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

Julie Muscroft

Governance and Commissioning

PO Box 1720

Huddersfield

HD1 9EL

Tel: 01484 221000

Please ask for: Jodie Harris

Email: jodie.harris@kirklees.gov.uk

Monday 15 January 2024

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Corporate Parenting Board

The **Corporate Parenting Board** will meet in the **Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.15 am** on **Tuesday 23 January 2024**.

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", on a light-colored background.

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 Elizabeth Reynolds

Councillor Richard Smith

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Karen Allison

Gill Addy

Kieran Lord

Joel Hanna

Stewart Horn

Louise Hallas

Vicky Metheringham

Tom Brailsford

Sara Miles

Jo-Anne Sanders

Keith Fielding

Georgina Ioannue

Keely Lucas

Farrah Munir

Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers

Interim Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

Head of Service for Corporate Parenting and Children's Residential Services

Head of Joint Commissioning, Children & Families

Virtual School Headteacher

Service Director - Child Protection & Family Support

Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

Interim Head of Service (Child Protection & Review Unit)

Service Director for Learning and Early Support

Kirklees Fostering Network

Kirklees Fostering Network

Care Leavers

Care Leavers

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Membership of the Board/Apologies

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

2: Minutes of previous meeting

1 - 10

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on the 5 December 2023.

3: Declaration of Interests

11 - 12

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

4: Admission of the Public

Most agenda items take place in public. This only changes where there is a need to consider exempt information, as contained at Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. You will be informed at this point which items are to be recommended for exclusion and to be resolved by the Board.

5: Deputations/Petitions

The Board will receive any petitions and/or 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 submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Members of the Public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four

deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

6: Public Question Time

To receive any public questions.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the period for the asking and answering of public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Any questions must be submitted in writing at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting

7: Head Of Service Update

The Board will consider a verbal update from a Head of Service giving an overview of work and progress in respect of the role of the corporate parent.

Contact:

Joel Hanna, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting and Children's Residential Services

8: Children's Performance Report

13 - 26

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

Contacts:

Joel Hanna, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting and Children's Residential Services

Vicky Metheringham, Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Headteacher

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children

Ian Mottershaw, Head of Service –Contextual Safeguarding and Y.E.S, Family Support and Child Protection

9: The Voice of Children and Young People and Care Experience Young People

The Board will consider a verbal update in respect of the representation of the voice of children and young people and care experienced young people.

Contact:

Joel Hanna, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting and Children's Residential Services

10: Sufficiency Update 27 - 52

The Board will consider a report providing an update on the progress against the priorities identified in the Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025.

Contact: Anna Gledhill, Head of Homes for Children

11: Fostering Report October 2022 to March 2023 53 - 74

The Board will consider the Fostering Report October 2022 to March 2023.

Contact: Anna Gledhill, Head of Homes for Children

12: Virtual School Governing Body Update

The Board will receive a verbal update in respect of the Virtual School Governing Body.

Contact:
Louise Hallas, Virtual School Headteacher

13: Children's Ambition Board Update

The Board will receive a verbal update in relation to the Children's Ambition Board.

Contacts:
Kieran Lord, Interim Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)
Vicky Metherringham, Service Director (Family Support and Child Protection)

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 Agenda Plan

75 - 84

The Board will consider the agenda plan for 2023/24.

Contact:

Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement
Officer

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Tuesday 5th December 2023

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds, Cabinet Member - Learning and Aspiration
Councillor Richard Smith, Conservative - Group Business Manager
Councillor John Lawson, Liberal Democrat - Group Leader
Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers
Kieran Lord, Interim Service Director: Resources, Improvements & Partnerships
Stewart Horn, Head of Children's Integrated Commissioning
Louise Hallas, Virtual School Headteacher - Children & Young People
Vicky Metheringham, Service Director - Child Protection & Family Support
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director - Learning & Early Support

In attendance: Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding Service and Y.E.S – Family Support and Child Protection
Nick Libell, Service Manager – Children and Families

Apologies: Councillor Karen Allison, Green Group - Group Business Manager
Sara Miles, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

The Board noted that Joel Hanna had been appointed as the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting and Children's Residential Services and that Ophelia Rix the previous Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers be thanked for her contributions and support to the work of the Board.

Apologies were received from Councillor Karen Allison and Sara Miles, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2023.

Corporate Parenting Board - 5 December 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

All Items were held in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

There were no deputations or petitions received.

6 Public Question Time

There were no questions received from members of the public

7 Service Acknowledgements and Awards

The Board received a verbal update in respect of the nomination of 3 Kirklees Social Workers for the National Social Worker of the year awards presented by Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

The Board noted that it was important to celebrate and recognise the work of all social workers and expressed their congratulations to the 3 nominees and the winner of the overall social worker of the year award.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the update, service acknowledgement and awards.

8 Service Updates

The Board received a verbal update in respect of service structure and portfolio arrangements presented by Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

Joel Hanna explained that his role would be undertaking responsibility for Corporate Parenting and the Social Work teams and Care leaving service along with retaining responsibility for the residential estate and the Head of Homes for Children was to assume responsibility for fostering and sufficiency.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Service Updates.

9 Children's Performance Highlight Report

The Board considered the latest Children's Performance Highlights Report in respect of the performance monitoring data for Children's Services presented by: Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers, Louise Hallas Virtual School Headteacher, Gill Addy, the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Stewart Horn, Head of Children's Integrated Commissioning, Vicky Metherringham, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection and Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding Service and Y.E.S. The following key points were highlighted:

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- In relation to Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability a breakdown of the 72 children were placed outside of Kirklees /more than 20 miles from their home address was to be provided to the Board to show where young people may be living with family and kinship carers.
- In relation to education outcomes, 100% of PEPs were completed within the Summer Term. Every young person was allocated to a member of the experienced Virtual School Team and their attendance, progress and attainment were reviewed enabling challenge and support in a timely manner and for all relevant interventions to be put in place.
- In relation to children looked after health data, progress being made to address the challenges faced by the Service included; bench marking across West Yorkshire, some change in working patterns including a reduction in cross-boundary working, and conversations were being held to prioritise clinicians and service delivery to increase capacity. A commitment to additional resources had been secured from the ICB and from the Local authority to enable the Looked After Health team to carry our Review Health Assessment to improve performance. Older children coming into care commonly had additional support needs and work had been done to explore if other more specialist services may be better placed to take on the IHA for this cohort.
- In relation to Children Looked After Convictions, the number of Young People who were looked after continually for 12 months or more aged 10 -17 who received a substantive outcome had fallen in comparison to previous year. The cohort was lower than the national average and statistical neighbours and this was attributed to the development of a more inclusive disposal panel which offered greater perspective in relation to the circumstances of the young people discussed. This brought forward more imaginative ways of restoration and rehabilitation to prevent reoffending.
- In relation to Care leavers, it was noted that improving Education, Employment and Training (EET) remained a priority in recognising this as a key protective factor for children in care and care leavers. Though a strong position was held nationally and in comparison, with stational neighbours, performance in relation indicators showed the need for improvement. Increasing cross-departmental and partnership working was key to improving opportunities for young people.
- In relation to Care leavers, work was being undertaken with housing providers to ensure that suitable accommodation was available for young people at the right time.

In the discussion to follow, questions and comments were invited from Board Members, with the following issues being covered:

- It was confirmed that the figure for children in care was lower than statistical neighbours was the result of the efforts made in early help services to prevent children from coming into care. The rate was consistent and there were other neighbours who were outliers due to local preventative services at an early level.
- The Board noted that Kirklees College should be recognised for their achievement and good work around attachment and trauma.
- It was confirmed that the increase in school moves was expected in September at the start of the new school year and that most school moves

were planned to make sure the young person had a positive start with their new school and a positive end with the previous school.

- It was positive to see the trauma informed approach being used and leading to good outcomes.
- It was advised that the restorative element in relation to convictions was about understanding a child's circumstances to take a more holistic approach and develop a bespoke package to prevent reoffending and over criminalising young people.
- In relation to understanding more about finding suitable accommodation for Care leavers the Board were advised that there were plans to increase the time that a young person can be referred prior to their 18th birthday. The extension of the offer may not be possible within the Councils current housing stock, so work was being undertaken to increase care leavers access to the private housing market. Improvements were also to be made to support those leaving care when moving into accommodation.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Children's Performance Highlights Report, and it was agreed that a breakdown of the children placed outside of Kirklees /more than 20 miles from their home address be provided to the Board.

- 10 Kirklees Children Looked After and Care Leavers Annual Health Report**
The Board considered the Kirklees Children Looked After and Care Leavers Annual Health Report (April 2022-March 2023) presented by Gill Addy Designated Nurse. It was explained that the reporting period covered recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and there were some challenges to services as a result. It was also highlighted that:

- There had been continuing capacity pressures on the team during the year.
- A hybrid model (telephone and face to face) remained post-pandemic for Initial Health Assessments (IHA).
- There was also the option for IHA's to be carried out via an extended face to face session for those less suited to the telephone aspect.
- There had been a significant rise in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) coming to the area which impacted on the IHA provision, but statutory timescale completion remained very good.
- There had been increasing pressures i.e., child health complexities, numbers of UASC, etc... on the nursing team.
- This had resulted in postponing some previous preventative work and a need to prioritise some activities.
- Bank staff had been used to carry out some nursing administrative tasks to help alleviate pressure.
- Dental access had improved and had been supported by the 'Flexible Commissioning' programme.
- This enabled all Children Looked After (CLA) and care leavers in Kirklees to access dental services.
- Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires' (SDQ's) return rates used to screen the emotional wellbeing of children aged 4 to 17 years, remained low, despite efforts to improve compliance.

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- Discussions continued with the Children's Social Care Service to look at alternative methods of distribution.
- The inclusion of a trauma screening assessment for UASC by a Locala GP, added a valuable dimension to the support options.
- This pilot programme had now ceased and work had been undertaken to try to seek further funding to reintroduce this work.
- Liaison with the sexual health and substance misuse outreach workers continued reinforcing a collaborative working model.
- The data showed that:
 - 201 IHA's (including 18 requests from other authorities) were completed, compared to 146 the previous year.
 - There was a significant rise (from 19 to 30) in UASC entering care, and the increase resulted in catch-up schedules being used more widely.
 - 652 Review Health Assessment's (RHA) were completed (including 55 requests from other authorities).
 - Immunisation rates averaged at 91% across all ages, and teenage boosters remained the most common outstanding immunisations.
 - Children's emotional health benefited from the development of the LA Placement Support Service.
 - 20 UASC benefitted from a 'trauma screening and report' project, led by an experienced Locala GP.
 - 130 Care Leaver health histories were written and distributed.
- There was a long-standing, dedicated, experienced health workforce in place which was co-located and linked through technology to support collaborative working.
- The Proposed Action Plan 2023-24 included:
 - To consider the development of an UASC IHA assessment form.
 - An Audit on the demographics of young people who admitted to vaping at their RHA.
 - To raise awareness of the opportunity offered through the Integrated Care Boards to provide free prescriptions, Optician and Dental support, to care experienced young people who were working and not claiming benefits.
 - To continue to pursue the business case, to increase the capacity in the team to improve health assessment timescales, additional work related to the IHA clinic, and the timely preparation of care leaver health histories.

The Board noted the update and expressed support for the provision of free prescriptions for care experienced young people and asked when this might be implemented. In response, Stewart Horn - Head of Children's Integrated Commissioning, advised that this would be a decision for the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and agreed to provide further information around time scales to the Board.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Kirklees Children Looked After and Care Leavers Annual Health Report and it was agreed that further information around time scales for an ICB decision on prescriptions, dental and optician support be provided to the Board.

11 Update on Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers presented a report setting out an update on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). It was noted that:

- All Local Authorities were required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of looked after children.
- SDQ's were introduced in 2008 as a screening tool to assist in measuring the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people.
- The SDQ is a clinically validated brief behavioural screening questionnaire for use with 4–17-year-olds or 2-4 year olds.
- The data was collected through the SDQ and a summary figure for each child (the total difficulties score) was the outcome measure used for tracking the emotional and behavioural difficulties of children looked after at a national level.
- The Kirklees return rate was below the national average, and there had been a reduction in the total number of returned SDQ's over the past three years, with last year's being the lowest.
- There had been a slight rise in the number of 'high' SDQ scores returned by carer this year.
- This suggested that carers were reporting more concerns on fewer looked after children.
- The 'satisfactory' and 'borderline' rates remained largely consistent overall.
- The SDQ working group had been working towards the initial goal to increase the return rate from carers of children looked after to above 80% (currently 65%).

In the discussion to follow, questions and comments were invited from Board Members, with the following issues being covered:

- It was confirmed that a standard template used nationally, and that the process that followed the completion of SDQ's and improving scores was part of the key drive for improvement. By 2024 the aim was for the process to be fully embedded, and that with increasing scores there would be better emotional support for young people and the process would be more meaningful.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Updates on Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire.

12 Summary Annual report on Complaints and Compliments

The Board considered the Compliments and Complaints Service Annual Summary 2022-23 which was presented by Nick Libell, Service Manager – Children and Families.

Nick Libell advised that the purpose of the report was to inform the Board of compliments and complaints in relation to children looked after during the period of 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. It was advised that:

- Under the Children's Act 1989, the provision of an annual Complaints report was a statutory requirement.
- 366 compliments and complaints were registered during this financial year.

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- 52 of these were compliments, 158 were enquiries and 85 complaints were remedied via the local resolution procedure.
- 23 complaints were responded to via the statutory Stage 1 process (an increase from 15 the previous year).
- There were four Stage 2 investigations, two Stage 3 investigations and four cases were referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- In relation to children looked after and care leavers, there were ten Stage 1 investigations during the 22/23 year out of a total of 23.
- The service worked hard to work in a restorative manner to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity.
- The Compliments and Complaints Team continued to ensure that the complaints process was open and accessible to young people both directly and through an advocate from the Children's Rights Service.
- 52% of all complaints registered at Stage One, were from young people, with the support of Childrens Rights Service.
- 34.8% of all complaints registered at Stage One, were from Parents.
- Of the 23 stage 1 complaints received, 10 related to Looked After Children.
- Most of the complaints received related to an issue with service provision a delay in communication or to disagree with a particular decision.
- There had been a small increase in the number of stage 1 complaints, but the overall position was that complaints were being resolved at the earliest possible stage.
- There was a focus on learning lessons from complaints and integrating this with broader quality assurance work across the directorate to improve outcomes for young people.
- This work included:
 - At all stages, any lessons and findings identified from complaints were expected to be followed up by managers with staff to inform individual learning and development.
 - Themes and patterns for learning identified from complaints were to be shared with the Learning and Development Service.
 - To strengthen embedding learning across the service, the Complaints team and Learning and Development team had strengthened pathways to review complaints and compliments to ensure that key messages influence practice.

In the discussion to follow, questions and comments were invited from Board Members, with the following issues being covered:

- Failure to communicate was present in all complaints and the Board wanted to understand how this had been translated to action to improve outcomes.
- It was important to highlight the compliments to share where there had been good practice and it was requested that this information be provided to the Board at a future meeting.
- When prioritizing workload, the Board highlighted that consideration should be given to what was most important to young people noting that this was a key element in maintaining strong relationships.
- That the outcomes of the 4 complaints which were considered by the Local Government Ombudsman for children and young people be shared with the Board.

In relation to improving outcomes Nick Libell advised that when a complaint was formally received the local resolution part of the complaint was referred to the responding manager to contact the young person or parent by phone or in person with the aim of intervening as early as possible. It was also noted that expectation management in terms of social worker workload was also a key element of this learning.

In relation to the prioritisation of workload Nick Libell advised that there was a pathway to fast track and prioritise complaints from young people. Where complaints come directly from a young person, or their advocate, these were responded to on an accelerated timescale with the ambition of attaining local resolution through quick action and response.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Compliments and Complaints Service Annual Summary 2022-23, and it was agreed that:

1. Details of the Compliments received, and examples of good practice be provided to the Board at a future meeting.
2. The outcomes of the 4 complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman for Children and Young People be shared with the Board.

13 Virtual School Governing Body Update

The Board considered a verbal update in respect of the Virtual School Governing Body.

Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds the Chair of the Governing Body introduced the item highlighting that the Governing Body had been developing a plan to refresh its support and challenge function. The action plan identified attendance, engagement, attainment and ECHP's as key priority areas.

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Headteacher further advised that at its last meeting the Governing Body considered:

- The Headteachers Report (previously presented to the Corporate Parenting Board).
- Areas of commissioned work such as training to support attainment in KS1 and KS2, the educational psychologist service and the CAMHS service.
- Action planning in respect of priority areas such as attendance (encompassing, suspensions, exclusions, and part time timetables) as well as progress and attainment.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Virtual School Draft Headteacher Report and it was agreed that a report showing a breakdown of recorded unauthorised absences be provided to the Board.

14 Children's Ambition Board Update

The Board considered a verbal update in relation to the last meeting of the Childrens Ambition Board presented by Kieran Lord, Interim Service Director -

Corporate Parenting Board - 5 December 2023

Resources, Improvements and Partnerships and Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director Learning and Early Support.

During its last meeting the Board considered highlights in performance for social care, exclusions/suspensions, strengths, and improvements. The Board also considered its future purpose, and it was agreed for there to be a key focus on improving outcomes for children with SEND moving forwards.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Children Ambition Board Update

15 **Updates from Board Members on Interaction 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.

The Chair noted attendance at:

- The Kinship Carers Halloween Party
- A Care Leaving team meeting in Dewsbury.
- A Time to Talk session.
- 2 full staff engagement sessions (Huddersfield and Dewsbury)
- Magic Breakfast (online session)

Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds reported that she had attended the Foster Carer Christmas celebration, the West Yorkshire launch of Project Hope and the Kirklees Top 100 employer launch. It was noted that the Project Hope and Kirklees Top 100 employer events were well attended and a strong commitment to supporting young people was demonstrated through likeminded partners and local employers coming together.

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director Learning and Early Support visited Woodley School and College where pupils had been working with the Councils Our Voice Team to input their views into what they would like to see in their new school. It was positive to listen to the young people and see them receive their feedback in respect of the architects design.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Updates from Board Members on Interaction with Services.

16 **Corporate Parenting Board Next Steps**

The Board considered a verbal update in respect of the next steps for the Corporate Parenting Board presented by Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. It was advised that upon request from the Local Authority a government advisor had reviewed care leaving services. Advice provided included plans to strengthen the Corporate Parenting Board by widening representation on the board, and by holding more powers to hold partners and the Council to account.

In the discussion to follow, questions and comments were invited from Board Members, with the following issues being covered:

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- The importance of ensuring that the voice of children and young people were represented on the Board, and it was agreed that this be added as a standard item for each meeting of the Board.
- It was confirmed that a meeting had been held with the Children in Care Council and a meeting was to be held with the Care leaving Council and Personal advisors shortly in respect of representing children and young peoples voices.
- It was confirmed that work was being undertaken with the Childrens Rights Team around providing and refreshing Total Respect Training and the roles and responsibilities of corporate parents to all elected members.
- The idea of holding Board meeting at more accessible times and locations to enable place-based working and greater representation of the voice of children and young people was suggested.
- It was confirmed that an informal meeting of the Board in respect of strengthening understanding of the role of the corporate parent amongst elected members be held as agreed in a previous meeting of the Board.
- It was suggested that member group meetings may provide a space for representation, and it was agreed for the Governance Officer to provide Joel Hanna with a list of the names of group business managers.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Corporate Parenting Next Steps, and it was agreed that:

1. 'Voice of Children Looked After and Care leavers' be added to all future Corporate Parenting Board meeting agenda's as a standard item.
2. The Governance Officer would provide Joel Hanna with a list of group business managers in relation to presenting on the principles and role of the Corporate Parent at group meetings.

17 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan

The Board considered the agenda plan for 2023/24.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the agenda plan for 2023/24 .

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.

Date of Board: 23 January 2024

Data is as at 30th November 2023, unless stated otherwise.

Benchmarking Source: Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT – Nov 23) & Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMt) v3.41. Benchmarking data is from March 2023 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	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	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	63.3 (621)	62.5 (613)	63.3 (619)	62.8 (614)	93.0	71.3
	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)	10.8% (67/621)	11.4% (70/613)	11.6% (72/619)	12.2% (75/614)	13.0%	17.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - CLA with three or more placements	% (number)	8.9% (55)	10.3% (63)	11.0% (68)	12.5% (77)	10.4%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of CLA in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	264	308	346	359	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.57	0.72	0.82	0.86	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- During the 12-month period from Dec 22 to Nov 23, the children looked after rate peaked at 63.3 (621 children) in Dec 22 and is currently 62.8 (614 children) in Nov 23. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 61.6 (604 children), slightly above our 31 March 2023 published rate of 60.6, and below the England 2023 rate of 71.3 and significantly below our Statistical Neighbours 2023 rate of 87.6.
- Of the 75 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering. The full breakdown is as follows:

Placement Type	Number	%
Fostering	56	74.7%
Residential	8	10.7%
Hostel/Sup Res (Unregistered Provider)	3	4.0%
Placed for Adoption	2	2.7%
Placed with Parents	1	1.3%
Residential School	1	1.3%
YOI or Prison	1	1.3%
Secure Unit	1	1.3%
Family centre or mother and baby unit	1	1.3%
Other / unknown	1	1.3%
Total	75	

- Reasons for children and young people living at distance can be due specialist accommodation not available in our area, children and young people living with extended family, identified safeguarding reasons as well as availability of matched and suitable capacity of provision within our area at the point of need. In the data above 16 of those children and young people in fostering arrangements are with members of their family.
- The care planning and decision-making processes for children and young people is monitored and reviewed at Legal Gateway, Permanence and Children Accessing Service Panels that are chaired by a Head of Service. The panels consider the most effective route to securing stable and permanent arrangements for caring for our children and people and oversees the quality and timeliness of care planning and ensures that children and young people receive the right services at the right time, and that these are reviewed.
- The panels provide assurance of management oversight, accountability for decision making and can support practice improvement through identifying areas of best practice and areas for development.
- Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) maintains effective oversight of our children and young people placed in external arrangements through a review panel held fortnightly and chaired by a Service Director. The purpose of the panel is to ensure effective oversight and accountability for our children who are not placed in Local Authority arrangements and provides a quality assurance function with appropriate challenge to ensure that plans for individual children progress.

What do we want to improve:

- The service is working together with our Fostering and the Emotional Wellbeing teams to support earlier identification where our children and young people's home arrangements may need additional support to intervene early and prevent a disruptive and potentially damaging breakdown in our children's living and care arrangements. Our Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) team is due to co-locate with our children Looked After teams to support timely identification and earlier planning for children whose plans have the potential for them to return to their family.
- We are setting out a refreshed recruitment campaign to support recruitment to the Children Looked After Social Work teams to support quicker turnaround of vacant posts and enable our social workers to invest the time required to establish and maintain effective relationships with children, young people, families, and carers.
- We are working to improve the alignment of our Children Looked After and Care Leaver teams to better support joint work and preparation for living independently and ensure that this key transitional age of child to adult life we maximise support to protect against disconnection with services and support.

Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	98.1%	98.0%	98.0%	97.5%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory timescale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	93.8% (591)	89.6% (552)	91.5% (563)	89.9% (549)	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)	3.7% (23)	2.0% (12)	1.9% (12)	1.6% (10)	11.3%	11.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
b. No. of CLA that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	56.5% (13)	58.3% (7)	16.7% (2)	50.0% (5)	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)	65.8% (25/38)	38.5% (10/26)	64.7% (11/17)	37.5% (3/8)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- 12 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) for children to become Looked After in November 2023, relating to 19 children in total. 3 of these requests were for sibling groups, with largest sibling group of 6 children.
- 25% of the requests referred were for children who were already subject to Child Protection Plans at point of becoming Looked After, which was reduction from previous month but reflected our average monthly percentage.. 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.
- In November 2023 97.5% of Looked After Review Meetings took place within required timescales. Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained 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, e.g. if it was identified at very short notice that the allocated Social Worker for the child was not going to be available to attend.
- Children's Looked After Review meetings are well attended by a range of partner agencies, who commit to taking actions to improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- Independent Reviewing Officers robustly review children's care plans. They provide time-bound actions, which are followed up in between Review meetings to ensure that plans for children progress, and where drift and delay is identified this is raised via informal and formal resolution processes.
- From June 2023 allocated IRO's for children New into Care have been required to undertake New into Care case audits. Findings are shared with the area social work Service Manager for oversight, and social work Team Managers. Key themes highlighting best practice and areas for practice and service improvement are captured in monthly CPRU reports for senior managers, and the findings are also shared in the monthly Children's Social Care Quality Assurance Board Meeting with Service Managers.
- The Children's Rights team continue to provide advocacy for children and young people, along with supporting young people at their Looked After Review meetings and working with the Children in Care Council (CICC) and Care Leavers Forum, both which meet on a regular basis.

- Team Managers for children in care meet with the Children in Care Council young people to obtain their wishes and feelings and consult with them in relation to areas of development and proposed changes to key documents. The CiCC and Care Leavers forum also meets with senior leaders. In October, the Service Director for Child Protection and Family Support met with both groups and the Principle Social Worker attended the groups to explore with them their views of social workers including what makes a good social worker, and to gain young people's experiences of services they have received, and where they feel improvements can be made. The new Head of Service for Children in Care has met and plans to continue to meet the groups regularly to consult with them.
- Independent Visitors (IV's) continue to support young people through a range of activities, according to the needs and wishes of the young people they are matched with. Currently there are 23 Independent Visitors matched with children and young people, and 20 young people previously referred are on a waiting list to be matched with an Independent Visitor, however this continues to be reviewed to ensure that this remains an accurate reflection of demand on the service. A significant number of those on the waiting list have additional needs/ are out of area which impacts on matching.
- The children in care service management team meet with the Children in Care Council young people to obtain their wishes and feeling along with consulting with them in relation to areas of development and proposed changes to key documents.
- There continues to be an emphasis on seeking to recruit Independent Visitors and successfully match with young people.
- We are continuing to undertake weekly management oversight and monitoring of statutory visits to our children and young people who are looked after to ensure that we can quickly identify where visits are out of time or risk being so. Through this process we can identify any trends or patterns of gaps in visits quickly and support issues like timely recording of visits, more effectively. Our approach, supported by our routine management auditing enables us to consider both timeliness, quality, and purposefulness of visits to children and young people as well as providing evidence of practice in relation key strengths and areas for further development.

Missing CLA:

- The number of Children having at least one missing episode has seen a decrease and the 12 month average of 2.4%, remains considerably below the national average and statistical neighbours. The numbers used to calculate percentages are relatively low making shifts in percentage scales potentially volatile.
- The number of children looked after who have missing episodes has been low for a considerable period and remains low.
- The principles of 'Right Support, Right Person, at the Right Time' are consistently adopted when approaching an Independent Return Interview. Utilising familiarity and identifying the right person for the circumstances and placing the Young Person at the centre of the decision is the consistent approach undertaken. With very specific exceptions all Children and Young people are offered an independent return home interview (100%).
- The percentage of Children receiving an IRI within 72 hours was lower than recent previous months and in line with the wider cohort of missing children. The principal of right person meant that although not always within 72 hours the best possible person undertook the task and ensured 100% of all accepted interviews were completed.
- Those completed within 72 hours of their return was low in August, however under those principles of utilising the right person 100% of all Independent Return Home interviews offered and accepted were completed.

- The number of children having multiple missing episodes has risen from 2 last month to 5 this The percentage rate increase is 50%, however this is determined from a very low overall number in the cohort of missing children. The slight fluctuation in the overall number of Children therefore creates a significant shift in the percentage and as such presents a volatile range.
- As per previous reports, 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.
- Daily Risk Exploitation and Missing Meetings (DREAMM) occur with partners to discuss, intelligence, missing episodes, and individual circumstances to ensure actions, and allocations are in keeping with the core principles placing the child at the centre.
- The Philomena Protocol is a Police initiative to help locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing. The basis of the scheme is for vital information about the young person to be recorded on a form so that this can be used to help locate them safely and quickly. The Philomena Protocol documents continue to be 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 needs to take place with the police call operators who receive the information as they are not all familiar with the protocol.
- West Yorkshire Police are undertaking a revised approach in accordance with an agreed national pilot. Though recently changed the lower numbers of missing episodes could be a reflection of the three steps undertaken when reporting a missing person. Levels of Intervention, No Immediate Intervention Required. Parental or Carer Intervention and Police Intervention. This approach may more accurately identify missing episodes and not unnecessarily create missing episodes that do not reflect the circumstances.

What do we want to improve:

- The Service Managers to continue to provide oversight of statutory visit compliance through the weekly performance meetings that are held within the service. Additionally there are fortnightly practitioner focused performance meeting chaired by the team manager to ensure all relevant support and development is in place for all staff.
- The report identifies the number of independent Return Home Interviews offered and accepted. Securing more IRI's remains a priority and together with securing those IRI's comes the requirement to ensure quality and value is maximised.
- The Youth Engagement has seen an increase in conversation from offer of IRI to Acceptance. This remains an ambition to constantly improve and harvest information that supports the young person and develops knowledge to reduce future missing episodes.

Children Looked After Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Spring Term 22/23	Summer Term 22/23	Autumn Term 23/24	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age CLA with PEP in the last term)	%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	95.0% (19/20)	100% (11/11)	94% (16/17)	95.6% (86/90)	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	26.8%	20.7%	22.8%	24.0%	17.3% (2021/22)	19.1% (2021/22)
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
CLA with a mid-year school move	Number	9	8	12	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- 100% of PEPs were completed within the Autumn Term.
- Every young person is allocated to a member of our experienced Virtual School Team; therefore we know our young people well and their attendance, progress and attainment are reviewed so that we are able to challenge and support in a timely manner and relevant interventions can be put in place.
- We continue to work closely with social care to improve young people's educational experiences.

What do we want to improve:

- Improving attainment and progress for all young people
- Reducing the number of unauthorised absences in both frequency and duration
- Reduction in the number of young people who are classed as PA (Persistent Absenteeism 90%)
- Reducing the time young people are not in full time provision.
- Stabilising school placements for young people

Children Looked After Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	61.5%	67.8%	65.2%	63.4%	76.7%	76.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	76.8%	53.2%	40.5%	32.6%	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	%	86.9%	80.2%	82.2%	85.4%	97.0%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	91.0%	88.7%	87.4%	85.1%	90.4%	89.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.11.16 No. of CLA in care more than 12 month and identified as having a substance misuse problem during the last year	% (number)	1.08% (5)	0.23% (1)	1.18% (5)	0.96% (4)	2.86%	3.00%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

Initial health assessments (IHA):

- LA rolling 12-month data shows that 36.6% were completed in the statutory timescale, capturing data from earlier in the year. The current percentage of IHA's completed within 20 working days in November is **0%**. The challenges are replicated across regional neighbours and is highlighted on the WY risk register. Prior to the recent situation an average of 95% were in timescales with no waiting list.
- Several contributing factors e.g., continuing numbers coming into care incl. sibling groups, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and some older individuals who we are unable to engage in the process and require alternative options needing extra resource.
- There is a planned, booked waiting list from late December to early March comprising of: 25 Virtual telephone assessments and 34 Face to Face
- There were 22 IHA timescale breaches for the Kirklees CLA related to clinic availability & capacity.
- The Business Case to consider additional nurse/doctor resource/alternative CLA Health model, which would support the whole team remains under commissioner consideration.

Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **85.4% & 85.1%** of the under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were completed in statutory timescales. Since September there has been an agreement to complete the RHA's in the month they are due instead of the exact date, in line with the DfE guidance SSSDA903, and this is providing improved results.
- Locala monthly data for Nov shows that there were 5 breaches of statutory timescales in total out of the 43 RHA's carried out, related to arrangements with the carers and an admin error. **95%** of the over 5-year-olds were in timescales.

Dental Checks (attended) within last 12 months: at the point of their RHA.

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **63.4%** of children aged 1+, had attended the dentist. Several factors are negatively affecting the recording. A working group has been established to look

Children in Care – Children Looked After Health (cont.)

at aligning the data with Locala and using other collection methods avoiding a total reliance on once or twice-yearly recording at the RHA.

- Locala monthly data for Nov shows that **100%** of children age 18months to 5 years & **91%** age 5 years+ had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA.

Registered at dentist:

- Locala data shows **100%** of children aged 18m to 5 years & **82%** 5 years+ at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' has supported CLA and care leavers to register. Children placed out of Kirklees, especially sibling groups may struggle to register, and some older young people may choose not to register.

Substance misuse:

- 4 (**0.96%**) young people are currently recorded as being significantly affected by substance misuse in their daily lives as recorded at their RHA. An alternative method of collecting this data is under consideration.

Immunisations: Locala

- 100% & 67%** of under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were up to date with their immunisations at their RHA. Reasons for a lower uptake in older children can be related to the shortened schedule offered to UASC who generally have an unknown history, some young people may decline, and placement moves or moves to semi-independent living can negatively impact take up.
- November data showed: **10** x children had immunisations outstanding at their RHA and **5** of these were UASC who were choosing not to engage in the shortened schedule offer. 4 others had outstanding School leavers boosters and Men ACWY. And 1 had HPV missing. All are followed up with their social workers.

Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				Benchmarking
		Oct-Dec 22/23 Q3	Jan-Mar 22/23 Q4	Apr-Jun 23/24 Q1	Jul-Sep 23/24 Q1	
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)	%	0.00% (0/343)	0.00% (0/343)	0.61% (2/326)	0.61% (2/326)	Kirk: 3.0% Eng.: 2.0% SN's: 3.3% Y&H: 2.0%
	Direction of Travel	↓	↔	↑	↔	

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

* The data for Oct to December 2023 will not be available until January 2024.

- The number of Young People who have been looked after continually for 12 months or more aged 10 to 17 who have received a substantive outcome has fallen in comparison to previous year. It should be noted the cohort is very small in real terms.

What do we want to improve:

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 23/24 year is smaller than the 22/23 year (326 compared to 343), but through continued

Children in Care – Children Looked After Convictions (cont.)

interventions by the YOT, restorative processes, liaison with Children’s Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will remain low.

- There is a focus around Looked After Children in our subgroups – specifically Subgroup 2 – Reducing offending and reoffending.

Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	94.0%	98.3%	100.0%	100.0%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↔		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	95.0%	96.1%	96.1%	95.2%	95.0%	92.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	90.3%	91.9%	92.0%	91.6%	89.3%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	58.0%	60.3%	58.2%	57.2%	51.4%	56.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	72.7%	93.5%	93.6%	93.9%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- *Contact with care leavers* –Our Personal Advisors continue to support and build positive relationships with the young people they are working with. Whilst we recognise that accessing support through the care leavers service is a personal choice for our Care Leavers the approach of our Personal Advisor’s is to support and encourage young people to engage.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – Our new interim Service Manager for the Care Leavers Service has revised the arrangements with our housing services to enable earlier bidding as part of our efforts to support Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation.
- *Children in Care aged 17 years with an allocated Personal Advisors* – we are continuing to work closely with our social work teams to ensure that we identify and support the allocation of young people for Personal Advisor support at 17 and 4 months.
- *Education Employment Training* – Engaging our Care Leavers in employment, training and education is recognised as a core priority for the service. In addition to our seconded C&K Careers Advisor in the Care Leaving Service we have held an initial meeting with the CEO of Kirklees college with the aim of establishing a close working relationship to benefit our Care Leavers. We have support from the Head of Skills and Employment in Skills and Regeneration and have begun work to establish a broad partnership of employers and training providers.
- *Pathway Plans* – We have recently partnered with North Yorkshire as part of the Sector Led Improvement Partnership and have agreed a focus on the quality of our Pathway plans. Existing performance and monitoring of completion remains an important part of our services quality assurance processes and we are continually seeking to identify early and address quickly timeliness and quality of care leavers pathway plans.

What do we want to improve:

- We recently benefited from a two-day review from the national implementation advisor to government on Care Leavers. This review together with the support we have through partnering with North Yorkshire has enabled us to establish a thorough service improvement plan to improve further our offer and services to Care Leavers
- We recognise that our Care Leaver’s offer can be enhanced significantly through developing and extending our partnership arrangements to include businesses, and local charities and organisations within our area. We have engaged Huddersfield Town Foundation Trust and agreed that we will co-develop and deliver our new ‘skills for independent living’ programme with them to support care leavers succeeding in new tenancies and have the confidence and system to access support where needed.
- We are developing links with the DWP, Kirklees College and the Nation Care Leaver Covenant team to access opportunities for employment and training for our care leavers as well as setting out quicker processes internally to support our Care Leavers access work tasters and internal Council opportunities for apprenticeships and jobs.
- In order to enhance our opportunities to engage care leavers and maximise our contact and support we are reviewing our accessibility and delivery of support provided through our two ‘Care Leaver Hubs.’ This will involve consultation with our Personal Advisors and Care Leavers.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	9.5% (19)	9.5% (23)	8.8% (22)	7.7% (19)	12.7%	9.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
A10 Average timescale (days) between the child coming into care and being placed with the adopter adjusted for foster carer adoptions (12 month rolling period)	Number	443.1	545.1	553.5	558.1	501.0	480.0
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)
A2 Average timescale (days) between receiving court authority to place a child and the council deciding to match the child with an adoptive family (12 month rolling period)	Number	186.5	210.2	207.7	224.7	193.0	197.0
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)	(ASGLB Q1-Q4 2022/23)

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- We continue to prioritise brothers and sisters growing up together and where possible Early Permanence Placements are made, **which has led to performance being below statistical and national average performance. We do have a small number of children who are either part of sibling group, harder to place due to age, ethnicity or additional needs however ensuring**

children who have a plan for adoption are given the best opportunity for this to be secured remains our priority. Children who are waiting longer than we would want to be matched are reviewed by the Agency Decision Maker to ensure adoption remains the right plan.

- Performance relating to % of children leaving care because of adoption is below our statistical and national England average against % percentage of children leaving care. Kirklees prides itself on the emphasis of children where it is not possible to return to birth family are able to remain within the extended family through other legal orders including Child Arrangement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders.
- We have good working relationships between Kirklees and One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), to address challenges at the earliest point.
- Monitoring of the adoption cases and outcomes continues to take place through monthly tracking of adoption cases by Kirklees and OAWY Service Delivery Managers. This is embedded into our day-to-day arrangements with OAWY.
- Training from OAWY has been and will continue to be provided to Kirklees staff, to ensure understanding of the complexities of the adoption process and awareness raising from research/practice.
- Continued support from OAWY to practitioners to Kirklees staff in relation to adoption practice.
- Timely identification of harder to place children and provision of appropriate resources to progress linking and matching outside of One Adoption where needed.
- OAWY attend Legal Gateway with a view to being able to provide support and assistance for any adoption cases including consideration of Early Permanence.
- The Early Permanence Meetings, which are held fortnightly to discuss all children and their plans for adoption, is having a positive impact on ensuring at the earliest point decisions are made to secure permanency should reunification to birth parents ruled out.
- Agreed escalation processes where drift is identified from tracking and monitoring processes.
- OAWY have secured national funding to support family finding for children who wait the longest for adoption and local provision of Early Permanence for older children/sibling groups. Kirklees children will be eligible for and benefit from these resources as the projects progress.

What do we want to improve:

- To increase the numbers of children placed through Early Permanence through early identification of children and increasing the number of EP adopters. This remains a key area for improvement.
- To ensure all children considered 'harder to place' are identified early for OAWY to commence family finding. For OAWY to continue taking an innovative approach to family finding for these children, ensuring that all avenues are proactively explored.
- To increase staff understanding of adoption, including Early Permanence, through training.
- Continue to jointly review cases where adoptions disrupt or breakdown to understand contributing factors to inform future practice.
- Finance staff and Service managers should review all available data at the time of formula reset to ensure all parties are clear what the apportionments are based on. This should commence swiftly to ensure it concludes in time for the 2024/25 refresh.

Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Nov-22	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total new Mainstream In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	1	0	0	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
Total new Connected Person Fostering approvals in the month	Number	3	2	2	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↔	↑		
In-house Mainstream Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	1	5	1	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
In-house Connected Person Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	1	5	2	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↑	↓		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	179	155	157	168	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
b. Family and friend placements (inc. Reg 24)	Number	134	116	118	102	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	165	169	171	168	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make:

- In November 2023 there were 6 foster carer approvals, 5 were kinship foster carers and 1 was a mainstream (unconnected) approval.
- There were 4 de-registrations in November 2023, 2 Kinship Carers and 2 Mainstream Carers. 1 Kinship Carer progressed to a Special Guardianship Order and another kinship carer resigned as the child in their care moved to another family member.
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers stood at 168 in November 2023, above the 12-month average of 158.
- The number of Family and Friends Placements stood at 102 in November 2023, inclusive of Reg 24 Placements. The 12-month average is 120.
- The November 2023 there were 168 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements. The 12-month average is 168.

What do we want to improve:

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a priority. We are updating our fostering recruitment strategy. We are focussed on recruiting internal foster carers who can help us to meet our sufficiency needs around placements for older children, children with complex needs, offering short and long-term placements, and short notice / emergency placements. In addition, work is being undertaken in respect of utilising current foster carers expertise to offer support, respite, and holiday placements. We are exploring quality assurance of all mainstream carers who have left the service.
- 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.

Sufficiency – Foster Carers (cont.)

- We continue to develop and implement policies and procedures for the Fostering Service. This service improvement plan is regularly reviewed.

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
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: 23 January 2024

Title of report: Sufficiency update

Purpose of report:

This report provides an update on the progress against the priorities identified in the Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025.

<p>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></p>	<p>Key Decision – No Private Report/Private Appendix – No</p>
<p>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</p>	<p>Not Applicable – for information only.</p>
<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</p>	<p>Kieran Lord- Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships. Children's Services.10.01.24</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
<p>Cabinet member portfolio</p>	<p>Cllr Kendrick</p>

Electoral wards affected: N/A

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

Summary

This report provides an update on the progress against the priorities and actions with the headline sufficiency plan, both identified in the Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025.

1. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

2. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The Service works with foster carers and across the council and wider partnership.

2.2 Working with Partners

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

2.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

2.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

2.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Sufficiency Strategy sets out a framework for understanding and forecasting the needs for high quality homes and care environments for our children and care experienced young people in Kirklees. This document identifies what we have done and to achieve these outcomes for children and young people as outlined in the sufficiency needs assessment and strategy for 2023-2025.

2.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees

Not applicable

2.7 Other (eg Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

3 Consultation

Not applicable

4 Engagement

Not applicable

5 Next steps and timelines

Sufficiency Headline plan to updated for April 2024.

6 Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

8 Contact officer

Anna Gledhill, Head of Homes for Children. 01484 221000 extension 71493
email: anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10 Service Director responsible

Kieran Lord, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships

Sufficiency Strategy Update
January 2024

This report provides an update on the progress against the priorities identified in the Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025.

Our priorities are delivered through our 'Continuous Service Improvement Plans' for our Fostering, Residential and Placements services.

a) **Where possible children in care live in family homes.**

46 Special Guardianship Orders and 5 Child Arrangement Orders were made between April 2023- January 2024 which have supported children to remain within their family. Our team re structure has ensured that our kinship foster carers receive consistent support in their own right through a supervising social worker.

b) **Expand our Fostering Services to delivery more fostering homes for our Children.**

Our number of children placed in internal mainstream fostering households matched the 12 month average (168) in November 2023. Our continuous service development plan has implemented a number of policies and practices to support the expansion of our fostering service including relationships with our regional colleagues, relationships with our fostering community and network, quality assurance activity, fostering finance policy. We recognise more is required to invest in our fostering services to ensure that it has effective capacity and resource to deliver our aspirations to build our fostering community and ensure that the corporate centre recognises and promotes fostering for Kirklees as a top priority for the authority.

c) **Ensure our Residential Children's Home deliver outstanding care**

We have invested in our residential estate to ensure that the homes we provide deliver best quality Outstanding care for our children. We have undertaken a full refurbishment of one of our homes in 2023 and will use this as a blueprint for our estate over the next three years. As part of our continuous improvement strategy, we will continue to invest in our workforce ensuring that our practice remains current and effective supported by our revised progression pathway as part of our workforce strategy.

d) **Ensure that our children and young people have access to a spectrum of placement options to best meet their individual needs.**

We will ensure that our recruitment of in house foster carers is based on a current understanding of demand and that our focus remains to increase our services in house capacity. We will establish effective commissioning arrangements that build strong partnership and join working based on safe and effective commissioning principles.

e) Build and develop our local relationship with the independent sector through effective market engagement to develop and manage a mixed economy of provision.

Two residential children’s homes provider events have taken place in 2023. Visits by Commissioning and the Placement Team staff to all children’s home providers in Kirklees are taking place. A White Rose regional provider event is planned for spring 2024.

All new children’s home planning applications in Kirklees are being monitored by the Commissioning Team, contact is then made with providers to explore potential opportunities for us to work in partnership.

A new 16+ Supported Accommodation Electronic Market Place (approved list of providers) is current out to tender, which is in line with the new Ofsted 16+ Supported Accommodation regulations and categories. A 16+ Supported Accommodation Provider Engagement Event was held September 2023.

f) Ensure that we can response to urgent / crisis need for accommodation for children and young people by developing our in house and commissioned provision designed to offer immediate access where required.

GW: The Commissioning Team and Placement Team are working in partnership to actively engage with current approved providers and potential new providers to increase emergency placement opportunities in Kirklees and neighbouring authorities.

The Commissioning Team are developing and reviewing contracts and Individual Placement Agreements with all of our external and unregulated providers to ensure they meet need.

Placement Sufficiency Headline Plan

Updates against our Headline Plan:

Area	Outcome	by
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<p style="text-align: center;">Fostering</p>	<p>Increase the number of Kirklees Council Foster Carers</p>	<p>Ensuring that fostering is recognised as a LA priority driven by our Corporate Parenting strategy</p> <p>Our corporate parenting strategy and approach is currently being refreshed.</p> <p>Ensure that our finance arrangements for foster cares are competitive against IFA and neighbouring LAs</p> <p>A foster carer fee uplift was implemented in 2023 for 2022-2023. Kirklees Fostering Finance Policy to ensure fairness and consistency of payments and enhancements support our sufficiency requirements was launched in May 2023.</p> <p>Deliver an effectively resourced marketing strategy</p> <p>We are refreshing our fostering recruitment and marketing strategy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Children's Homes</p>	<p>Expand our in-house capacity for caring for more children in our homes</p>	<p>Open our newly planned home 'Magdale House' in the spring 2023</p> <p>We are now finalising our registration for a new home that we anticipate will open within early new year 2024.</p> <p>Re-open our currently Closed home Healds Road in the spring 2023</p> <p>Healds Rd is now open with one young person living there and another moving in January 2024.</p> <p>Work with our cross council services to support our estate refurbishment programme and ensure that responses to damage and requirements for repair are undertaken swiftly and to a high quality.</p>

		<p>Aligning our placement support resources to support maintaining best and current practices within our homes</p> <p>Develop a business case based on invest to save principles, to expand our bedded in- house capacity by developing a small number of one and two bedded homes for children and young people, linked to our existing estate.</p> <p>Progress is being made to purchase a house from the open market to become a two person children’s home. A property has been identified, Corporate Assets colleagues are now taking the lead on carrying out due diligence.</p>
<p>Supported Living</p>	<p>Develop the range of independent/semi-independent accommodation options for our older young people in our care and those with care experience from our authority.</p>	<p>Review our commissioning arrangements and agree a new fit for purpose commissioning framework</p> <p>A revised list of Ofsted registered provider was put in place from the 28th October 2023. The new 16+ Supported Accommodation EMP will be operational from the 1st April 2024.</p> <p>Explore the potential for partnerships with local third sector organisations to enhance our offer for Care experienced young adults</p> <p>The new 16+ Supported Accommodation EMP has provided us with the opportunity to grow local supported accommodation options by actively engaging with providers as part of the tender process.</p>

Kirklees Children's Services

Sufficiency needs assessment & strategy

January 2023 to March 2025

Executive Summary

This sufficiency needs assessment and strategy for 2023-2025 is set out to provide a framework for understanding and forecasting the needs for high quality homes and care environments for our children and care experienced young people in Kirklees. The strategy reflects upon the progress made by Kirklees Council in meeting and reducing the number of children requiring to be looked after (hereafter referred to as Children Looked After (CLA) since 2020. The Strategy describes how the Council will continue to meet its Sufficiency Duty. This needs assessment and strategy is a statutory requirement set out in Section 22G of the Children's Act 1989.

The Sufficiency Duty requires "local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority is looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area."

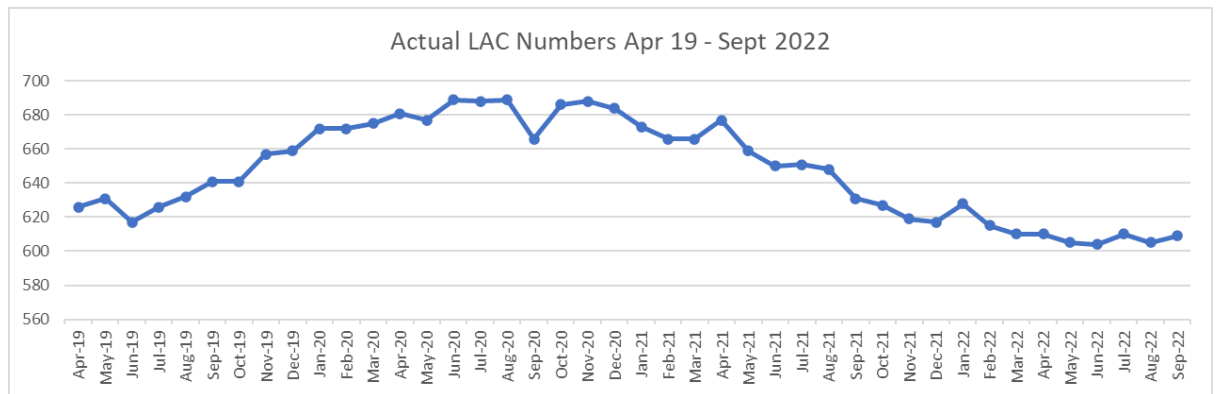
Kirklees Council is ambitious for the children it is responsible for and as set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, we want our children in care and care leavers to be happy, healthy, and successful. We are committed to providing children and young people with high quality parenting, care and the right support, to enable them to aspire, achieve and live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives. This document will identify what we have done and what we need to do to achieve these outcomes for children and young people.

1. Introduction

1.0 Kirklees Council has prioritised resources to support families at the earliest opportunity, and this has had a dramatic impact upon the numbers of children who either require a child protection plan or who are required to come into our care as Children Looked After (CLA).

1.1 Figure 1 below shows how the population of children in care has reduced. The graph below shows the fluctuations on a month-by-month basis from April 2019.

Fig 1.



1.2 This position is unique in the Yorkshire and Humberside region and amongst our statistical local authority neighbours. In all these comparative councils there has been an increase in the numbers of children in care and those children who are placed in Residential Children's Homes.

1.3 During this period Kirklees has also increased the numbers of children living with their relatives as connected carers and has increased the number securing permanence through Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). Overall, 89% of children in care are living in a family setting including fostering households, Kinship and Connected arrangements. These efforts to maintain children in family arrangements has also ensured that the authority has maintained a higher than average percentage of our children remaining close to home defined as living in Kirklees or within 20 miles of their home address.

1.4 Like other local authorities we have not been immune from the recent and enduring national and international economic situation which has seen a dramatic rise in living costs. We are aware that these challenges will add to those faced by the families across Kirklees and are monitoring the potential for an increase demand on our children's services. As well as the costs of delivering our service increasing, we are mindful of the potential rise in the

demand for statutory children’s services and in turn the potential necessity to put in place additional resource required to meet this need. Office of National Statistics (ONS) data shows that poverty in Kirklees has worsened in recent years with the authority moving from 93/317 most deprived to 73/317 between 2015 and 2019. (https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/information-and-data/pdf/KMC_ID2019.pdf) We know that poverty creates hardship and risk to many families and these factors may lead to an increase in the numbers of families facing hardship and becoming more reliant on public services including children’s services.

- 1.5 Based on this continuing pressure on our families and communities and in considering the regional and national increase in the number of children entering care, including those at an older age, we are predicting a likely increase in the numbers of children requiring additional support including care. A priority for our services is to increase the number of our internal foster carers along with expanding our capacity to provide specialist internally provided children’s home placements.
- 1.6 This sufficiency needs assessment and strategy describes the current care population and provides our forecast of the future care population to March 2025 based on current evidence and assumptions.

2. Current Children in Care Position

- 2.0 As reported on the 31st March 2022, the children in care population was 604, and the rate per 10,000 had reduced to its lowest level. Figure 2 below shows how the numbers of children in care have fluctuated over the past few years though shows that Kirklees has remained significantly lower than the average for our statistical neighbours.

Fig 2

Kirklees	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Children Looked After	673	621	665	661	604
Rate/10,000	67	62	66	66	60
Yorkshire & Humberside	8,190	8,570	8,970	9,210	9,300
Rate/10,000	71	74	77	78	81
Statistical Neighbours	6,950	7,391	7,467	7,410	7,320
Rate/10,000	86	92	92	93	92

England	75,360	78,140	80,000	80,780	82,170
Rate	64	65	67	67	70

2.1 The children in care 'rate' since 2017/18 shows that the gap between the rate of children in care between Kirklees and the Yorkshire & Humberside region has increased from 4/10,000 population to 21/10,000 and the gap between Kirklees and its Statistical Neighbours has increased from 19/10,000 to 32/10,000. These are significant differences, none of Kirklees' statistical neighbours had a lower rate and only 4 councils in the region have a lower rate.

3. Where Children Live

3.0 On the 31st March 2022 Kirklees' children in care were living in a range of settings as shown in figure 3 below.

Fig 3

Care Type	Number of Children	
Fostering- Unconnected Person	349	530 in family-based care
Fostering- Connected Person	112	
Placed for Adoption	19	
Placed with Parents	38	
Regulation 38(6)	12	
Children's Homes	32	74 in group care or supported living
Residential School	0	
Supported Living	35	
Other	7	
Total	604	

3.1 530 (88%) of Kirklees' children in care live in Kirklees or within 20 miles of their home address. The 72 children who live further than 20 miles from their home address are primarily living in the Yorkshire region, but some are placed further away as they need to access specialist services or their family members, who are their carers, live further away.

3.2 The proportion of children in care placed with Kirklees based carers has increased since 2018. The table below at figure 4 shows the number of children in care and the proportion placed outside of the council's boundaries.

Fig 4

	2017/18	2018/19	2019-20	2020/21	2021/22
Placed inside of Kirklees	366	343	370	378	353
Total In Care	673	621	665	661	604
Proportion placed inside of Kirklees	54%	55%	56%	57%	58%

3.3 Most of Kirklees' children in care, 530 are living within a family care setting and the number of children living in a children's home has reduced as a proportion of children in care as shown in Figure 5.

Fig 5

	2017/18	2018/19	2019-20	2020/21	2021/22
Children Living in Children's Homes	65	51	42	26	30
Total In Care	673	621	665	661	604
Proportion living in children's homes	9.7%	8.2%	6.3%	3.9%	5%

4. Placement Stability

4.0 There are two measures of placement stability;

- Children who have been in care for at least 2.5 years who have been in the same arrangement for at least 2 years, and
- Children who have had 3 or more arrangements in the previous 12 months.

4.1 Kirklees' performance when benchmarked against the region and England is shown in figure 6 below to be higher and to outperform the region and country in every year. However, the exceptional performance in long term stability seen in 20/21 was not repeated in 21/22. This is primarily due to the number of eligible children reducing as they left care.

Fig 6

Long term stability (Higher % = good)			
Year	England	Yorkshire & Humberside	Kirklees
2017/18	69%	69%	71%
2018/19	68%	68%	71%
2019/20	68%	66%	73%
2020/21	70%	70%	80%
2021/22	71%	71%	74%

4.2 Our review of performance of short-term stability shows a worsening trend as set out in figure 7 below. During the last year Kirklees' performance dropped significantly and analysis of the first six months of 2022 shows that 55 children have had at least three placements in the previous 12 months.

Fig 7

Short term stability (Lower % = Good)			
Year	England	Yorkshire & Humberside	Kirklees
2017/18	11%	11%	8%
2018/19	11%	11%	7%

2019/20	11%	11%	8%
2020/21	9%	9%	7%
2021/22	10%	9%	10%

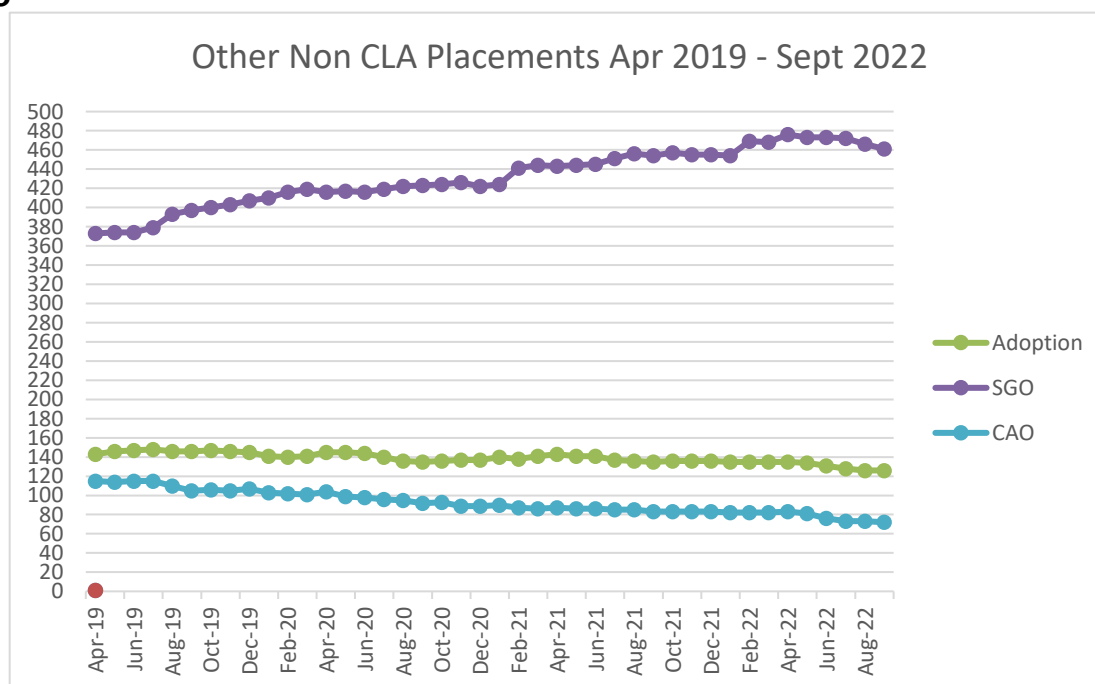
5. Forecasting Future Demand

5.0 Understanding and forecasting placement demand is not an exact science and is complex requiring consideration of a multitude of factors. These factors include positive preventative services such as receiving good parenting as a child, engagement in education, positive supportive networks as young people become adults, early help in the community when a person becomes a parent, and responsive statutory services when help is required. These services can mitigate risks linked to isolation, parental mental health, confidence, and skills etc. However, alongside these protective factors there are an equal number of risk factors that in some cases are difficult for children’s services alone to mitigate against. These include severe mental health, uncontrolled drug use, learning disabilities and harmful behaviours and most significantly poverty which we know is increasing in our communities.

5.1 Our frontline children’s services in Kirklees have been highly effective at supporting families without the need to remove children from their parents’ care. When this is required a greater number of children are being cared for by their extended family and the council is continuing to see a significant number of children having their futures secured through special guardianship orders (SGOs).

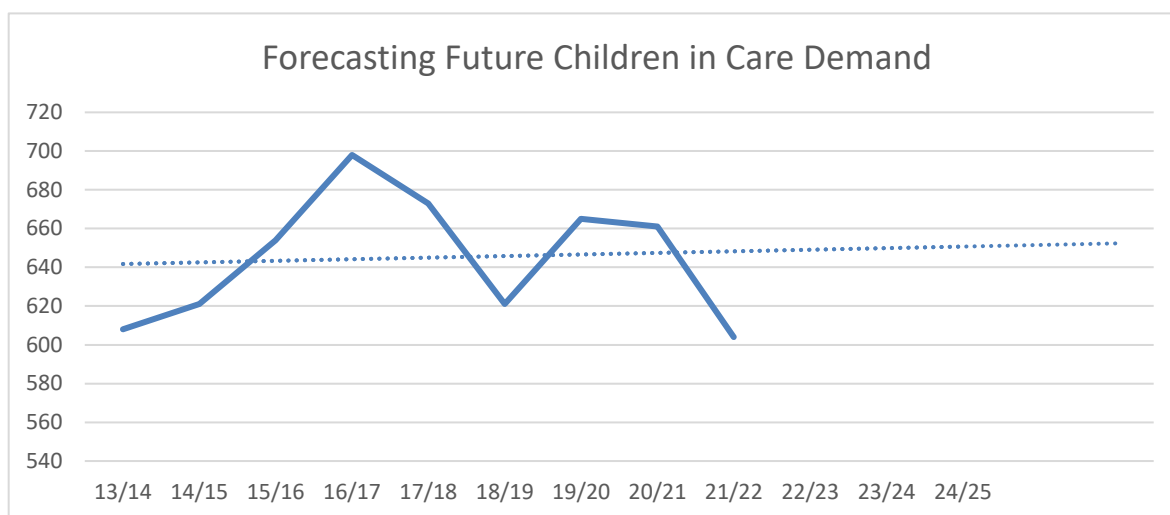
5.2 The table below shows the impact of this on the numbers of children who would otherwise have been in care.

Fig 8



- 5.3 Kirklees has reduced its care population by 57 children between 2021 and 2022, a reduction of 8.6% though it's notable that between April and the end of September 2022 the care population has shown a rise by 9 children to 613.
- 5.4 Whilst our care population has been at its lowest level for over a decade the national trend and risk indicators would suggest that there is a likelihood that we will see an increase in need and a resultant rise in the number of children requiring care provided by the local authority.
- 5.5 The following table was provided in response to the Dept. for Education in the winter of 2021 and has been updated with the SS903 data for March 2022. The dotted line is the forecasted growth, which by March 2025 estimates 650 children in care.

Fig 9



- 5.5 Based on this projection and considering the likely resultant demands on arrangements for placement types, we can assess a need to increase our in-house residential by circa 7 and fostering provision by 41. This is from current position where we are seeking to grow current capacity to return children from commissioned provision to our own delivered services.
- 5.6 In forecasting our future demand we have also had access resources provided to us as members of the 'White Rose Consortium of councils'. This has enabled us to consider predicted demand using the forecasting tool provided by Social Finance. The work by Social Finance for the consortium has not been finalised but will be fully available during 2023.

6. Placement types

Family based care

6.0 Children looked after by the authority are cared for in a range of different settings primarily based on their assessed needs, though increasingly also determined by capacity in the volume of provision.

a) **Connected carers temporarily approved as foster carers under Regulation 24.**

These are people who are known to the child, either as a relative or a friend or in another capacity such as a teacher. They are identified in an emergency as a potential carer and a 'Viability Assessment' is undertaken by the social worker. If this is positive the child is placed with the carer and this can lead to a full fostering assessment being undertaken.

b) **Connected carers approved at the Fostering Panel.**

Following the assessment, the carer is considered at the Fostering Panel and are approved for a named child only. This means they cannot foster other children that are not connected to them. These foster carers are then registered with Kirklees Council. These carers can typically be relatives such as grandparents, aunts and uncles.

c) **Unconnected foster carers.**

These are people who have been formally recruited following an application by the carer to be assessed as a foster carer. They are approved for several children, usually with a specific age range. The children they look after are unknown to them prior to the placement starting. These foster carers are then registered with Kirklees Council.

d) **Independent Fostering Agency foster carers.**

These people are similar to those described in paragraph c. above, but they have been assessed and approved by a private or voluntary fostering agency. They are registered with their agency, and the council contracts the agency.

6.1 On the 31st March 2022 the type of family based carers and the number of Kirklees' children they were caring for is set out below.

Fig 10

Type of Foster Carer	No. of Carers	No. of Children Placed
Regulation 24	35	46
Connected Person Foster Carer	42	64
Unconnected Kirklees Council Foster Carer	120	169
IFA Carer	126	180
Confidential	1	1
Total	324	460

6.2 The annual national report of fostering in England provides a snapshot of fostering activity. The table below at Figure 11 shows the number of approved fostering households for the Yorkshire & Humberside region, with the maximum capacity of children they are approved for, alongside the number of children in care at the 31st March 2022. The table shows the capability of councils to provide the required fostering provision for its children in care population. Kirklees' performance is the median figure for the region, with the maximum capacity of 47% of its children in care population. As highlighted previously, Kirklees has a high proportion of children in family groups, so this proportion requires Kirklees to purchase a significant number of foster placements from the private sector.

Fig 11

Council	No. of Council Approved Fostering Households	Maximum Capacity of Children	Children In Care	Max. Proportion of demand
Barnsley	135	240	348	69%
Bradford	280	495	1447	34%
Calderdale	80	155	337	46%
Doncaster	110	215	589	37%
East Riding	100	215	325	66%
Kingston Upon Hull	200	400	886	45%
Kirklees	170	285	604	47%
Leeds	525	1075	1373	78%
NE Lincolnshire	105	270	615	44%
N Lincolnshire	110	230	192	120%
N Yorkshire	190	330	429	77%
Rotherham	125	200	557	36%
Sheffield	270	450	666	68%
Wakefield	135	260	650	40%
York	80	250	277	90%

- 6.3 Kirklees currently purchases 180 'placements' from Independent Fostering Agencies, the same amount as Leeds which has just over double the number of children in care. These arrangements are currently necessary to meet the demand placed on our children's services to identify family-based care. Of these 180 children and young people 138 are living outside of Kirklees with a total of 102 foster carers. There appears to be very little difference in the level of need or complexity, of the children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies and our own Kirklees foster carers.
- 6.4 Analysis of the local independent fostering sector undertaken in 2021 showed 52 Independent Fostering Agency fostering households registered across 15 separate independent fostering Agencies, living within Kirklees. At the time of our review of these carers 60% of capacity was being used by other local authorities placing children within Kirklees. Whilst we develop and extend our own capacity to meet the needs of our children in care we know that we need to engage those providers in our local area to establish better ability to access local resources to keep our children and young people in and near to their home communities.
- 6.5 The combined total of approved foster carers in Kirklees is 273 (221 Kirklees and 52 IFAs). We know that we are currently accessing 102 Independent Fostering households located outside of the Kirklees area.
- 6.6 Given our current demand together with our predicted potential increase in the numbers of children in need of care from the local authority we assess our need to secure a minimum of 100 fostering households over the next 3 years.
- 6.7 By increasing our 'in-house' fostering capacity we aim to achieve:
- a. Increase the number of local placement options for our children
 - b. Increase the number of children living close to family, friends, schools and health services
 - c. Reduce the costs associated with placing children in private and more costly arrangements
 - d. Increase the stability of arrangements for children accommodated by the authority
- 6.8 In addition to expanding our 'in-house' fostering capacity we will also develop our strategic partnerships and commissioning arrangements with the 15 local Independent Fostering Agencies to establish our authority as a council of choice for their local carers.

7. Children's Homes

- 7.0 Kirklees Council currently operates five children's homes, with a sixth planned to open in the spring of 2023.
- 7.1 Our current plans for improvements across our residential estate set out our intention to have three of our homes registered to provide care and support for up to four children with emotional and social needs, two homes providing care for children with complex health needs and disabilities (one for six young people in permanent care and one short breaks provision). A further home identified focussed on supporting children and young people where there is a plan for the to return to family settings, with a programme of support and 'treatment' utilising the MST-FIT programme.

Fig 12

Home Name	Registered Bed Number	Client Group
Healds Road	4	MST home
Copthorne	4	Emotional & Social
Woodlands	4	Emotional & Social
Magdale House	4	Emotional & Social
Elm Grove	6	Children with Disabilities
Orchard View	8	Residential Short Breaks

- 7.2 The success of our residential homes will rely significantly upon ensuring that the homes function and deliver the support, as set out in their individual statements of purpose. Ensuring that our MST FIT home is used exclusively for children confirmed as planned to return home and where there has been a joint assessment between the social work team, MST team and the registered home manager will be essential.
- 7.3 Whilst much has been done to reduce the use of children's residential care with the current capacity, the authority can only meet 35% of its requirement, which means we are currently reliant on 2/3rds of residential care being provided from the independent and private sector.
- 7.4 At the 31st March 2022, we have 16 of our children living in 13 separate homes, operated by 9 different companies. 10 of these children were placed outside of our authority.
- 7.5 When reviewing the levels of needs of our children who are living in children's homes against those of other local authorities, it is evident that our children have, on average, had a higher rate of disruption in past home living arrangements. In available research papers it has been shown

that children living in a children's home had on average 5 previous placements prior to entering a children's home for the first time. For our children the average is 7. Additionally, comparison regarding the levels of needs, as demonstrated through having in place an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) showed that there were 50% of children in homes nationally, for Kirklees' children this is 82%.

7.6 We know from a review of our children in residential children's homes arrangements that our children and young people had the following characteristics:

- 82% have an education and health care plan
- All have experienced years of chronic parenting issues, including drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and neglect prior to entering local authority care
- All presented with emotional and behavioural challenges
- All expressed a desire to maintain contact with their families

More specific characteristics, which are not common to all of the children were identified as:

- ADHD diagnosis
- History of, and at risk of being exploited
- Education in special schools
- Multiple placement breakdowns

7.7 We know that locally there is a higher-than-average number of independent and private providers in the Kirklees area. This is largely due to the housing market. At the time of writing there were 30 private homes based in Kirklees, offering 99 places for children and young people to live that were operated by 15 different registered companies. On the 31st March 2022 Kirklees was accessing just six of places from this capacity, This has wider implications for our authority and services due to the potential high number of children and young people from other local authorities living in our area. These children and young people are likely to require a range of specialist's support services. The current data from the Dept for Education shows that Kirklees has 221 children from other councils living in the Borough, with over 40% having the highest level of needs and living within a children's home.

7.8 As part of existing **Homes for Children strategy** we plan to expand our in-house provision and are currently working to establish a new children's home bringing additional in-house capacity with a further four bedded home and separate additional smaller homes linked to existing registrations due to open in 2023.

8. Supported Living for Care Leavers

8.0 As the young people growing up within our care get older, the focus of the care and support given by carers is for our young people to be prepared to move into more independent living in our communities. For most of our young people this will take place in their fostering and or family living settings. Where appropriate our social work and fostering team will work to support young people remain within their fostering family setting through continued support through 'Staying Put' arrangements.

8.1 For young people growing up in our children's homes, as these settings are subject to national regulations, there is a requirement to support young people to move out, usually by the summer following their 18th birthday. For some of these young people continued support accommodation will be appropriate.

8.2 For a relatively small number of our young people they will leave their children's home or fostering arrangement after they are 16 and will be suited to more 'Semi-Independent' supported accommodation. We currently support this through a small number of Supported Board and Lodgings (SBL) carers and through commissioning Supported Living Accommodation from the independent and private sectors. This type of accommodation is not currently regulated by Government however at the time of writing Ofsted are consulting on the proposed regulatory framework due to take effect in 2024.

8.3 We currently have in place a commissioning 'framework' for contracting for Supported Living Accommodation. There are 5 types of accommodation and support available:

a) Group Living

The providers of Group Living arrangements offer furnished accommodation where a young person lives within a multioccupancy property and either has shared communal facilities or lives within a self-contained 'bed-sit' or apartment type living space within a larger building.

b) Supported Tenancy with Floating Support

The providers here provide community based furnished accommodation with a bespoke package of floating support from experienced staff.

c) Transferable Supported Tenancy and Floating Support

The providers here provide community based furnished accommodation with a bespoke package of floating support where, the tenancy is transferred to the young person on their 18th birthday.

d) Floating Support

Floating support providers deliver community based support to the young person in their own, or separately commissioned accommodation to manage their independent living skills, practical skills, and emotional resilience.

e) Short Stay

This is essentially emergency and urgent crisis accommodation and delivers community based furnished accommodation with a bespoke package of support from experienced staff on a short-term or emergency basis.

- 8.5 At the time of writing there were 31 individual companies on our commissioning framework for these type of supported, unregulated, provision who are either inside of Kirklees or within 20 miles of our boundary. Where these companies are unable to meet the needs of our young people, we have engaged other similar providers on bespoke contracting arrangements.
- 8.6 As referred to above, Ofsted have launched a consultation process relating to the anticipated regulatory framework for this sector. We will be responding and will update our sufficiency plan's following the response and resulted impact on the sector.

9. Services for Children with Complex Health Needs and Disabilities (CHAD)

- 9.0 Our resources for children with complex health needs and disabilities include services delivered through our 'Short Breaks Registered Children's Home'. Short breaks can be for a couple hours through to longer overnight stays. They can take place with foster carers or in our specialist registered children's home. In some cases a young person and their family will receive a personal budget and they can create their own short break package with their own carers.
- 9.1 We know that demand for our short breaks is high and consequently we are aiming to create additional capacity to enable young people to receive more short breaks within our fostering service and residential services. In order to maximise our ability to need needs we have contracted with a local provider 'Holly Bank Trust' to support additional short break capacity.
- 9.2 At the time of writing there are 25 children and young people with disabilities who are in the care of the local authority either by virtue of Section 20 or Section 31 of the Children Act. 14 of these children live with foster carers and 11 are in specialist residential children's homes. Our current maximum capacity for providing long term residential care is for up to six young people.

10. Market Engagement

- 10.0 As set out in the assessment above, there is a continued need for our authority to maintain a mixed economy of in-house and commissioned provision. Our forecast signals a likely increase in the number of children cared for by the local authority, which will require us to increase provision. We know that whilst there is a significant number of providers who have resources in our authority, only a very small proportion are accessed by us. We therefore need to better engage with the provider market and to be able to describe our needs and create partnerships to deliver the

additional and specialist services that we require.

11. Our Sufficiency priorities and strategy to deliver.

a) Where possible children in care live in family homes.

We will maintain our investment and focus in family support, Connected Carers and Special Guardianship support. This will be supported by re-aligning our services to best meet the needs of our carers, including Kinship and connected carer households.

b) Expand our Fostering Services to delivery more fostering homes for our Children.

We will invest in our fostering services to ensure that it has effective capacity and resource to deliver our aspirations to build our fostering community and ensure that the corporate centre recognises and promotes fostering for Kirklees as a top priority for the authority.

c) Ensure our Residential Children's Home deliver outstanding care

We will invest on our residential estate to ensure that the homes we provide deliver best quality Outstanding care for our children. We will modernise our residential workforce with a refreshed training and progression pathway and ensure that the levels or accountabilities for our regulated roles are effective.

d) Ensure that our children and young people have access to a spectrum of placement options to best meet their individual needs.

We will ensure that our recruitment of in house foster carers is based on a current understanding of demand and that our focus remains to increase our services in house capacity. We will establish effective commissioning arrangements that build strong partnership and join working based on safe and effective commissioning principles.

e) Build and develop our local relationship with the independent sector through effective market engagement to develop and manage a mixed economy of provision.

We will facilitate local market engagement events involving independent providers to discuss our local need assessment and opportunities to work together to provide the required range of diverse high-quality provision. We will work across the region with our West Yorkshire local authority partners to ensure that we are maximising our access to meet need local need.

f) Ensure that we can response to urgent / crisis need for accommodation for children and young people by developing our

in house and commissioned provision designed to offer immediate access where required.

We will work with the independent, private and voluntary sector to establish a partnership to maximise our access to accommodation and resources to support children and young people.

Appendix One

Placement Sufficiency Headline Plan

Delivering these priorities will be achieved through focussed 'Continuous Service Improvement Plans' for our Fostering, Residential and Placements services. These plans are supported, monitored, and driven through our governance arrangements set out in our Homes for Children improvement Board.

Area	Outcome	by
Fostering	Increase the number of Kirklees Council Foster Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that fostering is recognised as a LA priority driven by our Corporate Parenting strategy • Ensure that our finance arrangements for foster cares are competitive against IFA and neighbouring LAs • Deliver an effectively resourced marketing strategy

<p style="text-align: center;">Children's Homes</p>	<p>Expand our in-house capacity for caring for more children in our homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open our newly planned home 'Magdale House' in the spring 2023 • Re-open our currently Closed home Healds Road in the spring 2023 • Develop a business case based on invest to save principles, to expand our bedded in- house capacity by developing a small number of one and two bedded homes for children and young people, linked to our existing estate.
<p style="text-align: center;">Supported Living</p>	<p>Develop the range of independent/semi-independent accommodation options for our older young people in our care and those with care experience from our authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our commissioning arrangements and agree a new fit for purpose commissioning framework • Explore the potential for partnerships with local third sector organisations to enhance our offer for Care experienced young adults



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 23 January 2024

Title of report: Fostering Report October 2022 to March 2023

Purpose of report:

The purpose of the report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Board about the work undertaken by the fostering service. Reporting periods for our annual report are usually in line with financial reporting periods (April to March), however the services provided an eighteen-month report to October 2021 due to an Ofsted Monitoring visit, and a further report following 12-month period between October 2021 and September 2022.

This report covers the six-month period between October 2022 and March 2023 to realign the reporting period and enable the service to provide comparative data from national and regional service reporting in future reports.

<p>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></p>	<p>Key Decision – No Private Report/Private Appendix – No</p>
<p>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</p>	<p>Not Applicable – for information only.</p>
<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</p>	<p>Kieran Lord- Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships. Children's Services.</p> <p>9.1.2023</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>

Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: N/A

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

Summary

The report updates the Board on activity in relation to the recruitment and retention of foster carers and developments within the service.

Kirklees Fostering Service and our team of foster carers work in partnership to ensure children live in safe, nurturing family homes where they can achieve their potential and enjoy their childhood.

This six month Report provides a summary of the performance of the Fostering Service during the past year looking at work undertaken by our:

- Recruitment Team
- Connected Persons' Team
- Fostering Support Team
- Fostering Panel

1. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

2. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The Service works with foster carers and across the council and wider partnership.

2.2 Working with Partners

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

2.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

2.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

2.5 Improving outcomes for children

A key priority for Kirklees Council is to ensure that children can be brought up safely with their birth parents or within their wider extended family

network. Where it is identified that children cannot remain within their family, the fostering service contributes to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people who are looked after. The Fostering Service aims to support and expand our Fostering Services to ensure more fostering homes for our children looked after in Kirklees

2.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees

Not applicable

2.7 Other (eg Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

3 Consultation

Not applicable

4 Engagement

Not applicable

5 Next steps and timelines

Fostering Annual report for 2023-2024 to be timetabled for Corporate Parenting Board in 2024

6 Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

8 Contact officer

Anna Gledhill, Head of Homes for Children. 01484 221000 extension 71493
email: anna.gledhill@kirklees.gov.uk

9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10 Service Director responsible

Kieran Lord, Service Director, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships

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Kirklees Children and Families Service

Fostering Report

October 2022 to March 2023



Anna Gledhill
Service Manager Kirklees Fostering Service

1. Introduction

The purpose of the report as set out in regulations is to inform the Corporate Parenting Board about the work undertaken by the fostering service. Reporting periods for our annual report are usually in line with financial reporting periods (April to March), however the services provided an eighteen-month report to October 2021 due to an Ofsted Monitoring visit, and a further report following 12-month period between October 2021 and September 2022.

This report covers the six-month period between October 2022 and March 2023 to realign the reporting period and enable the service to provide comparative data from national and regional service reporting in future reports.

The report updates the Board on activity in relation to the recruitment and retention of foster carers and developments within the service.

A key priority for Kirklees Council is to ensure that children can be brought up safely with their birth parents or within their wider extended family network. Where it is identified that children cannot remain within their family, the fostering service contributes to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people who are looked after.

The Kirklees Sufficiency strategy describes our aim for children to live in a family environment, within the boundaries of Kirklees wherever possible. Fostering plays a vital role in supporting this ambition.

Kirklees Fostering Service and our team of foster carers work in partnership to ensure children live in safe, nurturing family homes where they can achieve their potential and enjoy their childhood.

This six month Report provides a summary of the performance of the Fostering Service during the past year looking at work undertaken by our:

- Recruitment Team
- Connected Persons' Team
- Fostering Support Team
- Fostering Panel

2. Background information

In Kirklees the number of children who are looked after has decreased over the past 12 months. The table below shows the snapshot position on 31st March each year, apart from the position for 2021/22.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	30/09/22	2022/23
Children Looked After	621	665	661	604	609	592
Rate/10,000	62	66	66	62	62	60
Stat Neighbours	75	78	80	83	N/A	Not yet available

The number of Children Looked After per 10,000 people in Kirklees has historically been much lower than that of all Kirklees' statistical neighbours and is lower than that of the Yorkshire & Humberside region and England as a whole. The 2022-2023 data has not yet been published therefore a comparison for this reporting period is not yet available.

The demographic of Children Looked After in Kirklees is that the majority of children are over the age of 10 years old. This can present difficulties in recruiting and retaining foster carers to meet the needs of our Looked After population and with the necessary skills to care for older children.

Age Range	31/03/22	Proportion of Care Population	31/03/23	Proportion of Care Population
Under 1	21	3%	32	5%
Between 1 and 5	102	17%	78	13%
Between 5 and 10	93	15%	88	15%
Between 10 and 16	254	42%	236	40%
Over 16	134	22%	158	27%
Total	604		592	

Only 33% of children in care are of primary school and non-school age and this has remained fairly consistent with the previous year. The proportion of children requiring care are older.

Type of accommodation of Children in Care

As of 31 March 2023 Children in care in Kirklees lived in the following types of care provision;

Care Type	Number of Children	% of Care Provision
Fostering- Unconnected Person	155	26%
Fostering- Connected Person	76	13%
Fostering- IFAs	160	27%
Fostering- Reg 24	42	7%
Placed for Adoption	10	2%
Placed with Parents	46	8%
Children's Homes	27	4%
Residential School	1	0.1%
Supported Living	57	9%
Other	18	3%
Total	592	

In total 391 children are placed with approved foster carers, either through a Kirklees fostering or through an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA). Of these, Kirklees fostering provides 231 children with a foster placement and 160 are looked after by an IFA carer.

It is a strength that 73% of all children in care are living within a family. This level of performance places greater pressure on the demands of fostering families and services.

3. Recruitment and Retention

The Fostering Service plays a key role in our overarching strategy to reduce the number of young people living in residential care and improve outcomes for children and young people. To do this we plan to increase the overall number of Foster Carers, maintain levels of retention and increase the skills of foster carers to develop a more wide-ranging offer that meets the varying needs of our children.

Our ambition is to achieve an increase in the number of foster carers on an annual basis therefore increasing the number of children and young people in Kirklees remaining close to their families and communities.

Between October 2022 and March 2023 Kirklees has approved 23 new fostering families. Over the same period 28 foster carers have resigned or were de-registered. This gives us a decrease of 5 fostering families.

The 23 approved foster carers were made up of 16 connected carers and 7 unconnected carers.

Increasing the number of in house foster placements within Kirklees will improve outcomes for children, allowing children to continue to attend their existing school, continue to take part in leisure and social activities and retain links with their wider family and community network.

As well as improving outcomes for children and young people; increasing the number of foster placements will reduce spend on external residential and independent fostering placements in line with the Children and Families Directorate budget strategy. The Fostering Service has developed a recruitment strategy and is working towards delivering a greater number of local fostering placements to achieve this.

The Council faces competition for recruiting carers from Independent Fostering Agencies operating in the Kirklees area when recruiting new foster carers. This reinforces the importance of an effective marketing strategy, high quality support offer and smooth, effective processing of applications.

During October 2022-March 2023 there were 101 enquiries relating to becoming a foster carer. There is a process which is followed, and the table below shows the flow through this process.

Stage	Number of People
Enquiry	101
Expression of Interest	73
Initial Visit	29
Essential Info Sent	16
Essential Info Returned	12
Approved at Panel	7

As can be seen the number of people reduces as they go through the application process. Of the 101 people who enquired to become a foster carer, 7 were approved. This figure is known as the conversion rate, in 20/21 the conversion rate was 8.4%, in 21/22 it reduced to 5.7%. The conversion rate for this reporting period is 7%

7 new unconnected fostering households were approved during this period, that is where the foster family has no previous connection to the child.

A total of 28 fostering and connected households resigned. The reasons are varied, but the majority of deregistrations are for positive reasons. 18 resignations were from Connected Carers, for reasons such as becoming Special Guardians or children returning to parents and their connected carer's approval has ended.

4. Foster Carer Support and Retention

Retention of foster carers is critical in providing high quality care and security for children who may have experienced a troubled start in life. Alongside financial support to carers, Kirklees has developed a range of other services to support foster carers and their birth children to deliver high quality care.

Kirklees has a reward system which gives foster carers a professional payment for their services linked to their skills. Foster carers can receive 3 payments; an allowance for the child, a skill element and a long service payment. Together these allowances can provide financial security for foster carers and reflect Kirklees Council's commitment to the carer.

In April 2023 Foster Carers were awarded an uplift to their allowances for the financial year 2022-2023. The tables below show the updated allowance structure and examples of weekly payments to carers. The rates increase in line with their skill level, which is described below.

Skill Level	Allowance Rate
1	£106.47
2	£133.09
3	£186.32
4	£239.56

Level 1 progression- completed Journey 2 Foster Training, completed a portfolio, which demonstrates that the National Fostering Standards have been met.

Level 2 progression- completed all mandatory training, completed TSD workbook and undertake a minimum of 4 further days or equivalent hours training or activities (classroom training, work with the placement support team, online training) to meet identified needs within your first year of practice.

Level 3 progression- completed the Level 3 Diploma or have a relevant equivalent qualification.

Level 4- is paid in certain circumstances. If a child placed is in receipt of the highest rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP it will be paid).

Foster carers are also paid different 'maintenance allowance' rates depending on the ages of the children they care for. Uplifted rates for 2022/23 are shown in the table below.

Age Range	Child Allowance
0-4	£155.00
5-10	£175.56
11-15	£219.80
16+	£267.38

Kirklees Foster carers are also rewarded through long service, receiving £10 per week for every year of service, up to a maximum of 15 years. Therefore, a foster carer with 5 years' experience, looking after a 10-year-old child and having reached Level 3, will receive £411.88 per week.

Alongside the financial element there are a number of non-financial benefits available. These include;

- A supported induction programme to be completed within 12 months of becoming approved
- A minimum of monthly support groups, including information from the Placement Support Team, Mockingbird, CAMHS, Kirklees' Legal Team and the Virtual School.
- Two celebration events
- 4 weeks paid annual leave
- Birth children/family events including camps, football matches
- Access to Kirklees Council's Employee Health Scheme
- 6 weekly supervision
- Discount card for shops, restaurants and cinemas
- Provision of laptops, Kirklees based email address and access to IT infrastructure

Mockingbird

The Mockingbird model includes a Hub Home Carer, who is developing positive relationships with the carers in the constellation and providing support to carers through daily/weekly telephone calls, messages and or visits depending on the needs of the carers and young people.

The model consists of support networks known as constellations. Kirklees implemented the first Mockingbird constellation in October 2021. A further two Hub Home Carers were appointed in December 2022, with work underway to form the constellations within this reporting period.

The first constellation consists of 8 families of short and long term carers and Special Guardianship carers. There are 8 children aged between 3-14 years old, and one young person on a Staying Put arrangement.

The Hub Home Carer provides sleep overs with the children offering them one sleep over per month. This provides tremendous support to the carers knowing they have that planned sleepover in advance providing them with the break they need. It also creates opportunities for the children to socialise and develop friendships as well their independence.

Formulation and Emotional Wellbeing

Kirklees has developed an integrated Emotional Wellbeing Service with its mental health partners Locala and South West Yorkshire Primary Foundation Trust (SWYPFT). This model ensures that all children entering care will have a Formulation undertaken before their first Children in Care review. This formulation will give foster carers the information, advice and support to deliver high quality care.

In 2022/23 Supervising Social Workers were trained in using Formulation as a tool to support their work with and support to Foster Carers. The impact of the use of Formulation with Foster Carers is to be reviewed.

5. Staying Put

Kirklees' Staying Put policy has been developed to address and meet the requirements of the many pieces of legislation and Guidance that exist in relation to children and young people, Fostering and Care Leavers.

The main aim of Staying Put is to ensure that young people do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements, that educational and training achievement and continuity is promoted and that all young people can make a gradual transition from care to independence or to an Adult Service if the young person's assessed needs meet this criteria.

Each young person will have differing needs, so it is right that the individual aims of Staying Put arrangements are made specific to each young person with their best interests and welfare at the heart of any decision making.

6. Connected Persons and Special Guardianship Orders

Supporting Children to grow up in permanent arrangements with families is the core goal for children's services. Where appropriate, enabling children to be cared for by their extended family either through fostering or through Special Guardianship Orders can provide significant benefits to the child's sense of belonging and security. Social Workers will continually assess and review children's plans for permanency and

consider where appropriate and feasible how Special Guardianship applications can best be supported for children in Connected Persons and Foster Care arrangements.

We know that in order to provide these types of arrangements for Foster Carers and Connected Carers those carers need to be assured that the support the authority provides is equivalent to that which they receive as Foster carers and Connected Carers, and that this support remains available on an ongoing basis. Kirklees has developed a consistent offer for Foster Carers who move to support children via an SGO. This offer ensures that the carer is not at a disadvantage in caring for a child via an SGO.

The Connected Persons' team undertakes a range of interventions.

- initial viabilities of prospective carers
- Regulation 24 assessments
- Full fostering assessments
- Special Guardianship Order Reports
- Special Guardianship Support Plans

The Connected Person's team works to very short timescales, which are primarily under the fostering regulations but also led by the Family Court system. Between October 2022 and March 2023 the Connected Persons' Team has undertaken 32 viability assessments which led to Regulation 24 approvals. Alongside this, 42 children had their futures secured through connect carers receiving Special Guardianship Orders.

7. Foster carer training and development

Caring for our children and young people requires a range of skills and knowledge. Our training offer to them is critical in helping them manage difficult situations and care effectively for our children. Developing the skills of our Foster Carers will support them in being able to care for children with more difficult and complex behaviours, reducing our reliance on external placements and improving outcomes for young people.

All applicants to the fostering service are required to participate in training. Initially this was planned as a group based course, but since the Covid 19 pandemic , has become an online course like other training offers. The current courses cover a range of topics that includes Core Values and Skills, Working with Adolescents, Understanding Trauma, etc. Prospective carers are also required to attend a selection of taster courses prior to their approval at Fostering Panel. These new courses give prospective carers a better understanding of the role of being a foster carer, introduce some of the issues they may encounter as carers and explains more about the social care system.

A training and development programme is provided for all approved foster carers and is linked to the Payment for Skills model. Foster carers are required to attend training or development opportunities dependant on their payment fostering skill level. The training framework is reviewed and updated by the foster carer training steering group alongside colleagues from Workforce Development.

The Fostering Service maintains a very close working relationship with the Placement Support Service. They offer training and support groups to foster carers. We are also reviewing the potential to offer courses online.

As stated above, Kirklees introduced a new Placement Support Service integrated model of therapeutic support, ensuring the right person works with the child and fostering family at the right time in the right place. A refreshed name (the Emotional Well-being Team) accompanied this development. This will reduce delay and build upon relationships which already exist for the child and foster carer. Part of the model is the introduction of Formulation. Formulation provides an opportunity for all those involved in the care of a child to come together and understand what is driving their behaviour. This enables the participants to begin to think about how they can help the child change their behaviour and agree specific offers of support and intervention. This helps improve placement stability and security by ensuring that everyone is working from a common plan and to common goals. Formulation is guided by trained staff who are able to support carers and the team around them. It is aimed that the Formulation model will be rolled out more widely across Children's services.

We need to ensure that our ambition to offer a wider range of foster placements to children with more complex and challenging behaviours and needs is underpinned by a suitable training programme so that foster carers are better equipped to understand and manage the behaviour of children who may present in ways that are hard to understand or manage. Developing this offer will help our carers look after children and young people with a broader range of behaviours and will contribute to reducing demand for external residential placements.

8. Fostering Panels

There are currently three Fostering Panels which meet on a monthly basis. We have one Independent Chair, and one Vice Chair and 20 other members from various backgrounds. All Panels complete a quality assurance audit of each item heard. This is then collated and provides evaluation of the reports to panel. Overall, the feedback from the Fostering Panels is positive. Where opportunities for improvements to reports are identified, feedback is given to the author, their manager and improvement actions agreed.

The fostering panel considers assessments of connected and unconnected carers, extensions to Regulation 24, changes of approvals, first annual reviews and long-term matching. The table below shows the work of the panel over the past 6 months.

Panel Activity 2021/22	Number
Change of Approval / Amendment	1
Connected Persons Carer Approved	16
Short reports	1
Deregistered Connected Carers	1
Deregistered	3
Extension Regulation 24 Approved	18
Extension Regulation 24 Not Approved	1
Long Term Match	0
Mainstream Carer Approved	8
Post Allegation	4
First Annual Reviews Connected Carer	2

The resignations are linked to carers moving from fostering to Special Guardianship Orders, retirement and changes in the foster carer's personal circumstances.

9. Quality Assurance Information

It is essential to have confidence in the quality of practice in fostering. This is assessed in a number of ways;

- Supervision
- Fostering Panel
- Annual Foster Carer Reviews
- The Family Court

The initial fostering assessment and the carer's first annual review is considered by the Fostering Panel. Within the reporting period there has been additional resource provided to our Quality and Improvement service to enable them to support that

reviews are primarily undertaken by an Independent Reviewing Officer, with some being undertaken by fostering managers who do not have line-management responsibility for the supervising social worker. These provide reassurance that the current work is assessed for quality and meets all minimum standards. The fostering service will be implementing additional managerial audits across the three areas of fostering in the coming period.

10. Diversity of Foster Carers and CLA

Kirklees has a diverse population, and it is important that our foster families reflect this diversity.

The ethnicity of Kirklees children in care on 31 March 2023 was as follows;

Ethnicity	Number of Children
White British	373
Any other White background	16
Traveller of Irish Heritage	1
White Romanian	1
White and Black Caribbean	40
White and Black African	3
White and Asian	29
Any other mixed background	19
Indian	6
Pakistani	42
Bangladeshi	1
Any other Asian background	25
Caribbean	3
African	12
Any other Black background	1
Any other ethnic group	20
Total	592

Ethnicity	Number of carers		
	2021	2022	2023
Asian Indian	21	21	19
Asian Other	2	2	1
Asian Pakistan	18	22	22
Black African	1	1	1
Black Caribbean	5	5	4
Black Other	3	2	1
Mixed Other	1	-	0

Mixed White & Black African	1	1	1
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	4	5	6
White British	302	298	301
White Irish	1	2	2
White Other	5	5	3

This shows some differences between the profile of children in care and approved foster carers. As a service there is a need to ensure that the profile of our foster carers reflects that of the children they look after and the wider diversity of the Kirklees population.

11. Future Priorities

Our Future Priorities for the fostering service are;

- To increase the number of foster carers in Kirklees and to reduce the use of Independent Fostering Agencies and residential placements out of Kirklees
- To develop different strands of foster carer offer, in particular to support for children of secondary school age with complex behaviours
- To review our Payment for Skills model to attract carers from a more skilled background, to enable the development of a stronger offer for older children, or children with more challenging behaviours.
- To increase the number of foster carers from diverse backgrounds so that the percentage of our foster carer cohort is similar to that of the young people we work with
- To maintain our scrutiny of external placements and ensure that we only place children in external placements when necessary and that when placed, outcomes are good.
- To review the offer to foster carers who want to become Special Guardianship Order carers
- To implement the Financial Policy to provide transparency and consistency across payments
- To review and develop the use of Formulation to support all children in Kirklees foster placements
- To increase the number of Mockingbird Constellations

12. Corporate considerations

Consultation and engagement

The Kirklees Fostering Network meets monthly with senior officers to discuss areas of service development and any issues of concern. Foster carer representation and stakeholder involvement in new service developments remains a key principle of the service.

The work of the Fostering Service is overseen through the Homes for Children Board and the Corporate Parenting Board. The Corporate Parenting Board has representation from services, partner agencies and from Elected Members and provides oversight of the work of the Fostering Service.

Resources, procurement and value for money

The offer of Foster Care placements continues to provide a good use of resources. Foster placements are not only less costly than other types of offer but offer young people a safe family experience within Kirklees which has lifelong effects on their ability to parent.

Risk management

It is a regulatory requirement of the local authority that this report is prepared and presented to the Corporate Parenting Board of the Council. The report is linked to the corporate risk on Safeguarding Children.

13. Conclusions

The recruitment and retention of foster carers and the development priorities of the fostering service will continue to be addressed in order to achieve a high quality service and best outcomes for children and young people looked after. These will be considered within the Fostering Service continuous improvement plan and with the oversight and scrutiny of the Homes for Children Board.

14. Recommendations

That the Corporate Parenting Board receives this report and continues to support the work of the Fostering Service and promote best outcomes for children.

That the Corporate Parenting Board support the following specific recommendations.

- To increase the number of current foster care placements available to children and young people cared for by Kirklees and to reduce the use of external residential and Independent Fostering Agency placements for children.
- To grow the number of Mockingbird constellations.
- To increase the diversity of our foster carers so that it matches that of the communities we serve and the children we care for.
- To increase our ability to meet a wide range of children's complex needs by developing a broader service offer underpinned by an enhanced training programme.
- To review and support the implementation of Formulation to support our Foster Carers and Looked After children with plans that meet their needs.
- To continue with our work to improve and enhance the offer for Foster Carers taking on Special Guardianship Orders.
- To improve the corporate commitment to Looked After Children and Fostering across Kirklees services.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Connected Person	A connected person, is a foster care who has a link to the child before they take on a caring role. The person can be a relative, a parent of a friend, a person who knows the child in a employment role such as a teacher.
Viability Assessment	This is an assessment carried out prior to a child being placed with a connected person.
Unconnected Person	This is a foster carer who has no connection with the child prior to them being placed with the carer.
Fostering Panel	The fostering panel is a statutory function of the fostering service. It recommends the approval of prospective foster carers and the terms of their approval.
De-registrations	Foster carers are legally registered with one Fostering Service. At the end of their fostering period they need to formally resign and be de-registered from the fostering service.
Mockingbird Model	This is an innovative method of delivering foster care using an extended family model which provides sleepovers and short breaks, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities. The programme improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2023/24

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
<p align="center">Tuesday 4th July 2023</p> <p align="center"><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 22nd June 2023</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 26th June 2023</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>Pre-meeting (private)</u></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Care leavers/ Children Looked After Overview Report</p> <p>Briefing note on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children & Post-16 Education</p> <p align="center"><u>Public Items:</u></p> <p>Membership of the Board</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Strategy</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy O Rix</p> <p>O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy V Metherringham/O Rix</p> <p>Cllr Pattison /L Hallas</p> <p>Board members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

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<p>12th September 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 31st August 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 4th September 2023</i></p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Overview reports (Children Looked after and Care Leavers)</p> <p>Voice of Children and Young People (name TBC)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Membership of the Board</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report</p> <p>One Adoption West Yorkshire (Annual Report)</p> <p>Children’s Rights Team Annual report</p> <p>Overview of Children’s Residential Services</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p>	<p>O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p align="center">Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p> <p>O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p>M Rawlings</p> <p>A Gledhill /S Miles</p> <p>J Hanna</p> <p>Cllr Pattison/J Tolley</p> <p align="center">Board Members</p>
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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2023/24

	Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan	J Harris
<p>Tuesday 24th October 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 12th October 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 16th October 2023</i></p>	Pre-meeting (Informal)	
	Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)	O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy
	Overview Reports	O Rix
	Residential Update (verbal)	K Lord
	Virtual School Draft Headteachers Report	L Hallas
	Public Items:	
	Children’s Performance Highlight Report	O Rix/ L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy
	Virtual School Draft Headteachers Report	L Hallas
	Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)	Cllr Reynolds / L Hallas
	Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal)	K Lord / V Metherringham
Updates from Board Members on interaction with services	Board Members	
Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan	J Harris	

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<p>Tuesday 5th December 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 23rd November 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 27th November 2023</i></p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Service acknowledgements and awards (verbal)</p> <p>Service Updates</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report</p> <p>Annual Health Report – Looked After Children Health Outcomes</p> <p>Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care</p> <p>Update on Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SQD’s)</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Childrens Ambition Board Update</p>	<p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p> <p align="center">V Metheringham / J Hanna</p> <p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">G Addy</p> <p align="center">Nick Libell/ H Sanderson</p> <p align="center">N Mostowfi/ J Hanna</p> <p align="center">Cllr Reynolds / L Hallas</p> <p align="center">K Lord /V Metheringham</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2023/24

	<p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Next Steps (verbal)</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p align="center">Board Members</p> <p align="center">J Hanna/ V Metheringham</p> <p align="center">J Harris</p>
<p>Tuesday 23rd January 2024</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 11th January 2024</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 15th January 2024</i></p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Residential Update</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Head of Service Update</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report</p> <p>The Voice of Children and Young People and Care Experienced Young People</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy</p>	<p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p> <p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p> <p align="center">Anna Gledhill</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

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	<p>Fostering Annual Report</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p align="center">Anna Gledhill</p> <p align="center">K Lord / V Metheringham</p> <p align="center">Cllr Reynolds / L Hallas</p> <p align="center">V Metheringham/ K Lord</p> <p align="center">Board Members J Harris</p>
<p align="center">Tuesday 5th March 2024</p> <p align="center"><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 22nd February 2024</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 26th February 2024</i></p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Head of Service Update</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report</p> <p>The Voice of Children and Young People and Care Experienced Young People</p>	<p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p> <p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metheringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p>

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	<p>Statement of Purpose for Residential Care (TBC)</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda</p>	<p align="center">K Lord</p> <p align="center">Cllr Reynolds /L Hallas</p> <p align="center">V Metherringham/ K Lord</p> <p align="center">Board Members</p> <p align="center">J Harris</p>
<p>Tuesday 23rd April 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 11th April 2024</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 15th April 2024</i></p>	<p align="center">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children’s Services)</p> <p align="center">Public Items:</p> <p>Head of Service Update</p> <p>Children’s Performance Highlight Report</p> <p>The Voice of Children and Young People and Care Experienced Young People</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p>	<p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p> <p align="center">J Hanna / L Hallas / V Metherringham /G Addy</p> <p align="center">J Hanna</p> <p align="center">Cllr Reynolds /L Hallas</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2023/24

	Children’s Ambition Board Update (verbal) Updates from Board Members on interaction with services Corporate Parenting Board Agenda	V Metherringham/ K lord Board Members J Harris
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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) Last seen March 2022
- (SD Environment and Climate Change – Last seen March 2022
- (SD CCG’s Chief Officer – Last seen February 2022)
- (SD Children’s Services – September 2022
- (SD Adults and health – January TBC)
- (SD Corporate Strategy/Public Heath – tbc)
- (Police Colleague (TBC)

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

Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)

Childrens Ambition Board Update (verbal)

Updates from Board Members on interaction with services

Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan

Items for consideration /to schedule :

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2023/24

Statement of Purpose for Fostering
Statement of Purpose for Residential Care
Report on Accommodation
Fostering Annual Report
Pathway planning report
Missing report
The Sufficiency Strategy Update
Supported Lodgings Scheme
Supported Lodgings / Post 18 Provision
Report of Adoption – to consult with OAWY new municipal year
A report from the virtual School re Post 16 attainment.
Ethnicity of LAC and foster carers.

Annual / 6 monthly reports:-

- 6 monthly report on Children's Rights (Oct to March) (June)
- Annual Report on work of the Children's Rights) April onwards
- 6 monthly report on Independent Visitors Scheme (Oct to March)
- Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care (January)
- Annual report on children who go missing from care
- Annual report on children and young people placed outside the Kirklees boundary
- Annual Health Report (report on health of looked after children) December
- Annual Report on Kirklees Fostering Service January
- OAWY – Annual (highlights report on Kirklees performance data)
- OAWY – 6 monthly report (June/July)

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