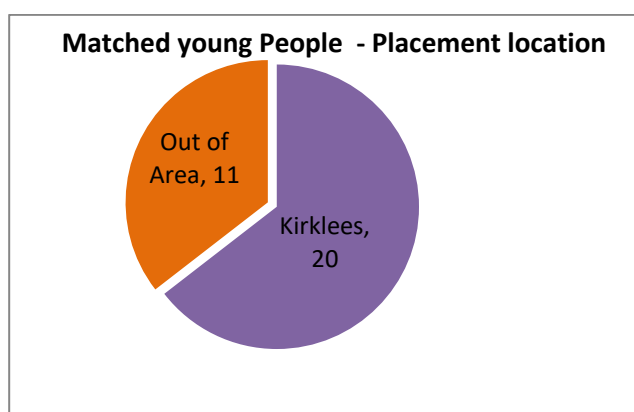


The ethnic background of children/young people who have an independent visitor is broadly representative of the wider Kirklees community. ¹

¹ <http://observatory.kirklees.gov.uk/profiles/ethnorigin>



35% of matched children/young people live in a host local authority area. A high proportion live in neighbouring authorities i.e., Leeds, Calderdale, and Bradford.



3. **Making a difference.**

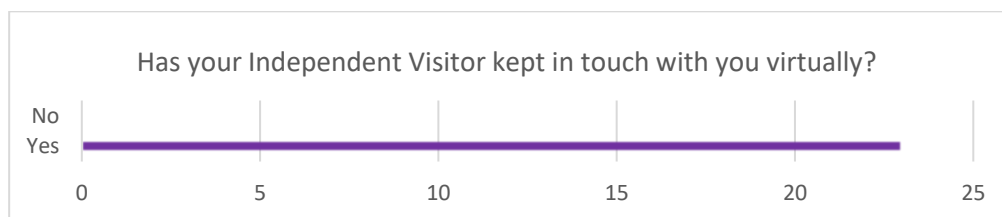
Independent Visitors are required to submit a short feedback form following each visit or contact with the child / young person they are matched with. Most of the contact during the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 has been virtual due to the Government restrictions, with Independent Visitors speaking to the young person over the phone or making Skype / Whatsapp / Zoom video calls. Analysis of this contact highlighted a total of 174 volunteering hours recorded during the past 12 months. This compares to 799 volunteering hours recorded during 2019-2020. Please refer to the feedback for comments from children/young people regarding the impact of their Independent Visitor.

A quality assurance audit of Independent Visitor activity was undertaken in January 2021 which resulted in an action plan being produced to drive forward continuous improvement of service delivery. It includes robust mechanisms for ensuring that contact is being maintained between volunteers and children / young people and that an annual review is undertaken with each volunteer, to include feedback from the child / young person the volunteer is matched with and their social worker. The plan also includes a recruitment campaign for the summer.

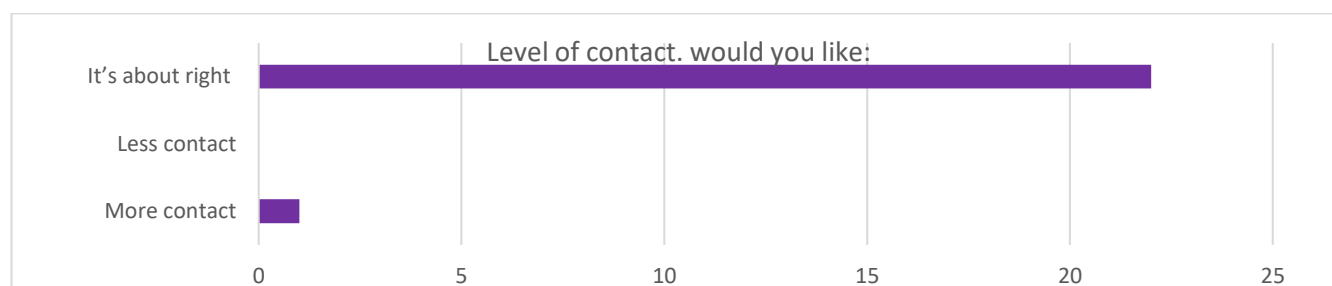
3.1 Feedback from young people

An Independent Visitor Practice Learning Quality Assurance Audit was conducted in February 2021, the Children's Rights team attempted to contact all the 30 young people who were matched with an Independent Visitor, of these, discussions were held with 23 young people.

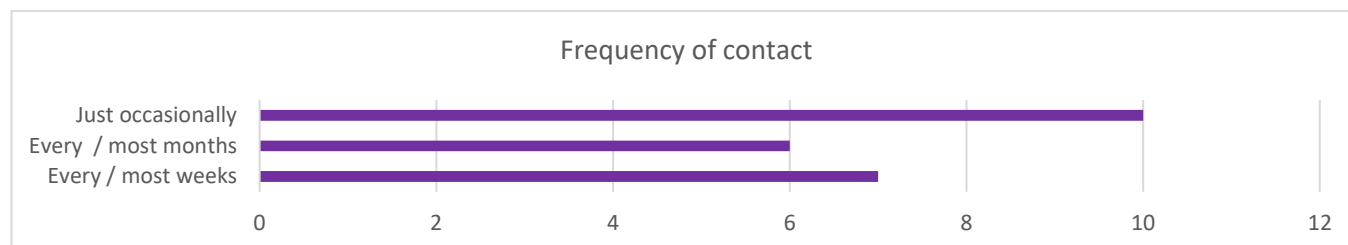
The audit highlighted areas for service improvement to ensuring that children and young people receive the best possible service from the Independent Visitor scheme, together with the impact Covid-19 restrictions had on some relationships between young people and their Independent Visitors. The Graph below shows that for each of the 23 young people their Independent visitor had maintained virtual contact with them during the pandemic.



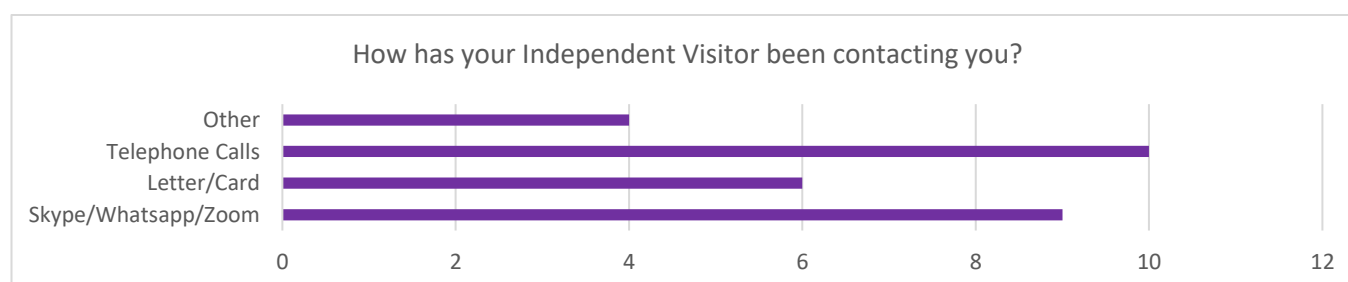
22 of the 23 young people spoken to said that the frequency of contact with their Independent Visitor was 'about right'. Only one said that they would like more contact, and this was shared with the Scheme Coordinator to discuss with the Independent Visitor.



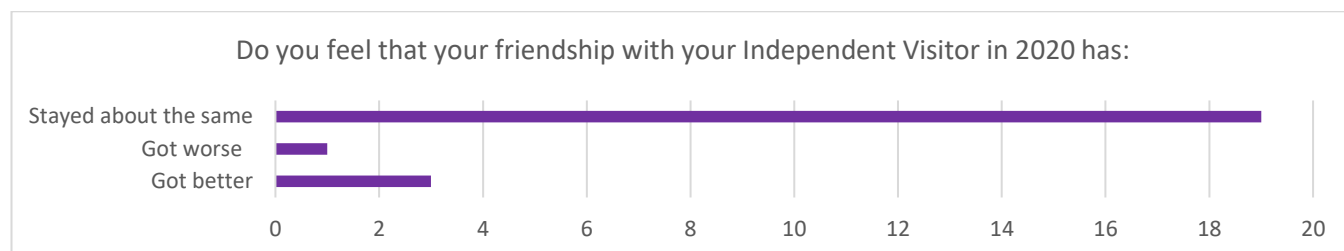
Regarding frequency of contact. 7 children /young people said that contact had been made between themselves and their Independent visitor every or most weeks, 6 said it had been every or most months, and 10 children /young people said that contact had been 'just occasionally'.



Children /young people shared that their Independent Visitor had maintained contact with them through a variety of means, including telephone calls, Skype, WhatsApp or Zoom 'face to face' calls or by sending letters and cards, and many children/young people said that they had contact through a variety of these.



When asked, 3 children /young people reported that their relationship with their Independent Visitor had improved during the Covid-19 pandemic, 18 said it had 'stayed about the same', and one reported that it had 'got worse'



Young People were asked the additional questions:

1. What's been good about having an independent visitor / how has this helped you?

The responses received included:

- *It's been fun as it helped me do something different as I have been bored.*
- *Made me more social, confident, made me at ease going out on my own, with other people and also clearing my head.*
- *She sends me a letter or card*
- *It's someone who doesn't have to follow all the same guidelines as professionals. I can talk to them about anything that I want to. It means I get out of the house and do activities that I wouldn't do on my own. I am given freedom to choose what activities I want to do.*
- *Was good when we could go out and do things*
- *My Independent Visitor is another person I can trust and someone who 'gets me'. She is amazing*
- *I get out a lot more and do more things.*
- *We can go out places and have a good chat.*
- *It's nice to get the occasional card and letter*
- *I am looking forward to seeing him face-face again. I think he is really good at what he does and has really good ideas on what we can do to have fun. He always makes things enjoyable and he is really friendly.*
- *Although she is an adult, I feel as though we are good friends. She is just an older version of me as we have the same interests. I like talking to her and she gives me advice as and when I ask for it.*
- *It's nice to keep in touch*
- *It's good to talk to her and go places*
- *Its nice to have a friend. Would be nice to be able to meet up*
- *I get out a lot more and do more things.*
- *Get to go to the cinema quite often.*
- *She's Very friendly. Getting to spend time with them*
- *Doing something different than you normally do. Sometimes we do the same things, sometimes different things. I cant wait to do Go Karting again!*
- *It gives me a bit of space to talk to another person*
- *It's good for young people who live on their own or don't have many friends. It's good socially. Takes me a while to open up to people so I do hold back but I'm happy with my Independent Visitor, she's good.*
- *It is good just having someone to talk to and hopefully do some activities*

2. Do you feel that you're getting what you thought you'd get from having an independent Visitor?

- *Yes I knew about the scheme before I had an Independent Visitor, it is consistent with what I thought I would get.*
- *It has been good to be able to have someone and being able to go out with her*
- *It has been better than what I thought*
- *Yes, more than that!*
- *Yes I got what I expected out of an Independent Visitor.*
- *I think it is a lot better than what I thought it was going to be like.*
- *Definitely what I expected*
- *yes, its good although it will be better when we can go out again*

3. Is there anything else you would like to say about your Independent Visitor?

- *She is an absolute delight, she is really nice, and she is great. I would recommend the scheme to other young people.*
- *We speak regularly and he is always friendly*
- *She's very friendly and talkative*
- *She's always a funny person, she made a puppet theatre for Christmas.*
- *She's really lovely, she's really good fun to go out with. She takes me to interesting places.*
- *Thank you for your support and being friendly.*
- *I am looking forward to seeing him face-face again. I think he is really good at what he does and has really good ideas on what we can do to have fun. He always makes things enjoyable and he is really friendly.*
- *She is a nice, understanding and supportive person. I am happy she is my Independent Visitor.*
- *He's a very nice person*
- *It will be good when we are able to start doing activities again*

4. The impact of Covid-19

Clear guidance has been issued to Independent Visitors throughout the Covid-19 restrictions to ensure that Independent Visitors have worked within the guidelines.

Throughout Covid-19 Independent Visitors have been asked to keep in touch with young people through letters and cards and/or virtually through using social media applications such as Skype/WhatsApp/Zoom/telephone calls. Mobile phones/sim cards were offered to all Independent Visitors to ensure and promote contact however, this offer was not taken up by any of the volunteers as they all said that they were able to use their own technology.

During the Covid-19 lockdown volunteers were encouraged to agree with children /young people how they would like to keep in touch and how often. This led to some employing creative ways of keeping in touch such as, doing virtual quizzes, undertaking a baking task, setting challenges, playing games, and having a virtual birthday cake. Several volunteers also kept in regular contact by sending cards or small gifts or craft activities for the young person.

A very small number of young people did not wish to have virtual contact with their Independent Visitor and wished to wait until in person visits could resume. When there was a lifting of

restrictions in 2020 volunteers were able to meet with their young person in person, which helped to maintain relationships. When revised Government Regulations again led to in person meetings not being possible, volunteers reverted once more to virtual / postal contact. Maintaining virtual relationships over a prolonged period did pose challenges, however several volunteers and children and young people continue to use technology and post to stay in touch.

A further challenge has been to effectively match children /young people on the waiting list with an Independent Visitor due to Government guidance. During the period, there have been 3 Independent Visitors available to be matched and up to 22 young people on the waiting list, many of which were living in host local authority areas, 1 successful match has taken place, with the introductory meeting conducted virtually and a further match is envisaged when it is possible to arrange an in-person meeting

The challenge to keep all Independent Visitor's fully engaged with the scheme and young people during the pandemic and beyond is recognised, as highlighted by the audit of contact; this is an area of focus and service improvement.

One specific challenge for contact between Independent Visitors and children / young people has been the guidance relating to travelling in a car. Whilst this has caused some frustration for several volunteers, most carers have been supportive in transporting children to meet with their Independent Visitor. To ensure safety and compliance with Covid-19 restrictions where required the Scheme Co-ordinator undertook individual risk assessments with volunteer and home risk assessments have also been completed to enable visits to occur.

The scheme's coordinator has been in contact with all Independent Visitors during the pandemic. However, a small number of Independent Visitors struggled to maintain regular contact and have been prioritised for supervision sessions to establish if they required additional support to maintain contact with their child / young person.

To promote contact, 11 separate virtual Peer Support Group meetings have been held to provide Independent Visitors with the opportunity to discuss both their individual relationship with their young person and any areas of concern or challenge. Additionally, two Independent Visitor newsletters have been circulated.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the Scheme Coordinator has developed a virtual training package, to enable training of small groups or individual volunteers applying to become Independent Visitors. This training will be supplemented through the use of Microsoft Teams or Skype training sessions.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the Council Communications Team ran a campaign to identify and celebrate Local Heroes. Two Independent Visitors were nominated by the scheme coordinator for their dedication in maintaining contact and support with their young person throughout the lockdown period.

Priorities

- In person visits to be resumed with children and young people.
- Recruitment campaign to be held in 2021
- A 'contract' outlining the expectation for contact levels between Independent visitors and children/young people to be introduced, and between Independent Visitors and the scheme coordinator.

- Introduction of enhanced quality assurance processes to identify areas of strength and those of challenge. To include mechanisms to capture regular feedback from children and young people to support continuous practice and service delivery improvements.
- To review the scheme against the National Independent Visitor Scheme Standards
- To review and update the Independent Visitors Handbook as required.
- To undertake a further Quality Assurance Audit of the Scheme by October 2021

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 29th June 2021

Title of report: Care Leavers Support and Financial Guidance Policy refresh

Purpose of report: To share with Board Members for information and comment a refreshed Care Leavers Support and Financial Guidance Policy.

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?	Yes. This policy effects all Wards.
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Key Decision – Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Mel Meggs – Strategic Director for Children's Services. 18 th May 2021
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Eamonn Croston – 11 th June 2021
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft. – 8 th June 2021
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: All.

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable.

Public or private: Public.

Has GDPR been considered? Yes, No personal or sensitive data, or other information covered by GDPR, is included in this report.

1. Summary

- 1.1. We need to be Corporate Parents who understand achieving positive outcomes for Care Leavers means for some young people, we will need to do things differently or do more than the minimum that is set down in Legislation. We intend to make a conscious shift away from one size fits all 'rule book' parenting to a flexible approach that is highly personalised to each young person's needs, with their wrap around support identified and clearly set out in their pathway plans.
 - 1.2. This policy puts young people at its heart, from the creative writing shared by a Care Leaver to new areas such as 'the Care Leavers pot', we have endeavoured to create a restorative policy where the voice, strengths and needs of young people take priority over process. The policy is sighted on how we can nurture young people to have ambition, achieve good outcomes and gain the skills needed to live successful and independent adult lives, whilst at the same time, acknowledging and remembering what it is like to be a young person and the things that are important in the here and now.
 - 1.3. Threading through the policy are the Council's Plan shared outcomes and the priority themes of the Children and Young People's Plan. The policy is set out in a way that reflects how the support delivered will contribute to these outcomes for Children and Young People
- 2. Information required to take a decision. – No decision required. Members are asked to comment and provide feedback on the proposed policy.**

Background.

- 2.1. The Council has duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 to prepare young people for leaving care and to provide financial support, guidance, and advice when they have left care depending on their age and how long they were in care for.
- 2.2. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on Local Authorities to provide Personal Advisors and support to all Former Relevant Care Leavers up to age 25 if they want this support. Not all Care Leavers want to continue their relationship with Children's Services once they leave care, this is their choice, and we must respect their wishes.
- 2.3. When a child is Looked After, or is a Care Leaver aged under 25, the Council is in law, their 'Corporate Parent'. This means that we should act towards these children and young people as any good parent would their own child. Just as other parents continue to love, support, care for and be ambitious for their children after they turn 18, so too must the Council.
- 2.4. All Local Authorities must publish information relating to what support is offered to Care Leavers. In Kirklees we have three main documents which set out how we will support our young people, these are:
 - The Corporate Parenting Strategy
 - The Kirklees Commitment to Care Leavers
 - Guidance for Financial Assistance for Looked After Young People aged 16 and over and for those who have left care.
- 2.5. The Children Leaving Care Act 2000 created four categories (known as Status) of Care Leavers who are entitled to support after their sixteenth birthday.

The table below summarises eligibility for services and describes the services that should be provided as a minimum.

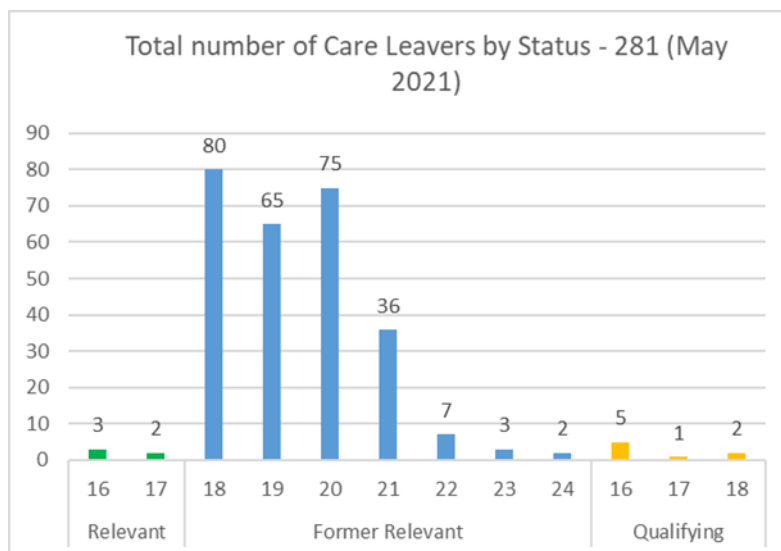
Table 1.

Explanation of Status	As a minimum, we must ensure these young people
Eligible young person (young people aged 16 or 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and were	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive all the care and support they would normally until they leave care.• Have a Personal Advisor

looked after on their 16 th birthday and who are still looked after)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a needs assessment. • Have a pathway plan and review. • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers
Relevant young person (young people aged under 18 who were previously an Eligible child and are no longer Looked After.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a Personal Advisor • Have a needs assessment. • Have a pathway plan and review. • Receive help to find both a good place to live (suitable accommodation) and financial support to pay for this. • Receive a maintenance allowance. • Receive encouragement and support to achieve their goals as set out in their pathway plan. • Have access to Keep in Touch. • Receive financial support to meet education, employment and training needs. • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers
Former relevant young person (young person aged 18-25 who have been Eligible or Relevant young people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a Personal Advisor • Have a needs assessment. • Have a pathway plan and review. • Receive help to find a good place to live (suitable accommodation) • Receive encouragement and support to achieve their goals as set out in their pathway plan. • Receive encouragement and support to access education, employment, and training. • Receive help with some living costs. • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers
Qualifying young person (any young person aged between 16 – 25 who has left care but who was in care on or after their 16 th birthday and had spent less than 13 weeks in care since the age of 14, in other words not an Eligible or Relevant young person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers • Receive encouragement, advice, and support. • Receive a maintenance allowance if they are taking part in education or training and not in receipt of Universal Credit,

- 2.6. The Guidance for Financial Assistance for Looked After Young People aged 16 and over and for those who have left care was produced in 2015. Since this time, Children's Services, the Council, and our Partners have collectively been on an ambitious journey of improvement.
- 2.7. Through the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Children's 10 Point Improvement Plan, the Children and Young People's Plan and Our Council Plan we have set out clearly our strategic intentions to improve outcomes for Children and Young People to give them the Best Start in life. By aligning our vision and narrative across all key policies and plans we have laid down strong foundations on which we can build outstanding services and created the conditions for success for social work practice.
- 2.8. The current Financial Guidance for Care Leavers for Looked After Young People aged 16 and over and for those who have left care is outdated. It does not reflect our Corporate Parenting narrative and ambitions.
- 2.9. To ensure staff not only have the conditions for success but also the tools to facilitate success, The Leaving Care Team have reviewed and refreshed the Financial Guidance for Care Leavers to ensure young people leaving care are able to access support which provides them the best start to their adult lives.
- 2.10. Whilst the refreshed policy is ambitious, members are asked to note and be reassured the contents, where it is in the Council's powers to make changes, reflect recent recommendation for improving support to Care Leavers made to Central Government by the Children's Commissioner.

- 2.11. To also note, the National Independent Review of Children's Social Care is now underway. Included in the scope of the review is support for young people as they prepare to leave care and those receiving ongoing support once they have left care. Policy reforms at national level are expected to materialise over the course of the next six months and beyond. The council will likely be in a position of strength to implement changes, as we believe much has been pre-empted and is covered in the scope of this policy should it be approved.
- 2.12. To successfully implement and deliver the policy it will need collaboration across council Directorates and an agreement on funding to strengthen the council wide Corporate Parenting Offer.
- 2.13. To deliver some proposals in the policy, it may require changes to policy in other Directorates, for example Welfare and Exchequer and Housing Services. Discussions with services may need to take place to understand what impact this would have on their policy areas and whether if required, changes can be made under Schemes of Delegation or would require a Political Decision.
- 2.14. The creation of a 'Corporate Parenting Offer, Budget or Pot' is not a new concept and has been discussed by the Executive Team before. There was initial agreement to the concept, however the conversations were not progressed. It is proposed conversations resume to agree how a council wide Corporate Parenting Offer can be put in place.
- 2.15. Not surprisingly, money and finance are high on the list of issues Care Leavers seek support for. The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team) offer advocacy, advice, and representation to Care Leavers and children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees within the borough or in external placements.
- 2.16. The 2019/20 Children's Rights Team (CRT) Annual Report provides insight into the issues and experiences of Care Leavers. Of all the contacts made by young people to the CRT solely for support and representation with issues they were experiencing, 60 (27%) came from Care Leavers. Of these requests, 12 (20%) related to financial support. The themes raised were:
- Financial support at university
 - Savings
 - celebratory allowances.
 - Leaving care grant
 - Financial support with an emergency.
 - Council tax not being paid where Care leaver lives in another Local Authority.
 - Support with bills
 - Overall financial support and adherence to financial policy
- 2.17. These findings align with feedback provided by the Care Leavers Personal Advisors (PA's) on the main issues Care Leavers raise with them. The topic of having enough money to live off is one of the most frequently raised issues.
- 2.18. As part of refreshing this policy, a number of financial scenarios have been modelled to assess both the cost and potential impact on outcomes increasing the amount of Income Maintenance would have for those Care Leavers which we have a duty to pay Income Maintenance to.
- 2.19. As shown in Table 1. We only have a duty to pay Income Maintenance to Relevant Care Leavers. These are Care Leavers aged 16 – 17 who are living independently. The reason we must pay this is because young people are not able to claim benefits until they are 18 (unless they qualify for an exception e.g., they are a lone parent or have a disability)
- 2.20. The chart below shows the current total number of Care Leavers by their Eligibility Status.



2.21. There are 5 Care Leavers who we must pay Income Maintenance for. The weekly rate we pay is equivalent to Universal Credit - £79.38 (includes £20 temporary Covid 19 increase, from Autumn 2021 this may return to pre Covid rate of £59.38)

Alternative payment models for Income Maintenance considered what the cost would be if we based Income Maintenance on:

- Universal Credit over 25 rate
- Minimum National Wage rates – based on 37 hour week, 16/17 year old rates.
- The Living Wage.

The potential financial impact is shown in the table below.

	Weekly cost (allowance rate paid)	Annual cost per Relevant Care Leaver	Annual cost based on current Relevant cohort numbers
Option 1. Current model – aligned to UC under 25 rate	£59.38	£3,087	£15,435
Option 2. UC over 25 rate	£74.96	£3,897	£19,489
Option 3. Minimum National Wage	£170.94	£8,888	£44,440
Option 4. The Living Wage	£329.67	£17,142	£85,710

2.22. Based on the data, the service has concluded it is not a viable option to increase the amount of Income Maintenance and recommends Option 1 -Income Maintenance remains in payment at the current rate for the following reasons.

2.23. The duty to pay Income Maintenance is only for two years from the age of 16 through to when a Care Leaver turns 18. At this point, Care Leavers are expected to maintain themselves either through wages, education bursaries or benefit claims.

2.24. Analysis of data to the end of April 2021 shows 120 out of 282 Care Leavers (42.5%) are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and therefore it is reasonable to assume these Care Leavers are claiming Universal Credit. This suggests If we did implement Option 3 or 4, for the proportion of Relevant Care Leavers who go on to claim benefits, they would experience a cliff edge as their income reduces significantly to the UC under 25 rate once they turn 18. Potentially we would be setting Care Leavers up to fail.

- 2.25. Whilst it could be affordable to increase Income Maintenance to the over 25 UC rate, as set out above, Care Leavers once they turn 18 will receive the under 25 rate if they claim benefits under current regulations. The Children's Commissioner has recommended to Central Government that all Care Leavers be entitled to this rate. This option has been included to highlight we may have a duty to pay this rate in the future.
- 2.26. The underpinning spirit and intention of the policy is to support and incentivise Care Leavers to continue or enter into Education, Employment or Training (EET) with a longer term ambition of improving outcomes and life chances for Care Leavers.
Our numbers of Care Leavers who are in EET are not where we want them to be. Benchmarking shows we are lower than both our Statistical Neighbours and the England average.
- 2.27. Implementing either Option 3 or 4 may further decrease the number of Care Leavers who are in EET, as for the two years we have a duty to pay this allowance, the financial incentives proposed within the policy for taking up EET would be outweighed by the amount of Income Maintenance allowance.
- 2.28. Analysis of the 5 Relevant Care Leavers current education status and pathway plans shows 4 out of the 5 (80%) are in full time education and either are at college or have a place to start college in September 2021. We need to do more to support Care Leavers post 18, as this is where the drop off in EET occurs.
- 2.29. Most of our Children Looked After live in family settings with Foster Carers, with a read across to the aims of the Staying Put policy, we want more Care Leavers to take up the opportunity of Staying Put arrangements. There is a risk this offer would look more attractive to 16 and 17 years olds preparing for leaving care and could result in more young people moving to living independent at an earlier age or before they are really ready.
- 2.30. Whilst as Corporate Parents we have to consider 'is this good enough for my child?' we also have to follow 'good parenting principles.'
Care Leavers often need support to further develop emotional maturity and practical skills such as managing money and budgeting in order to manage living independently. We have to consider whether giving 16 and 17 year old Care Leavers these weekly amounts of allowances would unintentionally create risks for these vulnerable young people.
- 2.31. There is a need to balance what Care Leavers want against what they actually need and what can be afforded. In order to implement a higher Income Maintenance model of payments for a very small number of Care Leavers, many areas of the proposed policy would need to be cut in order for it to be affordable. This would result in a pared back offer and loss of opportunity for the majority of Care Leavers.
- 2.32. We are committed to the principle that no Care Leaver should experience poverty and we will deliver on this commitment by ensuring all Care Leavers have access to a package of wrap around support and individual plans which appropriately meet needs.
A pot of up to £550 per year will be available for PA's to use to meet unplanned requests in the best interest of their young people.
This pot of money is in addition to any other allowances or grants outlined in this guidance.
PA's will have autonomy in decision making in regard to this pot of money, however, once it's exhausted, there will be no further funding available until the next financial year.
- 2.33. The refreshed policy proposes increases to some existing areas such as the Leaving Care Grant and holiday and birthday allowances as well as introducing new areas such as help with moving and incentives to support Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training.
Unlike the previous policy, accessing some of the benefits and support will not be dependent on Care Leavers being in EET. Personal Advisors will be encouraged to work with their Care Leavers to use the 'Care Leavers' pot innovatively to nurture ambition, for instance a Care Leaver might have a passion or talent in the Arts or Sports, by using the pot to pay for classes or equipment, a Care Leaver may find they are able to pursue career options they might not have thought possible.

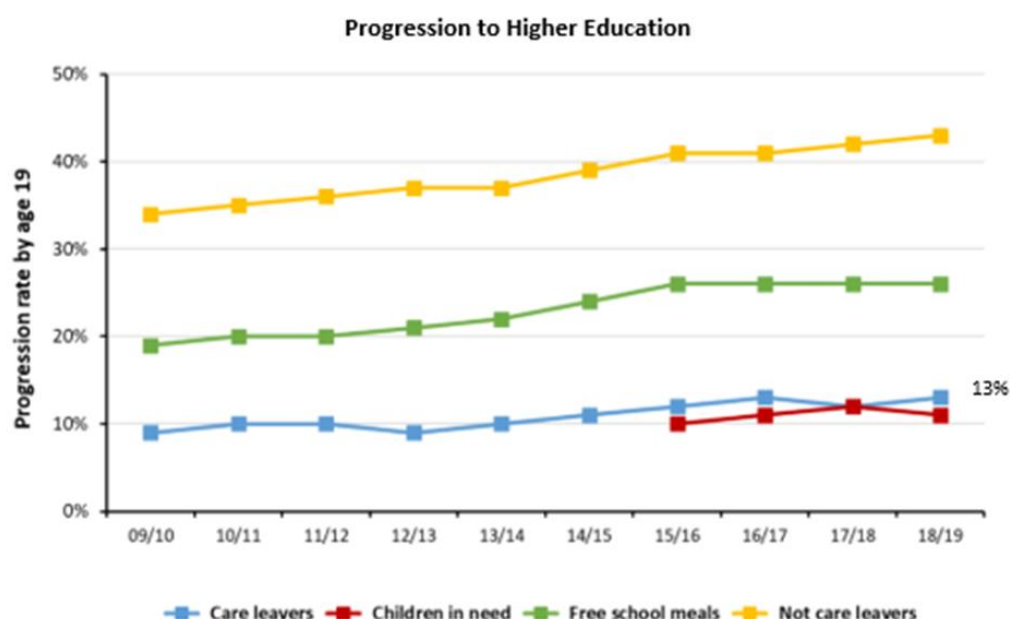
- 2.34. Policy Section 4.4 'Top Ups' commits to the principle that no young person should find themselves financially worse off or experience poverty when undertaking education, employment or training to improve their life chances. We will ensure that all our care leavers who are attending full time education or equivalent have a minimum of £105 disposable income after rent costs.
- 2.35. We believe incentivising education, employment, and training rather than increasing the maintenance allowance is the right thing to do and will better support Care Leavers to achieve improved longer term outcomes.
- 2.36. The refreshed policy provides clarity for the most common areas of support requested by Care Leavers. This will facilitate consistent, fair, and transparent decision making whilst at the same time, moving away from a blanket parenting rule book to a position where personalisation is at the heart of planning. If approved, successful implementation of the policy will result in a much needed improved offer for Care Leavers.
- 2.37. Aspire and Achieve is one of the Council's shared outcomes. It is accepted that there is a strong correlation between educational attainment, poverty, inclusion, social mobility, and life chances. In Kirklees, the number of Care Leavers progressing on to Higher Education is not where we would want it to be.

The table below shows the numbers progressing as a proportion of the total cohort of Care Leavers.

Year	C/L enrolling in HE Sept.	Total C/L attending HE	Total number of care leavers eligible for services Sept	% of C/L in Kirklees in HE
2018/19	4	16	241	6.6%
2019/20	6	16	251	6.4%
2020/21	7	20	262	7.6%
2021/22	11*	Not yet known	Not yet known	

* current active UCAS statuses, subject to successful application completion and offer.

Whilst it is heartening to see an increasing trend year on year, when compared against the Department for Education (DfE) National statistics on progression to Higher Education, Care Leavers in Kirklees are well below the National average of 13%.



Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, HESA Student Record and ESFA ILR

- 2.38. Of the total cohort of Care Leavers enrolled in Higher Education settings. Only one attends Huddersfield University. The others attend Universities in the following cities: Leeds, London, Liverpool, York, Bradford, Sheffield, Birmingham, Nottingham, and Manchester.
- 2.39. We do not currently reflect the higher living costs associated with city living and accommodation in the Higher Education Bursary for Care Leavers.
- 2.40. There are proposals within both this policy and the Staying Put Policy which will improve the support available to Care Leavers who want to progress to Higher Education, however there will be a cost attached. These are set out below in Section 3 – Financial Implications.

3. Implications for the Council

Working with People

This policy has been shaped by the voice of Care Leavers gained from feedback from the CRT and PA's who work directly with Care Leavers.

The Young People's Achieve Awards 2020 provided insight into types of support Care Leavers valued. We have built on what we have done well and further strengthened these policy areas.

The policy has been shared with Care Leavers for feedback. Once feedback has been received the next steps will be to collaborate with the Care Leavers Forum and Children in Care Council via the CRT to produce an Easy Read version for Care Leavers and to update the Kirklees Commitment to Care Leavers. (Care Leavers Local Offer)

Working with Partners

The Care Leavers Service will work with our collective Corporate Parents and the wider partnership to ensure appropriate accommodation, resources and services are available to support successful transitions into adult life.

Place Based Working

We want Care Leavers to live their lives confidently, independently and with dignity. It is intended this policy will enable Care Leavers to feel included and better connected to the communities they live in and encourage them to contribute to making the places where they live safe and welcoming places.

Climate Change and Air Quality

Options for more environmentally friendly travel and transport have been considered in Section 6.6 of this policy.

Improving outcomes for children

This policy has been written in a way that clearly shows how areas of support provided contribute to both the shared outcomes of Best Start, Living Independently, Aspire and Achieve and Well and the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan.

Tackling poverty, closing equality gaps, and increasing life chances are outcomes this policy aims to positively impact on.

Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

There are no HR or Legal implications.

The overall annual budget for Care Leaver spend is £576,916. The outturn position for 2020/21 shows an underspend of £74,120.

Analysis comparing overall Care Leaver spend against budget over the last two years shows underspends of £142,444 in 2018/2019 and £55,707 in 2019/2020 against the same base budget of £576,916.

The findings do offer some assurance that on current demand there is potentially tolerance in the budget to improve the financial support outlined in the proposals, but it is unlikely the current budget will stretch to meet the whole cost burden.

The issue is knowing future levels of demand and take up of the offer. Not all Care Leavers will need or want to access all parts of the offer. Care Leaver need is assessed on an individual basis as part of their pathway planning, as such there is a difficulty in extracting information to make meaningful projections.

It is estimated introducing the Higher Education Allowance would incur an additional pressure of £7,378.80 per year per student over the period of their course. (Usually three years)

Based on the average number of Care Leavers progressing to Higher Education, each year between 2018/19 – 2020/21 (6) this would mean an additional annual cost of £44,272.80. This cost would rise if the trend in Care Leavers progressing into Higher Education continues on the same trajectory.

Similarly, the introduction of the Graduation Bursary and Vocational/Apprenticeship reward proposals would bring additional costs of £3,500 and £250 respectively per young person who successfully completes their course.

Due to the difficulties in projecting volume growth and demand, the following is proposed.

In the next 3 months, the Care Leavers Service will work with finance colleagues, and transactional services to improve how Care Leaver spend can be recorded and monitored. This will be in place before the refreshed policy is implemented.

There is no request for additional funding at this time. We will monitor spend, demand and volume growth over the first year of the policy along with what difference the policy makes to the lives of Care Leavers with a specific focus on attainment and take up of Education, Employment and Training and the numbers of Care Leavers experiencing crisis as a result of poverty.

Children's Services will use this time to collaborate with the wider service and finance colleagues to propose how a 'Corporate Parenting Offer' might be created and drawn down.

Dependent on the financial outturn of year one of the policy, the Care Leavers Service will return with a business case for additional funding if required.

4. Consultees and their opinions

4.1. The policy has been drafted in consultation with the following people:

- Heads of Service and Service Managers in the Care Leavers and Fostering Services.
- The Care Leavers Service, Personal Advisors and Careers Advisor.
- The Virtual School and Post 16 Progression and Partnerships
- The Children's Right's Team.

Consultees reported they felt young people and improving outcomes for them was at the heart of the policy. All consultees felt their feedback and concerns have been addressed and well reflected in the policy.

4.2. Children's Service's Senior Leadership team have received a briefing for their own sign off of the policy on 18th May 2021.

4.3. The Care Leaver forum has been engaged and the draft policy and presentation outlining changes has been shared for feedback and further input.

4.4. The Portfolio Holder for Children has been engaged and consulted with throughout the process. A meeting on the 25th May 2021 between Cllr Kendrick, Strategic Director Mel Meggs and Service Director Elaine McShane shared and agreed the final version of the updated policy.

4.5. The Executive Team were consulted on the 8th June 2021 and approved the policy to move forward to Cabinet.

5. Next steps and timelines

- 5.1. Subject to approval by Cabinet members. Steps will be taken to implement the policy, with the aim of it being in place by September 2021.
- 5.2. Collaboration with Care Leavers to write and design an easy read guide to the policy and refresh and update our Commitment to Care Leavers will take place.
- 5.3. Regular updates on progress and the impact/outcomes as a result of implementing the policy will be scheduled in the forward plan and provided to the Corporate Parenting Board
- 6. Officer recommendations and reasons**
 - 6.1. Corporate Parenting Board Members are asked to note the updated policy and provide feedback and comments.
 - 6.2. It is recommended for future updates of the policy that approval be given for a Delegated Officer Decision to be made by the Service Director for Family Support and Child Protection.
- 7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

As Cabinet Portfolio Holder, I am supportive of the proposals in the updated policy. This is a fantastic opportunity for us as Corporate Parents to strengthen the support we already provide to Care Leavers and deliver an outstanding offer that will make a real difference to the lives of our young people.
- 8. Contact officer.**

Lisa Warnes – Programme Manager, Children's Improvement Team.
lisa.warnes@kirklees.gov.uk
01484 221000.
- 9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Executive Team – 8th June 2021
Key Decision Notice – 24th June 2021
- 10. Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane – Service Director for Family Support and Child Protection

Support Policy for Young People Leaving Care.

2020/21



DRAFT

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1. **“Care”** by CF, a Kirklees Care Leaver

Care is a strong word.

Care means everything.

Care is about being able to help.

Care is about being able to support.

Care is about being able to love people for who they are.

Care for people you love; it's important.

Care is important.

Care is for everyone, no one deserves not to be cared for.

Care is not overrated, it's the law.

Care is about love.

Care is about paying attention.

Care is about trust.

Care is about kindness.

Care is about showing children they have a future.

Care is a responsibility.

Being in care is frightening.

Being in care is upsetting.

Being in care is losing family.

Being in care is losing friends.

Being in care is shedding tears.

Being in care is bottling up feelings.

Being in care is about not feeling wanted.

Being in care is about not feeling loved.

Being in care is about feeling guilt.

Being in care is being unloved.

Being in care is mentally straining.

Being in care is crying in an empty room.

Being in care is being broken but smiling through it.

Being in care is feeling like you're screaming for help but no one listens.

Being in care is thinking about is this worth me living.

1.1 Introduction and purpose.

First and foremost, Kirklees Children's Services would like to extend its thanks to our young person for giving permission to share their creative writing about "Care".

As Corporate Parents, Kirklees Council is committed to supporting our care experienced young people to have not only the best start in life as a child but also to have the best start as they prepare for life as adults.

We want our young people to have ambition and aspirations, to have the same opportunities to achieve their goals, reach their full potential, and enjoy leisure and cultural activities as any other child would.

We need to be Corporate Parents who understand achieving these outcomes means for some young people, we will need to do more or do things differently to the minimum that is set down in the rules. We aim to make a conscious shift away from restrictive 'rule book' parenting to an approach that is highly tailored to individual's needs with support wrapped around as required.

In 2018 the Government launched the Care Leaver Covenant – a pledge to help people leaving care to become independent. It was said at the time: "We are the parents for these children and young people and the way to think about that is, what would I want for my child?"

In the context of this policy and guidance, it would be easy to lose focus on how vulnerable and traumatised many of care experienced young people are and concentrate instead on the financial cost to our authority.

The simple truth is we need to do more to support young people leaving care; more to nurture ambition and more to prevent these young people from experiencing poverty.

Young people leaving care need to move towards independence at a pace that is right for them not a set point in time. We know care leavers can face considerable disadvantages and barriers to achievement and stability as they leave care and move into adulthood. Young people in care are more likely to move out into the adult world earlier, often without the same level of ongoing family support their peers are afforded. This can mean they have fewer life chances and as a result experience poorer outcomes, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Leaving home can be many things, exciting – stepping out into the world, having independence, and making your own decisions, going to University or getting your own place to live. For some young people it might be a time of worry and anxiety– wondering how you'll cope on your own and manage your own money.

Working with our care leavers and partners in Kirklees, we will support our young people to develop the skills, resilience, and confidence they need to prepare them for a successful transition into adult life as any good parent would. It is important that we ensure young people leaving care receive the right level of practical, emotional, and financial support.

To do this well, we recognise the need for a flexible financial support policy which meets legislative requirements but can be used innovatively to meet the needs of our young people leaving care, reflecting our outstanding ambitions for care leavers.

This policy draws down the offer from all service areas across Kirklees Council in a true collaborative approach to Corporate Parenting to provide collective support to young people leaving care.

This policy sets out what services and support should be provided to young people aged between 16 and 25 who have left care. It sets out the role of Personal Advisors (PA's) and the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service and the standards of service provision that should be available to all Kirklees care leavers.

2. Principles and Objectives of service

- The voice of young people leaving care will be at the heart of all planning and decision making for their future. The wellbeing and aspirations of young people will be the central consideration of the Care Leavers Service to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of each young person.
- The Care Leavers Service will be a caring and supportive parent. Every care leaver will have a dedicated personal advisor to provide support and to enable access to services based on high quality assessment and planning to help them achieve good outcomes and improved life chances.
- Support will be personalised for each care leaver based on their assessed needs and their aspirations for the future. Personal advisors are encouraged to be creative and innovative to create individually tailored plans for care leavers.
- The Care Leavers Service will work with our collective Corporate Parents and the wider partnership, to ensure appropriate accommodation, resources and services are available to support successful transitions and meet the assessed needs of care leavers.
- The Care Leavers Service recognises that whilst care leavers may face challenges during the transition to adulthood, they are no different to our own children. They may need or wish to change direction and goals numerous times to find a path to a successful future that is right for them. The Care Leavers Service will act as any good parent would and support these aspirations and ambitions through quality pathway planning which provides for such contingencies, ensuring plans are flexible.

3 How we decide what support Care Leavers can receive.

3.1 The Legal Framework.

There are laws which set out how Kirklees Council (and every other council) must support young people leaving care.

The Children Leaving Care Act 2000 created four categories of Care Leavers who are entitled to support after their sixteenth birthday. Kirklees Council's financial responsibility for Care Leavers will be determined according to these categories.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on Local Authorities to provide Personal Advisors and support to all Former Relevant Care Leavers up to age 25 if they want this support.

The policy has been developed in line with:

- I. The Children Act 1989
- II. The Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- III. The Children Act 2004
- IV. Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
- V. Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- VI. The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- VII. Our Council Plan 2020/21
- VIII. Kirklees Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019/2021
- IX. Kirklees Children and Young Peoples Plan

A detailed description of the different types of eligibility is provided in appendix 1.

The table below summarises eligibility for services and describes the services that should be provided as a minimum.

Explanation of Status	As a minimum, we will ensure these young people
Eligible young person (young people aged 16 or 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and were looked after on their 16 th birthday and who are still looked after by Kirklees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive all the care and support they would normally until they leave care. • Have a Personal Advisor • Have a needs assessment. • Have a pathway plan and review. • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers
Relevant young person (young people aged under 18 who were previously an Eligible child and are no longer Looked After.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a Personal Advisor • Have a needs assessment. • Have a pathway plan and review. • Receive help to find both a good place to live (suitable accommodation) and financial support to pay for this. • Receive a maintenance allowance. • Receive encouragement and support to achieve their goals as set out in their pathway plan. • Have access to Keep in Touch. • Receive financial support to meet education, employment, and training needs. • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers
Former relevant young person (young person aged 18-25 who have been Eligible or Relevant young people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a Personal Advisor • Have a needs assessment. • Have a pathway plan and review. • Receive help to find a good place to live (suitable accommodation) • Receive encouragement and support to achieve their goals as set out in their pathway plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive encouragement and support to access education, employment, and training. • Receive help with some living costs. • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers
Qualifying young person (any young person aged between 16 – 25 who has left care but who was in care on or after their 16 th birthday and had spent less than 13 weeks in care since the age of 14, in other words not an Eligible or Relevant young person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have access to our Commitment to Care Leavers • Receive encouragement, advice, and support. • Receive a maintenance allowance if they are taking part in education or training and not in receipt of Universal Credit,

3.2 Personal Advisors.

“Behind every child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first”

Matthew L Jacobson.

When the time comes for young people to leave our care, they are entitled to a range of services which are to help them plan their future and achieve their aspirations. This preparation to leave care starts with the Care Leavers Service when young people turn 16, they are allocated a personal advisor and the support they receive can be in place until they turn 25.

Personal Advisors (PA's) provide the care, advice and encouragement young people need to have the foundations for success in place to help them go on to achieve their full potential.

We have a duty to ensure all Eligible, Relevant, and Former Relevant children are provided with a personal advisor.

PA's are the people that work the closest with young people as they prepare to move into adulthood, hearing their hopes and dreams for the future and working together with the young person they will develop a plan which sets out how they might achieve their goals. Most importantly, PA's will be the people a young person knows believes in them and they can turn to if things get tough.

For eligible young people (children who are still looked after by the council) their PA will be their allocated social worker.

For relevant and former relevant young people, the Care Leavers Service will look at the interests and culture of young people and try to match them with a PA that shares similar beliefs and interests.

The support PA's will provide will be wide ranging and will very much be dependent on the needs of each individual young person. PA's will lever all relevant resources available across the Kirklees partnership to ensure young people and Care Leavers have access to:

- Information and support to develop the practical skills needed to begin an adult life, promoting the help that can be found at our dedicated Care Leavers services No.11 & No 12
- Information and support to access education, training, and employment opportunities and to access any incentive funding or bursaries there may be.

- Support in finding and sustaining employment.
- Information and practical support to manage their money, including help with budgeting, setting up bank and saving accounts, setting up direct debits, using banking apps, debt advice.
- Information and advice about the housing and accommodation options potentially available and support to secure accommodation
- Support and encouragement to develop their confidence and make good decisions.
- Support with navigating the benefit system and applying for benefits if required.
- General information about maintaining positive health and wellbeing; knowledge about how to access targeted and specialist health services.
- Information about leisure, sporting, and cultural opportunities to enable care leavers to enjoy and participate in community life.

3.3 Pathway Plans.

"Help me get 'somewhere', not 'nowhere'" Kirklees Care Leaver

Pathway plans need to be a meaningful roadmap to a young person's future, something which capture not just practicalities needed to live well and cope in the adult world, but also hopes and ambitions and how a young person might realise these goals. As well as looking to the future, to help young people make sense of their life, good plans should incorporate elements of life story work so that they have a permanent record of their care experiences and have an understanding as to why they were looked after.

Plans need to be produced with the young person and in collaboration with others who have a role in their lives such as the virtual school, parents, current carers, teacher or tutor, nurse, reviewing officer and any advocate. Every Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young person should have their financial needs assessed and included in their Pathway Plans.

Pathway planning for care leavers should reflect their growing independence as they take on more responsibility for their lives.

All care leavers must have a pathway plan in place that is based on an assessment of their needs. Pathway plans should have a contingency plan in place and be flexible enough to allow for changes in direction, our own children often regularly change their minds about what they want to study or do for a career, young people leaving care should be afforded the same support and encouragement to find a direction that is right for them as we would our own children.

The views of young people must be at the heart of all pathway planning, and they should be encouraged to participate as far as possible. PA's should keep young people informed of the outcomes of assessments and reviews and ensure they are provided with copies of key documents.

PA's will ensure Pathway Plans are kept up to date in line with young people's needs. There is an expectation PA's will meet with young people as a minimum every two months.

It is essential that pathway planning ensures care leavers are in receipt of mainstream and universal services, benefits where applicable and have suitable accommodation.

PA's have a duty to co-ordinate the provision of services for care leavers from a number of agencies, so it is vital that the professional network is engaged and co-produces the pathway process.

Pathway planning should end in a planned manner as the young person nears their 21st birthday unless the young person wishes to continue to receive support. In these cases, young people can continue to receive support up to the age of 25. There is no longer a requirement for young people to be engaged in a planned programme of education or training to continue to receive support past the age of 21. During this period, planning should focus on transitions to relevant adult resources as required by the young person's assessed needs.

3.4 Process for agreeing Financial Support.

Financial support should be agreed and recorded as part of each young person's pathway plan.

Young people's needs regarding financial support should be assessed within the pathway needs assessment along with areas of support, amounts to be paid and the frequency of payments to be made.

Many payments made by the Care Leaver Service are discretionary and the amount paid will be dependent on each young person's need.

Whilst the Care Leavers Service needs to be mindful of budgetary constraints and the financial envelope we have to work in, it is important young people are not excluded from accessing things their non-care experienced peers are able to.

Payments to young people as far as practicable should be made in accordance with this guidance and with the approval of the Care Leavers Service.

Payments to, or on behalf of, any 'young person must be on the Financial Authorisation Form and approved by a Team Leader and/or Team Manager.

All spend must be recorded on Liquid Logic and a log should be created and held on Wisdom against each young person's file.

Financial support needs to be reviewed every 6 months at the pathway plan review, but care leavers can ask their social worker or personal advisor to review their support needs earlier where their circumstances have changed or where they are having difficulty in managing their finances.

3.5 Payments

Having a bank account and the ability to make electronic and contactless payments are a basic necessity in today's world.

PA's will work with young people ensuring there is an early emphasis on supporting young people to open bank and savings accounts to develop their money management skills and promote saving for later life.

All young people and care leavers should be supported to open an account which best meets their needs. Care leavers will be expected to have a bank account as payment of all allowances and grants will be made directly into this bank account unless there are ongoing concerns about the care leaver's ability to manage their money.

Care Leavers should be supported to look at the digital offer from banks and the financial sector, all of which have apps which can help young people manage their money.

For those care leavers who are unable to access mainstream banking services alternate methods of payments are in place, currently this could be cash payments or payments to carers or residential homes. Moving forward we aim to introduce pre-loaded payment cards.

For those individuals about whom concerns exist, the social worker or personal advisor may agree with the care leaver to release small amounts of allowances to them at more regular intervals while they develop the skills to budget more effectively.

Social workers and PA's should regularly assess how the care leaver is managing their money and whether they need extra support in learning how to budget.

In a crisis or other emergency where a care leaver makes a request for emergency funds, the social worker or personal advisor must carry out an assessment to look into the circumstances of the request before agreeing any support.

Requests for emergency payment may also be indicative of other issues, for example substance misuse or debt, and this should be explored during the assessment. Wherever possible, emergency assistance should be given in forms other than cash, for example, this might be food parcels, utility top ups, and travel passes.

If planned payments are to be stopped for any reason e.g., removing incentives because a young person is no longer engaged in employment, education, or training as per their pathway plan, this must be discussed with the social worker or personal advisor's line manager. The social worker or personal advisor should write to the care leaver to explain the reasons for this.

4 Living Independently

We want our young people to live their lives confidently, independently and with dignity. We want them to feel included and connected to the communities they live in and be encouraged to contribute to making the places where they live safe and welcoming places.

What “getting somewhere” looks like will be different for each young person, so, we will make sure every care leaver has the right advice, and financial and emotional support at the right time.

Pathway planning needs to be central to young people’s journey to independence. It will be aspirational as well as practical, capturing and planning for where young people see themselves in 5, 10 years’ time, this might include owning their own home or car.

The financial support guidance below outlines what is available and is intended to incentivise work, training, and education.

We know PA’s work alongside their young people and understand them well. With this in mind PA’s are encouraged not to see this as a rigid framework, and to be innovative and creative when it comes to providing financial support, so we meet aspirations as well as need and ensuring no young person is financially worse off by taking up work training or education.

4.1 Income Maintenance.

The council will make sure young people have enough money to live off. A maintenance allowance will be paid to cover the costs of day to day living, including food, toiletries, utility bills, general travel, social life and leisure activities.

Income Maintenance is a payment which is in line with Universal Credit rates. Up to date information on standard monthly allowances can be found [here](#)

The current allowance equates to £79.38 (includes temporary 12 month Covid 19 increase) per week.

Should the temporary 12 month Covid 19 increase end as planned on the 6th of October 2021. The amount of Income Maintenance will reduce in line with Universal Credit rates to £59.38 per week.

This allowance may be paid to young people up to the age of 18 living independently. This allowance will continue to be paid regardless of any other income the young person has, such as a Further Education grant, training allowance or wages from employment.

This is the absolute minimum amount a young person should be expected to live on, and additional financial support should be provided with any needs identified by the pathway planning process. In general, Young People should be encouraged to engage in activities that increase their weekly income through incentives and bonuses.

Income maintenance cannot not be paid if a young person is in receipt of Universal Credit.

4.2 Who can receive Income Maintenance allowance?

Eligible young people.

As Eligible young people are still looked after, their financial support needs should continue to be met in the same way as other looked after children via

the Care Planning process. There is no duty within the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 to meet the maintenance needs of these young people.

Some Eligible young people may be entitled to claim non-means tested benefits such as Personal Independence Payments

Relevant Young People

The council has a duty to ensure that the income, maintenance, and accommodation costs of 'relevant' young people are adequately covered.

These young people are no longer entitled to claim means tested benefits such as Universal Credit. Responsibility for this financial support now lies with the Care Leavers Service

Important exceptions to this rule are lone parents or young people with long term health problems, or with disabilities. Relevant young people can claim non-means tested benefits e.g., PIPS Personal Independence Payment as appropriate.

If relevant young people are in employment, then their earnings will be taken into consideration when determining their entitlement. For relevant young people in full time or part time education, any part time earnings will be disregarded, dependant on their level of earnings.

Where a young person is entitled to weekly Maintenance Allowance, details should be recorded in their Pathway Plan.

Former Relevant and Qualifying Young People

The Care Leavers Service does not have a duty to provide income maintenance for these young people. However, in recognition of the challenges they face and the possible lack of familial support, wherever possible we should offer support and encouragement to access work, training or education.

Where there is no other source of income, young people should be supported to claim the appropriate benefit.

Former relevant young people who are in full time further education are normally entitled to claim Income Support/Universal Credit to meet their weekly living costs up to the age of 25. However, if a former relevant young person is not entitled to Universal Credit, income maintenance may be paid following an assessment of circumstance/need.

Similarly, Qualifying young people, who are engaged in education or training and not in receipt of Universal Credit, may also receive Income Maintenance following an assessment of circumstances and need.

Former relevant and qualifying young people in employment will normally be responsible for meeting their own needs in terms of living costs, if these young people are on a low wage, they may be entitled to some welfare benefits but assistance may still be considered based upon assessed need through the Young Persons Pathway Plan.

Young People in Custody

If a young person is on remand or serving a custodial sentence they will be fully maintained within the institution and so will not be entitled to income maintenance from Care Leavers Service.

We wish to support young people to maintain contact with family and friends whilst in custody and will pay a monthly allowance of £20 to support telephone contact for eligible and relevant young people.

Young people in custody may have the opportunity to earn pocket money/weekly allowance whilst in custody. Requests for exceptional payments for items such as clothing and educational equipment will be considered in line with current procedures for other young people who are leaving care and will be based on need.

Payments should be made online to young people's custodial accounts via the Money to Prisoner (MTP) portal. Payments by bank transfer and pre-paid card are not accepted. Where senders are unable to use the MTP portal they can apply to the Governor for permission for cash, postal orders, or cheques to be credited to a prisoner's account,

Former Relevant young people will generally not be entitled to an allowance, however at a Team Managers discretion, can receive up to £75 per year.

'Eligible', 'Relevant' and 'Former Relevant' young people who have been granted financial support whilst serving a custodial sentence may, upon release, apply for a clothing grant. This should only be paid in exceptional circumstances upon the discretion of a Team Manager.

'Qualifying' young people are not eligible for payments of any kind whilst serving custodial sentences.

Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children and Young People

The provisions introduced by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 apply to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the same way as other children in this country. They will, however, have an immigration status (applying for asylum, acceptance as a refugee, granted exceptional leave to remain, or refused to leave to remain), that will need to be taken into account when considering provision of services.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) who are looked after will be entitled to all the allowances for Looked After Children with the exception of payments for passports and support towards the cost of learning to drive.

Children and young people who are accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 will accrue entitlements to the provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 in the normal way. In some circumstances young people who receive a service via Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 will also be entitled to the full provisions of the Children (Leaving Care Act) 2000. This will apply where young people have been "de facto" looked after (as per the 'Hillingdon Judgement' 2004). The decision about individual's entitlements to leaving care provision should be made by the relevant Leaving Care Team Manager based on a clear assessment of the circumstances.

'Former Relevant' young people who were unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Young people who have received a decision regarding their immigration status and are allowed to remain for a minimum of 5 years will be entitled to the same support as all other 'Former Relevant' young people.

Young people who have exhausted all appeal rights are not entitled to leaving care funding except to avoid a breach of their human rights.

If a Young person has no recourse to any other funding, and if the Care Leavers Service provide support then this will usually be to cover housing costs and income maintenance only. They will not be entitled to any other financial support.

4.3 Support whilst waiting for benefits to be processed.

Debt and poverty seriously impact on life chances, tackling poverty and closing inequality gaps is a key priority for both the council and the Children and Young People's Partnership. Wherever we can, we must do all we can to reduce the likelihood of a young person falling into debt.

When young people make their first claim for Universal Credit, there is usually a 4 week delay until they receive their payments. During this waiting period, we will ensure income maintenance is paid.

If there is a further delay beyond the 4 weeks, we will look at the young person's circumstances and assess what support can be offered in kind by way of food parcels and/or another period of income maintenance.

To receive this support whilst benefits are being processed, young people will be required to attend all appointments and respond to any asks in relation to progressing their claim. PA's should ensure young people understand what they need to do and provide any support needed. In addition, they need to make a commitment not to apply for a Universal Credit Advanced Payment (it should be explained this is because advanced payments have to be paid back and will be taken out of their benefits once they are processed, this could mean they find they struggle to have enough money to live on, pay bills etc.)

The benefit system can be complicated and daunting. We will ensure all young people receive support to navigate the system, this will look different for each individual, it could be help completing online forms and reading communications from the DWP, access to somewhere with computers and Wi-Fi or attending appointments with them.

4.4 Top up payments

We are committed to the principle that no young person should find themselves financially worse off when undertaking education, employment, or training to improve their life chances than they would if they were on benefits.

We will ensure that all our care leavers who are attending full time education or equivalent have a minimum of £105 disposable income after rent costs. This includes income from Universal Credit or similar source and bursary monies (in cash or kind).

The Care Leavers Service will support the young person to ensure they have claimed all the benefits and bursaries they are entitled to. If the amount falls short of the minimum amount, the Care Leavers Service will top up the remainder. For example, if a Young Person receives £79.09 in Universal Credit and a £25 bursary, the Care Leavers Service will provide a Top Up of £15.91 weekly.

An additional £15 per week will be paid to young people where they are responsible for their food and utilities.

Bursary payments are a term time only payment. During holiday periods when the bursary element is not payable by schools and colleges, the Care Leavers Service will not pay the bursary, but will make sure tops ups are made where necessary to the minimum disposable income amount.

To summarise, we will ensure all young people in full time education, employment or training have a minimum of £105 per week to live off.

4.5 Support to find a home.

We will support care leavers to find a home that is right for them that they can manage, afford, and most importantly feel proud of if moving on to their own place.

There are a number of housing and accommodation options to explore with young people as they prepare to leave care. Safety and affordability will be key considerations alongside independent living skills and emotional resilience to live alone, but other areas such as distance and costs to travel to work, and education settings and being able to maintain familiar relationships, friendships and support networks also need to be taken into account.

Joining the housing ladder may seem a distant goal for many care leavers, however this should still be explored and encouraged along with other alternatives such as shared ownership and self-build.

Ultimately, if a young person doesn't feel a sense of belonging, connection, or desire to be part of the community where they live, the likelihood of putting down roots and having a stable life are low.

We will help young people up to the age of 25 to find housing. PA's will provide support to young people and care leavers to set up their homes and visit to check they are coping or just for a chat if that's what a young person wants.

These are some of the types of housing and accommodation that PA's should explore with young people.

- Council Tenancy – In Kirklees, Care Leavers are entitled to Band A (the highest band) in the Choice Based Letting system – Choose n Move. Care Leavers will need to 'bid' (register an interest) on properties they are interested in. Young people will need access to the internet to do this as the process is on-line. It should be noted that a single person will only be entitled to a 1 bedroomed property. The majority of these in Kirklees are Flats or Maisonettes.

- Staying Put – Where a care leaver remains living with their foster family up to the age of 21.
- Supported accommodation/semi-independent living – Care Leavers have their own accommodation but there are staff on hand for help and support.
- Supported Lodgings – Care Leavers rent a room in the home of a family; this is similar to Staying Put but means the young person is a lodger in the home.
- Trainer Flats – Care Leavers get the opportunity to practice independent living with support on hand if it's needed.
- Shared accommodation – Usually 1 bedroomed self-contained flat in a house.
- Private accommodation – a property owned by a private landlord.
- Housing association property – Similar to a Council tenancy.
- Accommodation during holiday periods if the Care Leaver is at University. Some but not all Universities offer 52 weeks accommodation for Care Leavers. PA's will work with Care Leavers going to University to ensure they have accommodation during holidays and breaks.
- Shared Lives Accommodation – If a young person needs additional support with independent living as an adult, Shared Lives provides trained carers who offer support and help in different ways to support independent living.

4.6 Rent, Housing Costs and Utility bills

No one likes having to pay bills, but unfortunately, this is part of growing up and being independent. Young people will be expected to pay for utility bills from any Leaving Care (maintenance) Allowance and/or wage received.

Where a young person's utility bills are paid by the Care Leavers Service as part of accommodation costs (e.g., in supported lodgings placements) then dependant on cost, the cost of the utility bills or a contribution towards the cost will be deducted from the Leaving Care Allowance received by the young person.

Young people with a net income over £120 per week will be expected to contribute to their rent, based on the table of contributions in Appendix 2.

As part of developing money management and life skills, it is advisable that PA's help young people set up Direct Debits for their essential bills and outgoings. Many banks offer accounts and applications which section off money for Direct Debits into a separate 'pot' from the main account when

income such as benefits or wages are paid in. Accounts like these help ensure bills are paid and easily show what money is left to 'live' on.

As part of the Council wide commitment to reducing poverty – especially fuel poverty, PA's and the Care Leaver service should support young people and care leavers to find the best utility deals on the market. Pre-payment or token meters whilst helpful in preventing people using more than they can pay for are significantly more expensive than other tariffs.

If accommodation isn't adequately heated and ventilated, it can lead to problems with mould and damp which could impact on young people's physical health and wellbeing. All these things need to be discussed with young people as they prepare to move towards independence.

Eligible and Relevant Young People

Due to the changes in the law, 16 and 17 year olds can no longer claim benefits, therefore up to the age of 18, we will pay full rent costs based on assessed need across a range of independent, supported and unsupported accommodation.

Former Relevant and Qualifying Young People

Beyond the age of 18, unless in Further or Higher Education, rent and accommodation costs become responsibility of the Care leaver, this could be via income or the Housing Benefit element of Universal Credit. Where required, we will support Care Leavers to claim the benefits they are entitled to.

- 4.7 Bonds, Advanced Rent Payments and Discretionary Housing Payments
Based on assessed need and outlined in the Pathway Plan, the council will fund **one** rent deposit (4 weeks rent in advance) / bond / accommodation administrative fees for an Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant young person.

The sum paid for administrative fees is not a set rate as this will vary dependent on the provider or Landlord.

Where a young person wishes to move address and is due to have their bond returned then this bond can be carried forward to the new property and increased if there is a need.

We may fund a further rent deposit (4 weeks rent in advance) and/or bond and/or accommodation administrative fees in exceptional circumstances to enable a young person to move from their initial accommodation or where they have had to leave in an unplanned way.

Where a young person has not received a rent deposit / bond/ administration costs prior to their 21st birthday this financial assistance remains available to the young person up to their 25th birthday.

We will assure 6 months' rent to facilitate access to private rented accommodation.

To prevent homelessness due to rent arrears when former relevant young people reach 21 and lose entitlement to Universal Credit higher housing

allowances, for care leavers who are settled and have maintained their tenancy well, we will support them to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments, if unsuccessful we will top up any shortfall in rent brought by reductions in the Universal Credit Housing element until they are 25 to enable them to remain in the community where they are currently living. A Top-Up will be based on assessed need.

Care Leavers who have Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods (KHN) tenancies can access help with money worries from the KHN Money Advice Team.

MAU@kirklees.gov.uk

The team provide free and impartial advice to all tenants, offering a wide range of support on budgeting and money management, debt, rent matters and a whole host of issues arising from welfare reforms. Areas the team can help with include:

- Help managing debts
- Negotiating reduced payments with creditors
- Budgeting and day-to-day money management
- Support to ensure people receive their correct benefit entitlements
- Help filling in claim forms
- Assistance in dealing with letters about benefits
- Applying for grants from charitable organisations
- Ongoing advice and support

4.8 Council Tax

All Care Leavers who live in Kirklees that would normally be responsible for paying Council Tax, dependent on earnings, will be able to access the council's main Council Tax Reduction Scheme and will be entitled to a further reduction under the council's Discretionary Reduction Scheme. In effect, this means Care leavers will pay no Council Tax.

Where a care leaver is living outside of Kirklees, they will still be eligible for support with their council tax in line with the support they would receive if living in Kirklees. Where a care leaver is unable to access support via other local authorities' scheme, Kirklees Council will cover the costs in line with our policy, we will provide financial support to ensure Care Leavers living outside Kirklees are not unfairly disadvantaged.

4.9 Help with removal costs.

Removal expenses for up to 2 changes of address will be funded for all Care Leavers.

The Care Leavers Service will make sure young people have adequate and suitable luggage to pack and transport their clothes and small belonging in. Bin bags are not acceptable under any circumstances.

4.10 Setting up home allowance.

The timescale for moving on to independent accommodation will be different for each young person, and it is important that PA's have assessed a young person's increasing ability to cope alone before agreeing to any move towards more independent living.

When PA's believe their young person is ready to move on, young people who are Eligible', 'Relevant' and 'Former Relevant' are able to access funds to help them set up their new home.

A setting up home allowance is a one-off payment which may be paid in instalments and is used to enable and support a young person to move to an independent or semi-independent living situation. This allowance should only be accessed when a young person secures the tenancy of a flat or a house and this is in line with their Pathway Plan.

Because young people leave care at different times and move into different sorts of accommodation, it means that not everyone will need all the equipment and furniture for a home at once. Some young people may need a small amount of setting up home money to begin with, because, for example, they are moving into furnished accommodation and they don't need to furnish and equip a whole house/flat, so it is important young people can continue to draw down their grant between different accommodation settings throughout the time they receive support from us.

An allowance of £2800 is available to pay towards the cost of setting up their home. A list of suggested essential items which young people should have for setting up their home is set out in Appendix 3. £200 will be paid as an additional payment after twelve months when a Young Person has achieved a successful tenancy.

Young People should be given reasonable choice about how, and from where they purchase goods for setting up home. Following 'good parenting' principles, PA's and the Care Leaving Service should work with young people to share advice about value for money, quality and safety in respect to the goods and services they wish to purchase. Whilst there is a need to manage expectations, we should always consider 'is this good enough for my child?'

Any shared tenancy should be jointly furnished and, as such, entitlements will be paid on a pro rata basis.

All young people who move into independent accommodation will have the option of taking up a basic furniture and white good package.

In recognition that many people access TV via devices other than a traditional TV set and there is still a requirement for a licence, the Care Leaver Service will pay the first year's TV licence cost.

A TV should not be purchased by the young person from their setting up home allowance without a TV licence being funded,

Where the first TV licence is funded after the young person is 18, further TV licences are expected to be paid for by the young person from their income.

When a young person moves into accommodation where they need their own contents insurance this will be funded for the first year (and any subsequent years, up to the age of 18). This is a mandatory payment to protect the young person's belongings and is non-transferable.

4.11 Setting up home Starter Pack.

To get young people off to a good start when they move into their own accommodation for the first time, we will provide a 'welcome to your new home starter pack' up to the value of £70. It can be split anyway the PA and young person sees fit to best meet their needs but should cover these areas.

- A Welcome to your new home or congratulations on your new home card.
- Basic Food Supplies – Tinned, dried and packet goods, Cereal, Tea/Coffee, Sugar/Sweeteners, Cordial, biscuits, crisps.
- Cleaning Products – Washing up liquid, Washing Powder, Multipurpose Cleaner
- Toiletries – Toilet roll, toothpaste, deodorant, shower gel

5 **Aspire and Achieve.**

5.1 Education, Training and Employment.

We want Kirklees to be an exceptional place to learn and be educated, where from the earliest years we cultivate curiosity in children and develop a love of learning that continues to grow throughout their lives.

Our commitment is for every child, including those who are vulnerable or need extra help, to have the best start in life, the best opportunities to develop, and the support needed to achieve their ambitions.

Every young person should receive the support they need to achieve their full potential, leaving education ready for life and work and well placed to make positive contributions to the communities in which they live.

We believe in creating the right, inclusive environment to nurture talents and abilities.

We recognised that for some young people, staying in academic learning may not be the right path for them. With this in mind, this guidance will reflect that vocational learning is afforded equal value and weight to ensure young people in training or on apprenticeships are not disadvantaged.

To ensure care leavers have opportunities to achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations, the Leaving Care Service will:

- Build on the foundations of young people's previous achievements and assessed strengths as set out in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Provide high quality advice and guidance on accessing higher and further education and progressing plans for training and employment opportunities so that young people are aware of their options and can make informed choices about their future career options.
- Actively encourage and support young people to engage in education, vocational training and apprenticeships.
- Ensure each young person has a pathway plan that supports them in achieving their goals and which sets out the support they will receive.

- Continually review the young person's progress at pathway reviews to ensure they remain engaged and that adequate support is being provided to enable them to pursue their goals.
- Provide a gateway to lifelong learning for those young people who wish to return to education at a later date by linking in with the C & K Careers Service and the Virtual School to provide learning and training opportunities.

PA's have a duty to fulfil the role of a good corporate parent by ensuring that all care leavers recognise the importance of planning for their future careers and making the most of education and training opportunities.

In particular PA's should recognise the additional barriers to achievement and the attainment gap faced by care leavers and help them to have high aspirations and to build on their strengths whilst recognising their weaknesses and needs.

Where possible, care leavers should be encouraged to remain in education in order to help them be better prepared for independence and to improve their life chances and opportunities for future employment.

PA's should ensure that issues around education, training and employment are addressed in the pathway planning process and that the young person's pathway plan provides a package of support that promotes attainment.

Where Care Leavers are going on to Higher Education, the plan should also include details of not only any vacation accommodation to be provided when they return home on breaks, but what support will be in place for them whilst they are away on their course.

Whilst Higher Education establishments offer specific pastoral support for care leavers, it's not the same as being able to see and talk to someone that knows you well and who you have an established relationship with.

We want our young people to know how proud we are of them and how we will continue to be interested in their lives, to be there for them to share with someone how well they're doing and not just for when times are tough.

Every effort should be made to encourage young people to continue engaging with their PA whilst they are away. If the young person wishes it, PA's should regularly go and see their young people in their setting.

Careers Advisors within the Care Leavers Service and the Virtual School will be able to offer advice and guidance to both PA's and young people as pathway plans are created.

5.2 Education for Eligible Care leavers in supported or independent settings, Former Relevant and Relevant Care Leavers

Sometimes things don't work out the way we hope, outcomes at exam time is a good example of this. For young people who don't get the grades they need to continue their education, funding will be available for re-sitting GCSE's / A Levels / AS Levels if the young person requests and is committed to this.

The Leaving Care Service will offer financial support for care leavers through at least one course of further or higher education of their choice until they are 21 years old, or until the end of a programme of education or training, if this has been captured in their pathway plan.

If not met by a Bursary or charitable funding, costs may be met for:

- Registration and Examination fees.
- Textbooks and equipment specified as essential.
- Activities essential to meet course requirements including course trips.
- Public transport between accommodation and course centre.
- Transport costs to open days & college interviews.
- Specific clothing, including clothes for interviews and essential equipment related to the course.

Young people starting a course of Further Education from the age of 16 and before the age of 19 may be entitled to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year.
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules.

Schools / colleges / training providers are responsible for managing both types of bursary. They will set out the conditions students should meet to receive a bursary (e.g., attendance or behaviour) and when it will be paid.

The high level criteria for a young person being accepted for a bursary are set out below.

- A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31st August to be eligible for help from the bursary fund.
- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.
- Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support.
- Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are classed as employed, rather than in education. They are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

The Bursary Fund Guide is refreshed on at least an annual basis. For further information on qualifying criteria and vulnerable groups covered, please use this [link](#).

PA's and Careers Advisors will support young people to make their applications.

Care Leavers can claim Income Support / Universal Credit and Housing Benefit whilst in further education from their 18th birthday until the end of the academic year in which they are 21. For young people who cannot access this, either because they are over 21 years or for some other reason, an assessment should be carried out and, subject to the outcome of that assessment, personal allowances may be paid. Accommodation may also be provided, or the means to secure it.

5.3 Education, training and voluntary work financial support incentives ('Eligible', 'Relevant' and 'Former Relevant' young people)

A financial support incentive of up to £25 a week may be paid on top of any Maintenance Allowance to young people undertaking part-time education / training and/or a minimum of 5 hours voluntary work per week as an incentive to continue this if they cannot access a Bursary Fund.

It may be paid as a regular payment at the same time as the Maintenance Allowance, in advance or retrospectively, based on attendance and commitment. Payment may be time-limited, reflective of the length of course or training.

Where a young person receiving a Maintenance Allowance is undertaking part-time employment then their income will not be deducted as an incentive to encourage them to continue to work

Young people attending a course which is 16 hours or over per week will be considered to be in full-time education and will receive the equivalent of the 16 – 19 bursary i.e. up to a maximum of £1200 per year.

This will be reflective of a 52 week year and as such this allowance equates to £1200 divided by 52 weeks = £23.07, however it has been agreed that training incentive will be rounded up to a maximum payment of £25 a week.

For young people on courses that are less than 16 hours a week, payments will be based on actual attendance in days.

- Part-time course 4 days £20
- Part-time course 3 days £15
- Part-time course 2 days £10
- Part-time course 1 day £5

Young People should receive either the 16-19 bursary or the Education / Training incentive allowance, not both.

If an eligible or relevant young person is a parent and wishes to continue with a Further Education course of study, they may be entitled to access a Care to Learn Grant for funding towards childcare and travel costs.

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

- 5.4 Additional costs -Books, equipment, clothing and devices for studying.
In addition to the bursary fund, a discretionary allowance of up to £300 per year towards costs incurred as a result of a particular course of study, this could be to assist young people to purchase essential items such as books, equipment, laptops, clothing, or to support them to take part in field trips which their course may require.

This allowance should be available to young people who are fully co-operating and engaged with their Pathway Plan.

An application for a Personal Education Plan Support Allowance (PEPSA) may also be made to cover the cost of one-off course equipment or educational trips.

Where a PEPSA application has been received up to the maximum amount or applied for and refused and the young person is unable to access the Bursary Fund then necessary course equipment may be funded from the Leaving Care budget, based on assessed need.

The Care Leavers service reserves the right to reclaim the full amount of the allowances paid towards 'course costs' should a young person fail to demonstrate an appropriate level of commitment to completing their studies.

We recognise the necessity of needing an appropriate device to use not just for studying but to support staying connected with friends, family and support networks. As part of our commitment to digital inclusion, all care leavers will be provided with a device to meet their educational and personal needs.

- 5.5 Support into work.

For care leavers who want to experience work, the council will support young people into work by offering part-time jobs and apprenticeships.

The Council will help managers to support care experienced young people they employ in their services.

- 5.6 Completion of Apprenticeships and Vocational work

In recognition that vocational learning and apprenticeships are important, on successful completion of vocational courses and apprenticeships, these young people will receive a special recognition and gift vouchers to the value of £250 at the annual Achieve Awards.

- 5.7 Higher Education (Former relevant young people)

When care leavers against the odds have succeeded in getting somewhere most of their non-care experienced peers take for granted, it's important there is continued access to informed and good quality practical, financial and emotional support to enable young people to sustain their ability to study.

Whilst young people wishing to undertake Higher Education course will need to fund their course fees, accommodation costs and day to day living costs themselves, there are loans and grants available to cover these costs. Tuition Fee Loans and Maintenance Loans for living costs are available to care leavers. Full information can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/new-fulltime-students>

If after starting an undergraduate course of study a young person wants to change course or attend a different higher education institution, the young person needs to discuss this as soon as they can with their PA and prior to changing course /institution to confirm whether funding for accommodation will be approved for this.

Any Former Relevant or young person over the age of 21 and up to the age of 25 who wishes to re-engage with Children's Social Care and pursue a part-time or full-time course of Further or Higher Education may contact the Local Authority and request an assessment of their needs.

5.8 Income in Higher Education

As mentioned above, Former Relevant young people undertaking a recognised course of Higher Education are eligible to access a Tuition Fee Loan, Maintenance Loan, Maintenance Grant and an Accommodation Loan provided by the Government.

In addition, young people undertaking a recognised course of Higher Education are also eligible to claim a Higher Education Bursary of £2,000 from the Care leavers Service.

Young people who start a course before their 25th birthday are also entitled to access the Higher Education Bursary if they have not received this previously.

A young person who is also an unaccompanied asylum seeker is also entitled to the Higher Education Bursary provided they are not appeals rights exhausted.

PA's will arrange for the bursary to be paid in instalments over the length of the course. See Appendix 4 for payment schedule.

If there is a delay in this being paid after term starts, a transitional payment from the Leaving Care service will be considered until the student grant/loan is available.

Arrangements about the reimbursement of this payment will be made on a case by case basis and recorded in the Pathway Plan.

Some Universities and Colleges also pay Institutional Bursaries and extra bursaries for students who have been in care.

Whilst the onus is on the young person to apply for grants and loans in a timely manner, like any good parent would, PA's, with support and advice from the Careers Advisors will assist where required in applying for all these and also to charitable organisations for any additional funding to help maximise a young person's income and to help reduce the amount of loans a young person needs to apply for.

Further information about Student loans and Grants can be found at:

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

An overview of Student Finance can be found in Appendix 5.

These loans and grants will be considered by the Care Leavers Service as the young person's income and as such the total amount available (claimed or not claimed by the young person) will be used when calculating any allowances that may be available from the Care Leavers Service.

For the purposes of calculation, the summer period (12 weeks) will be treated separately from the rest of the year (40 weeks).

The details and principles identified within Kirklees financial guidance establishes that young people who are living independently and attending education on a full-time basis require a weekly income of £120 (i.e. a full subsidy) after rent costs have been met if they are buying their own food. This guidance will be applied to young people attending University. An example of how this might be calculated is shown in Appendix 6.

During holidays, the Care Leavers Service will continue to offer young people financial support during this period.

The level of this support will include all reasonable rent costs and basic income maintenance to reflect the Universal Credit level

5.9 Higher Education Allowance.

We are committed to doing all we can to make sure children get the best start in life, our aspirations are to carry this through as far as we practically can, so a young person gets the best start at an adult life as well.

We know Higher Education is expensive and many students will finish their studies with considerable amounts of student debt as a result of the loans they take out.

We want to do all we can to reduce the amount of debt our care leavers accrue, so with this in mind, our Higher Education financial support offer provides the potential for care leavers to choose whether they want to take out any student maintenance loans.

On top of the Higher Education Bursary of £2000, subject to the young person's continued engagement with their PA and the Higher Education Setting we will provide:

£87.90 a week (maintenance and incentive)

£54.00 a week accommodation element

Total £141.90 per week for all elements

Payments made for 52 weeks a year.

We will provide a travel card for travel to and from university during term time, PA's will make sure young people and their belongings are taken to and from university at the beginning and end of terms, if required.

5.10 Consent and support.

It is so important that the Care Leavers Service can continue to support young people who are able to go on to higher education.

To do this to the best of our abilities, we need young people to provide written consent that allows the Care Leavers Service to liaise with both Student Finance England and the University where the young person will be studying.

Consent is required to allow the Care Leavers service to discuss / clarify any issues with regard to general support or finances that may occur.

We need to reassure young people and be clear that the Care Leavers Service will only contact Student Finance England, Universities or their respective support services with the young person's knowledge.

The arrangement around support and consent needs to be a written agreement between the young person and the Care Leavers Service and be signed prior to the start of the academic year.

5.11 Graduation

Successful completion of Higher Education courses is a huge achievement in any young person's life.

We will make sure Care Leavers can celebrate Graduation events as any other young person would and ensure they have someone there to share what might be their proudest moment in their life.

If a young person wishes, the Care Leavers service will make sure the person they are closest to attends, this might be their PA, social worker or other professional who has supported them over the years.

Financial support should be provided to the amount of £250 to cover the cost of Gown hire, photographs, tickets and invitations together with sundry expenses.

5.12 Graduation Bursary for Higher Education.

Young people successfully completing their degree course will receive a one-off Graduation Bursary from the Council following graduation. This amount of £3,500 is to provide both financial support immediately following graduation and in recognition of their achievement.

6 Healthy and Well.

No matter where young people live, work or study we want to them to be able to live their lives confidently and have good physical and mental health and well-being. We want to nurture young people to become resilient adults, but ultimately, we just want our young people to be happy.

What helps contribute to mental health and wellbeing will be different for each young person. As Corporate Parents, we need to remember and not lose sight of what motivated and made us happy as young people.

In our roles as officers of the council, we might view some of these things as materialistic and luxuries – a new pair of trainers might seem unimportant in the grand scheme of things, especially when we have to manage and keep within our budgets, but to some young people, how they look and what they wear will be significant factors to how they feel about themselves. Being able to take part in activities and go on holiday will all impact on how included in their wider peer group they feel.

Feeling lonely, excluded or isolated is not something experienced only by older people. Increasingly young people are reporting feeling lonely and disconnected.

The Care Leavers Service is committed to doing all it can to reduce inequalities and ensure young people are supported to be able to participate in the same life, cultural and leisure opportunities their non-care experienced peers have.

This section of guidance sets out things we can do to support health and wellbeing.

6.1 The Care Leavers Pot

Unplanned asks for financial support are common. Getting approval and sign off from a Team Leader or Manager for each request creates a large workload and can take time for requests to be approved. Understandably, this can lead to a lot of frustrated young people who don't really care about our internal decision making processes, they simply want to know can they have what they've asked for.

To speed things up and in recognition that PA's and Social Workers are probably the people that know their young people's the best, a pot of up to £550 per year will be available for PA's to use to meet unplanned requests in the best interest of their young people.

This pot of money is in addition to any other allowances or grants outlined in this guidance.

PA's will have autonomy in decision making in regard to this pot of money, however, once it's exhausted, there will be no further funding available until the next financial year.

Any further unplanned requests will need to be considered under the guidance for Emergency Payments.

6.2 Clothing Allowance

Clothing allowances in Residential Care

For those young people who are 16+ and remain in residential care, their clothing costs will be paid from the residential budget.

Clothing allowances in Foster Care

For those young people who are 16+ and remain in foster care, their clothing costs will be paid from the fostering carer's allowance.

Where a young person stays with their former foster carer once they turn 18 in a Staying Put arrangement, the clothing element paid to carers' stops because the young person will have their own source of income and are expected to use that to buy their own clothes. As the young person approaches 18, foster carers should ensure young people have at least the basic minimum wardrobe set out below.

Clothing allowances for young people moving to independent living in the community.

Young people moving to living independently in the community should leave care, residential and foster care, with suitable clothing. The following list is for guidance and is the basic minimum a young person should leave care with:

- A winter coat.
- A summer jacket or coat
- Several jumpers and sweatshirts
- At least 2 pairs jeans/trousers
- At least 2 skirts/dresses, or if the young person prefers, increase the pairs of jeans/trousers.
- An outfit suitable for interviews.
- Sufficient underwear and socks.
- At least 3 t-shirts
- At least 2 shirts/blouses/tops
- 1 pair of trainers
- 1 pair of shoes
- 1 pair of boots suitable for bad weather conditions

After living independently for a period of 6 months, and if the young person is engaged with their PA, Education, Training or Employment (ETE), 'Eligible', 'Relevant' and 'Former Relevant' young people may apply for a clothing allowance of up to £300 per financial year. It should be noted that this allowance does not entitle young people to £300 for clothing but should be on individual need.

The year runs from April 1st to March 31st in line with the budget. Pro rata payments will therefore be made dependant on the time of year.

6.3 Birthdays and Celebrations.

Every young person should have something to look forward to on their birthday. Whilst most young people may want a cash present for their birthday so they can purchase what they want, there may be some young people that would appreciate a gift to open and for someone to see them and simply say 'Happy Birthday – have a great day'.

Best practice would be to buy a gift for young people.

In addition to the amounts below, PA's can take the young person out for a meal on their Birthday up to the age of 25 if the young person wishes. This can be up to £60.00 in total (£30:00 per person) for the 18th and 21st Birthday and £40.00 (£20.00 per person) for other Birthdays. Alcohol cannot be purchased with public money.

Every young person will receive a birthday card from their PA and or Social Worker.

Birthday present amounts for young people (including Eligible and Relevant young people placed with parents) are:

- 16th and 17th Birthdays - £150
- 18th Birthday - £175
- 19th and 20th Birthdays -£30

- 21st Birthday -£75
- 22nd to 25th Birthday - £30

Regardless of whether young people are living independently, living in a Staying Put arrangement or placed with parents, they will receive these amounts:

Exceptions

A 'Qualifying' Young Person will not be entitled to a Birthday allowance.

Young people in custody at the time of their 16th, 17th or 18th Birthday who would normally be entitled to the Birthday Allowance should have their allowance banked and given to them upon their release from custody. However, any expenditure whilst in custody can be considered on a case by case basis.

Christmas and Faith Celebrations

It is important we encourage and support our young people to celebrate their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

An annual allowance to celebrate religious or cultural festivals is available to all care leavers. Young people may wish to split their allowance over more than one festival, however the total payment will be the same as set out below.

Regardless of whether young people are living independently, living in a Staying Put arrangement or placed with parents, they will receive these amounts:

16 and 17 year olds - £150

18 to 25 - £50.

Exceptions

A 'Qualifying' Young Person will not be entitled to a Christmas or Cultural Celebration Allowance.

Young people in custody who would normally be entitled to the Christmas / Cultural Celebration Allowance will be entitled to a reduced allowance of £30 which should be banked and given to them upon their release from custody. However, any expenditure whilst in custody can be considered on a case by case basis.

6.4 Leisure.

Young people should be encouraged to make use of leisure facilities, and to pursue sports, hobbies and pastimes. Some young people may have talents or abilities, which should be encouraged and nurtured.

Financial support through a Pathway Plan might include:

- help with sports equipment.
- help with musical instruments, tuition costs, exam fees, sheet music etc.
- help with membership fees of clubs.

- special training or coaching fees.
- music, dance, art or singing lessons.
- payment for services at sports clubs and facilities.
- The cost of maintaining contact with family and other people who are important.
- Maintaining and supporting cultural and religious needs.

All care leavers can access free Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) Membership Funding and assistance may be available through other sources e.g. sporting or arts-based organisations, community interest groups or through education or youth work initiatives. In some circumstances it may be possible to fund part of the cost of activities by 'match funding' with another organisation, or for the young person to contribute themselves. PA's should investigate all potential sources of funding streams.

This list is not exhaustive, and Pathway Plans should take account of individual circumstances when detailing support to be provided. As a general principle any activity which encourages the young person to use their time constructively, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and/or helps the young person develop and maintain positive relationships should be considered within the planning process.

6.5 Holidays and passports

In addition to being a key document needed for identification purposes, passports open the door to the world of travel.

The Care Leavers Service will fund a passport up to the age of 25. However any loss or damage to the passport is the responsibility of the young person and replacement costs will need to be met by them.

We want young people to share the same experience of travel and holidays many of their peers have. As well as warm climates and beaches, travelling gives young people the opportunity to see and experience different cultures, history, cuisines and if young people have a talent – put their language skills into practice.

Care Leavers (eligible, relevant, former relevant including placed with parent and Staying Put) are able to access an annual holiday allowance up to their 21st Birthday of £500.

Exceptions

'Qualifying' young people are not entitled to a Holiday Allowance.

Where a young person is deemed, by their Social Worker / Personal Advisor, not to be cooperating with their Pathway Plan, the availability of the Holiday allowance will be reviewed, and may be withdrawn, following consultation with a Team Manager.

6.6 Transport and travel.

Similar to a passport, the ability to travel can open up opportunities for young people. It can help a young person secure employment and training or make it

easier to get there, especially if there are rota's and shifts that are outside the hours of public transport.

It can help young people keep in touch with friends and family and broaden their horizons by being able to see different parts of the country if they are able to save up and buy and insure a car.

However we need to make sure there are other options available to support young people to travel, some young people may not be able to drive for medical reasons or affording a car and the insurance might be a way off in the future.

Increasingly, we need to consider the Climate Emergency and our commitment in Kirklees to reducing Carbon Emissions and look at what we can offer that contributes to this.

6.7 Public transport.

Weekly and Monthly bus passes can be provided by the Care Leavers Service subject to individual need and on a case by case basis. This is usually to help support young people to attend training or interviews.

Our aspiration is to work with regional public transport providers to provide all Care Leavers with a travel bus pass which is not just half fare or limited to off peak.

6.8 Driving Lessons.

We will provide funding to support young people through the learning to drive process, from obtaining a provisional licence, driving lessons through to taking the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) Theory Test and taking of the DSA Driving test.

'Eligible' and 'Relevant' and 'Former Relevant' young people aged 17 to 21 years and in full time education, training or employment are entitled providing they are engaging with their pathway plan and PA.

If a young person has just started lessons prior to their 21st birthday, payments should continue until they pass their test and they will remain an open case until this is completed.

Exceptions

'Qualifying' Young People, Asylum Seeking Young People who have not been granted leave to remain.

What we will fund.

Provisional Licence: Full payment

Theory Test: Full payment - should a young person fail their test; we will fund up to 3 theory tests (first one should be taken prior or at least half-way through starting driving lessons)

DSA Driving Test: Full payment – Should a young person fail their test; we will fund up to 3 practical tests.

Driving Lessons: Full Payment – We will fund up to 55 hours of driving lessons. This is based on the average number of lessons it takes to pass a test plus 10 lessons. This can be taken weekly or as an intensive course and guidance will be sought from the driving instructor which would best meet the needs of each young person.

PA's should encourage the young person to book, plan and commit to continuing their driving lessons to allow themselves the best possible chance of passing their test/s.

It is expected that the practical test is passed after 55 hours of driving lessons.

*exception may be given for parents who are not in ETE but are fully engaged with their Pathway Plan and PA

If the young person has or receives any driving convictions prior to or during the course of driving lessons, financial support may be withdrawn immediately. Advice from a Team Manager/Leader should be sought.

Where a young person is deemed, by their Social Worker / Personal Advisor, not to be cooperating with their Pathway Plan, the availability of financial support re driving lessons will be reviewed, and may be withdrawn, following consultation with a Team Manager/Leader.

Where concerns are identified regarding a young person's misuse of drugs or alcohol financial support will not be offered.

Whilst buying a car and associated costs such as insurance, fuel and repairs are the responsibility of the young person to fund, PA's will support young people to put plans in place to help them save to buy a car.

6.9 Cycle Scheme

Cycling not only is a good way of keeping fit, but it is a good way to reducing the impact we have on the environment.

The Council will fund a bicycle and safety equipment for young people who would prefer a greener way of travelling.

6.10 Support to stay in touch.

Over the course of this year, we have as a society realised how important it is to be able to stay in touch with family and friends. We have seen the significant detrimental impacts on mental health and well-being where young people have not been able to do this.

As an organisation, we are considering what contact and keeping in touch with friends looks like and how we can make best use of digital technology to support young people to maintain their networks.

As mentioned earlier in this guidance, the council is committed to reducing inequalities, this includes digital inequalities as well as the more common themes such as poverty and education attainment gaps.

For all care leavers, the council will fund or provide one suitable device such as a Chromebook or laptop which can be used for both education purposes if the

young person is continuing in education and for keeping in contact with family and friends. This device will be the responsibility of the care leaver, the council cannot be responsible for loss, theft or damage.

A device alone isn't much use without access to Wi-Fi. The council will provide 4G routers or Dongles to care leavers to help keep them connected to those most important to them.

Whilst virtual contact can be helpful and a lot of young people might prefer this way of engaging, it's by no means the only way and there are benefits to be gained through in person contact. Young people views should be central when planning what contact looks like for them.

As part of pathway planning, we capture each young person's relationships with their peers, friendship network and significant adults and how all these relationships will contribute to them making a successful transition to adulthood and how they will assist with integration into the community that they identify with.

We have a Duty to ensure young people who are Eligible receive funding to maintain contact with their families.

Funding for Relevant and Former Relevant young people will also be provided to enable a young person to maintain contact with significant family and friends where they do not live in Kirklees. This should be based on using public transport i.e. bus or train. Private Hire/Taxis should not be used. Tickets should be booked in advance where possible to reduce costs.

If contact with a family member is of a significant nature, due to a special event (such as a wedding, birthday party or significant religious event) young people can request a contribution from the Care Leavers Service to support them to attend the occasion.

This may be, for example, the cost of a meal in a restaurant of up to £20.00, taking part in a leisure activity or buying of a small present. No alcohol or tobacco can be funded through public money.

6.11 Young Parents and Child Care equipment.

We are Corporate Grandparents as well as Corporate Parents. Ensuring the next generation of children get the best start in life to avoid the need for formal social care intervention is non-negotiable.

Becoming a parent can be overwhelming for anyone regardless of age. For young people who become parents, we must support, encourage and offer any help we can so they flourish and become confident and capable parents.

Young parents should be encouraged and helped to access support such as Auntie Pam's, local parenting support groups and universal services through the Early Support Teams

Care Leavers on low incomes or benefits may be able to claim a Sure Start Maternity grant of up to £500 from the DWP at 11 weeks prior to the due date

of the baby for their first child. PA's should work with young expectant mothers to make sure this is claimed in all cases.

In addition the Care Leavers Service will provide a one off sum off £200 in the third trimester to support young parents to buy essential items

A suggested list of necessary items is:

- Cot plus 3 sets of bedding
- bottles
- Sterilizer
- Buggy & Cover
- Safety gate
- Clothing / Nappies
- Baby monitor

6.12 Support with Health needs

As young people leave care, we want them to be able to stay healthy and continue to access health service such as dentists, GP's and opticians.

If a young person is moving out of the area where they are currently registered with a GP practice, PA's should encourage and support care leavers to find a new GP and dentist.

Young people who are aged 16, 17 and 18 and who are undertaking full time education or training courses will generally be exempt from the majority of NHS health charges. Exemptions include:

- NHS prescription,
- Dental charges
- Sight tests (free to young people under nineteen and undertaking full time education).

For young people aged 16/17 who are not undertaking full time education or training courses and who receive financial support from the Care Leavers Service, there are arrangements in place for claiming help with health costs.

These young people will be fast-tracked to help through the NHS Low Income Scheme. They will need to fill in either a short claim form HC1 (SC) or full HC1 form. The form should then be sent off in the envelope provided. It will be dealt with immediately on receipt and an NHS exemption from charges certificate (HC2) for full help sent to the young person.

Young people aged over eighteen who are being supported by the local authority and do not automatically qualify for an exemption, (for example, young people being financially supported to undertake education courses) should complete a HC1 form and submit the form together with information from the Care Leavers Service about the level of support.

Young people will then be sent an NHS full exemption from charges certificate (HC2) or a partial exemption from charges certificate (HC3) depending on their level of income.

The Care Leavers Service will hold copies of the HC1 (SC) and full HC1 form, but they can also be obtained from Jobcentre Plus offices, NHS hospitals and from some doctors, dentists and opticians.

The NHS Forms order line on 0845 610 1112 or by email from the following address: nhsforms@spsl.uk.com

The exemption certificates will last for 12 months or until the young person's 18th birthday, whichever is longer.

Single parents and young people who are sick or disabled and in receipt of some benefits, will be exempt from NHS prescription, dental charges and sight tests charges by virtue of their benefit claim.

Information about HC11 'Help with health costs?' is also available at

<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/HealthCosts/1558.aspx>

The Care Leavers Service will use its discretion in whether to provide any additional financial contributions towards meeting young people's health needs.

An example of the type of support offered is additional money to top up the basic amount available through the NHS to buy glasses. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis up to a maximum of £100 or matching the value of any NHS voucher a young person may have- whichever is the greater sum in any one financial year.

Support with transport costs to attend appointments particularly where frequent appointments are needed will be supported.

6.13 Emotional wellbeing, counselling or therapeutic needs.

For young people under the age of 18 a referral should be made to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

For young people over 18, whose identified needs mean they are entitled to a service from Health or Adult and Community Services then any support and care needs will be funded as part of their Care Plan.

6.14 Care Leaver Participation.

Participation enables care leavers to become involved in shaping Kirklees services by getting involved in decision making processes via consultation forums, workshops and projects.

Through being involved, it can also provide a valuable social network of peer support for care leavers and give young people the confidence, skills and experience that will enable them to improve their employment prospects.

We will pay £20 per day pro rata for specific consultation work.

6.15 Emergency Payments.

Despite all the allowances and support in this guidance, there will undoubtedly be times where young people fall on hard times.

To prevent the crisis escalating further in exceptional circumstances we will consider making a one off emergency payment.

These payments should be made according to need to alleviate a crisis where a young person has no other access to finance. Food parcels can be an alternative to emergency payments, but the preference would be to support the young person to develop better living skills by working with them to create a budgeted meal plan which will sustain them over this period and take them shopping for food they need.

It may be that the young person needs help to develop cooking skills, for instance, cooking in batches which can be cheaper, or it might be that they don't have basic white goods such as a fridge or freezer to store food.

Every effort should be made to get underneath what has happened, what the young person's situation is and what support can we lever from other agencies if necessary, to help the young person take control of their situation and avoid a revolving door of emergency payments.

This policy makes a conscientious decision not to set a limit on how much an emergency payment should be. What is most important is that the Personal Advisor works with the young person to understand how they have reached this crisis point and together find a way forward, putting in more support if needed to try prevent this happening again.

Use of the Care Leaver Pot can also be considered as a means by which to ensure young people do not experience poverty.

If the young person's pot is exhausted and an emergency payment is needed, this must be approved by the Team Manager.

It is important to remember that in circumstances where the emergency payment is for gas or electricity the spending must be supervised. Consideration needs to be given to how much the pre-payment will take back in debt owed when the top up is applied.

It is generally unacceptable to approve more than 4 emergency payments in any 12 month period. It is important to note that just because this guidance suggests 4 emergency payments could be made, it should not be seen as acceptable for a young person to be presenting for this many emergencies.

It should not be viewed as definitive if the young person is considered to be at extreme risk despite having received previous payments. The Team Manager and Service Manager will make any final decisions regarding this.

Appendix 1

Eligibility criteria, background and exemptions.

General information for guidance to eligibility:

The provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 came in to force, in England on 1 October 2001. The principle aim of the Act being to improve the life chances of young people living in and leaving Local Authority Care.

The Act places various duties on Local Authorities; specifically, Services to Children and Young People Departments to assess and meet the needs of 'Relevant' Care Leavers aged 16-17. Consequently, Kirklees 'Relevant' Care Leavers will be supported by the Care Leavers Service, which will provide them with maintenance and accommodation until they reach the age of 18. 'Eligible' young people and 'Relevant' Care leavers are not generally entitled to Universal Credit (UC) or the housing element of the Universal Credit.

However, where a young person is:

- A lone parent
- A single person looking after foster children
- Incapable of work
- A disabled worker
- A disabled or deaf student
- Registered Blind
- Appealing against a decision that they are not incapable of work
- In relevant education; severely mentally or physically disabled and unlikely to obtain employment within the next twelve months
- In relevant education, and a lone parent of a child for whom they are treated as responsible and is treated as a member of their household.

That young person should not be treated as either an 'Eligible' or a 'Relevant' child for the purposes of entitlement to benefits and would have access to Universal Credit, so long as all other conditions are met.

Young people placed with foster carers are financially supported through the foster care allowance which is paid directly to foster carers. However, there is a general expectation that carers offer support to young people in line with this financial guidance.

The children (Leaving Care) Act created legal categories of young people.

'Eligible' young people are young people who remain Looked After, aged 16-17, and have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14. The role of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers service with these young people is to develop a Pathway Plan which defines their current Service and is clear as to the support that will be available when they leave care.

(except where the Local Authority placed the young person in a pre-planned series of short-term placements, none of which exceeds 4 weeks even if they amount to 13 weeks and at the end of each placement the child or young person returns to their parents, or the person who has parental responsibility).

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act and meeting the above criteria will be entitled to the same level of support as other Looked After Children.

'Relevant' young people are aged 16-17 who have previously been Looked After for 13 weeks including sometime as a 16 year old, who have now left care. 'Relevant' young people have their maintenance and accommodation costs paid by the Council as defined within the financial guidance.

'Former Relevant' young people are Care Leavers aged over 18 and were 'Eligible' or 'Relevant' prior to their 18th birthday. These young people have their accommodation and maintenance needs met through the same systems open to other young people of the same age i.e. they can usually claim Income Support and financial assistance with housing costs.

Young people who begin Higher Education prior to aged 21 will be supported in accordance with existing guidance until the end of their course or aged 25.

Young People over the age of 21 who make a new request for financial support for Education or Training will only be supported to the maximum of Income Maintenance and Housing Benefit level. This support will be subject to an assessment of needs.

'Former Relevant' young people have access to personal support and some ad hoc financial support to assist with meeting some specific needs identified in the financial guidance.

'Qualifying' some young people qualify for support (1989 Children Act Sect 24).

'Qualifying' young people are over 16 and under 21, (or under 24 if in education or training) who have spent less than 13 weeks in care with at least some time as a 16 year old. These young people are entitled to advice and some limited financial assistance as defined within the financial guidance.

Appendix 2

Board Contributions.

The level of contributions made by a young person should be in relation to their earnings or alternatively their income maintenance Board payments are made by young people who live in accommodation where food is provided e.g. supported lodgings.

Board payments are made in accordance with scale below

if earning:	Contribution
up to £100	£20.00
£100-£125	£23.00
£126-£150	£27.00

£151 and over	£32.00
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Maximum payable per week = £32.00

All young people pay a minimum of £20.00 per week if living in a placement where food is provided.

Rent Contributions.

The level of contributions made by a young person should be in relation to their earnings.

Where a young person is in paid employment, receives a net weekly take home pay which is above £120 per week and living in either supported accommodation or their own tenancy, contributions to housing costs made by the Care leavers service will be reduced, with an expectation that young people should pay a rent contribution based on the following table.

Young Persons weekly net income	Young Persons weekly rent contribution
Less than £120 pw	£0
£121 - £130 per week	£10
£131 - £140 per week	£20
£141 - £150 per week	£30
£151 and over per week	£40

If a young persons' net weekly wage exceeds £150, the maximum rent contribution would be £40 per week.

Young people whose net weekly take home pay is less than £120 per week are not expected to make a contribution to their rent.

Appendix 3

Setting up home essential items for young people

This list is not exhaustive, and account should be taken of each young person's circumstances when considering items of importance for a young person setting up home.

Furniture

- Bed and mattress (new)
- Wardrobe
- Chest of drawers
- Sofa
- Easy chairs
- Dining table & chairs
- Coffee table
- Shelving/storage

Kitchen and household equipment

- Cooker & fitting of (if gas must be by a registered professional)
- TV - license must be purchased by the care leaver's service.
- Washing machine and fitting of
- Tumble drier - using radiators to dry clothes causes damp and mould in property
- Fridge / freezer
- Microwave
- First aid box/kit
- Spare Keys
- Fire/Carbon Detectors, Fire Blanket – Must have
- Basic tool kit – hammer, screwdrivers, tape measure,
- Cutlery & Crockery - 4 place settings of cutlery – dinner plates, bowls side plates, mugs, knives, forks, spoons, teaspoons (new)
- Set of kitchen utensils, including knives for preparing food (new)
- Pans
- Kettle
- Iron
- Ironing board
- Bowl / drainer / bins – consider bin systems to aide recycling and separation of waste
- Vacuum cleaner
- Mop & bucket.
- Toilet brush

Linens and soft furnishings

- Carpets
- Curtains & Curtain tracks/rails and fitting of
- Duvet (new)
- Duvet sets x 2 (new)
- Sheets x 2 pairs (new)
- Pillows x 2 (new)
- Towels x 6 (new)
- Tea towels x 6 (new)
- Lamps & lampshades (new)
- Other items which may be particularly relevant to that young person e.g. photos, photo frames

Appendix 4

Higher Education Bursary payment schedule.

Where a young person is applying for or attending University on a higher Education Course whose duration is a minimum of 2 years, they will be supported financially to a maximum of £2,000.

This financial support is in addition to existing support provided by the Care Leavers Service as detailed within this guidance document.

The majority of study courses are of 3 years duration, accordingly, bursary payments should be made into a young person's bank account as follows:

1st year

£250 paid in the September prior to the young person starting their University course and £250 in March the following year.

2nd year

£250 paid in the September prior to the young person re- commencing their University course, following the summer break and £250 to be paid in the September in March of the following year.

3rd year

£250 paid in the September once the young person has re- commenced their University course, following the summer break and £250 to be paid in March the following year.

£500 paid to the young person upon completion of their course.

Where a young person leaves the course prior to completing it, for any reason, then the remainder of the unpaid bursary will not be paid.

If a young person temporarily leaves the course or is required to re-start the course, then no additional bursary will be paid, however the bursary payments will continue as detailed above to a maximum of £2,000.

If a young person intends to start a course and the 1st year bursary payment is provided, should the young person not start the course, or withdraws within the first 8 weeks then this money should be returned to the local authority.

Appendix 5

Student Finance overview

Student Maintenance Loan:

The Maintenance Loan is there to help with accommodation and other living costs.

The maximum loan is £9203 (2020-2021) - more if studying in London (up to £12010). Student Finance England usually pays the money into a young person's bank account in three instalments - one at the start of each term.

Full-time student	Loan for courses from September 2020
Living at home	Up to £7,747
Living away from home, outside London	Up to £9,203
Living away from home, in London	Up to £12,010
You spend a year of a UK course studying abroad	Up to £10,539

Tuition Fee Loan:

The Care Leavers service cannot accept responsibility for tuition fees and as such it is expected that young people will apply and subsequently receive Tuition fee loans in line with the majority of their peers who will be attending university

The Tuition Fee Loan covers the full amount a young person is charged for tuition fees

Liability for the repayment of Maintenance and Tuition loans will always be held by the young person in receipt of these loans. The Care Leavers Service cannot accept any responsibility for the repayment of these loans

Appendix 6

Higher Education Income calculation example

When calculation Higher Education income, the Care Leavers Service will divide the total income available from grants and loans by 40 weeks to identify a young person's normal weekly income.

If this figure is below £120 after rent/housing costs have been deducted, the Local Authority will top this figure up to £120 per week.

As means of illustration for a young person attending university in 2020/21 living in a hall of residence with weekly rent cost of £135;

Total Grant and loan available	£9203
Rent Costs*	(40 weeks x £135) = £5400
Total Grant and Loan minus Rent Costs	£9203 - £5400 = £3803
Total income divided by 40 weeks week	£3803 / 40wks = £95.07 per week
Top Up by the Local Authority to £120**	£24.93 per week

*In order to qualify for the Top Up, all rent costs must be agreed by the Local Authority in advance of the young person signing for student accommodation and all loans and grants income must be declared.

**If food or utilities are provided by the student accommodation, then the Top Up by the Local Authority will be up to £105 per week to reflect this.

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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
29 th June 2021	<u>Pre-meeting (private)</u>	
	Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services) - Stat	O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane
	<u>Public Items:</u>	
	Minutes of Previous Meeting	J Harris
	Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes	J Tolly/O Rix/ E McShane
	Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile	O Rix/E McShane
	Children's Rights Team Annual report	M Tiernan/ A Gledhill/ S Miles
	Overall financial policy for care leavers	E McShane/ L Warnes
	Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)	Cllr Pattison /J Tolley
	OFSTED and Ambition Board Update (verbal)	E McShane

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

	Membership of the Board	Board Members
	Updates from Board Members on interaction with services	Board Members
	Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22	J Harris
17th August 2021	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>Attendance by David Shepherd , Strategic Director for Growth and Regeneration- Update on the Role of Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>One Adoption WY Annual Report 6 monthly report</p> <p>Staying Put Fostering for Children in Care</p> <p>Annual Foster Carer Handbook</p> <p>Statement of Purpose for Fostering Service (Annual)</p> <p>Statement of Purpose for Residential care</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>J Harris</p> <p>D Shepherd (tbc)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolly / E McShane</p> <p>S Whiteley (One Adoption)</p> <p>E McShane</p> <p>A Quinlan</p> <p>A Quinlan</p> <p>L Caunce</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

	<p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Thriving Kirklees and CAMH's update</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21</p>	<p>O Rix</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Cllr Pattison /J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
5th October 2021	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Attendance by Colin Parr Strategic Director Environment and Climate Change - Update on the Role of Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>J Harris</p> <p>C Parr (tbc)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolly / E McShane</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

	<p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22</p>	<p>O Rix</p> <p>Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
23rd November 2021	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director TBC - Update on the Role of Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>J Harris</p> <p>Strategic Director (tbc)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p>

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	<p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22</p>	<p>Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
11th January 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director TBC - Update on the Role of Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>J Harris</p> <p>Strategic Director (tbc)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Board Members</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

	Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22	J Harris
15th February 2022	<p>Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p>Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director TBC - Update on the Role of Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>J Harris</p> <p>Strategic Director (tbc)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

<p>29th March 2022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director TBC - Update on the Role of Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J Harris</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strategic Director (tbc)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p style="text-align: center;">O Rix</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cllr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p style="text-align: center;">T Brailsford</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board Members</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J Harris</p>
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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

Standing Items (as on Agenda Plan)

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Attendance by Strategic Director Update on the Role of Corporate Parent

- (SD Growth and Regeneration– August PROV)
- (SD Environment and Climate Change – October PROV)
- (SD Children’s Services – date TBC)
- (SD CCG’s Chief Officer – Date TBC)

Children’s Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children’s Homes

Overview of number of children in Care (snapshot) including age profile

Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)

OFSTED and Improvement Board Update (verbal)

Updates from Board Members on interaction with services

Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2021/22

Future items for consideration:

~~Overall financial policy for care leavers (June)~~

Annual Foster Carer Handbook (August)

Thriving Kirklees and CAMH’s update (August)

Staying Put Fostering for Children in Care (August)

Statement of Purpose for Fostering Service (August)

Statement of Purpose for Residential Care (August)

Supported Lodgings Scheme (date TBC)

Richard Parry – Update on Transitions Programme and approach to commissioning across Adults and Health, Children’s Services, and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG’s) (date TBC)

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2021/22

Annual reports:-

- ~~6 monthly report on Children's Rights (Oct to March) (M Tiernan/A Gledhill) (June)~~
- 6 monthly report on Independent Visitors Scheme (Oct to March)
- Annual Report on Children's Rights and Independent Visitors Scheme (April 19 to March 20)
- Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care
- Annual report on children who go missing from care
- Annual report on the work of the leaving care service
- Annual report on children and young people placed outside the Kirklees boundary
- Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report
- Annual Health Report
- Annual Report on Private Fostering
- Annual review of the Foster Caring Handbook (August - Tbc)
- Annual Report on Kirklees Fostering Service

Quarterly reports:

- Fostering Agency Report (April to June) (A Quinlan)
- Fostering Agency Report (July to Sept) (A Quinlan)
- Fostering Agency Report (Oct to Dec)
- Fostering Agency Report (Jan to March)

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