

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Strategy

for
CHILDREN
WHO ARE
LOOKED AFTER
AND CARE
LEAVERS

including children on the edge of care,
children who are adopted, and those subject to
Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders

2018 - 2023



EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

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Contents

1. Joint Introduction.....	4
2. The new Strategy on a page.....	5
3. Context: Key Facts and Figures.....	6
4. Scope, Priorities and Strategic Themes.....	8
5. Key Actions and Performance Measures.....	11
6. Ownership and Governance.....	12

Annexes

A. How we put the Strategy together, including progress since the last Strategy.....	13
B. The views of Children who are Looked After or Leaving Care.....	17
C. Other relevant Plans and Strategies.....	20
D. Key Contacts.....	21
National Recognition.....	22

1. Joint Introduction by the Cabinet Member and the Chair of the Children's Trust Board

We are pleased, on behalf of the East Riding Children's Trust Board, to introduce the five year East Riding Strategy for Children who are Looked After and Care Leavers.

The Strategy for 2018 to 2023 builds on previous strategies but also goes well beyond them. For one thing, we have decided that it should be much broader in scope: not just to cover children while they are in the care of the council, but also Care Leavers, children on the edge of care, and children subject to Special Guardianship and Child Arrangements Orders.

It is also considerably more ambitious in its goals. East Riding's performance for Children who are Looked After is already excellent, but we know that we cannot be complacent. So, as well as ensuring that our success is built on solid foundations, we want to extend our services, to invest in improvements, and to challenge ourselves constantly to ensure that we remain at the forefront.

Our staff and our carers do fantastic work, and we want to support them to achieve even more for our young people. We will benefit from the insights and new thinking from our fellow leading Local Authorities who are part of the 'Partners in Practice' programme, which is described elsewhere.

The Strategy has been informed by a number of inputs – described in the Annexes – of which by far the most important has been the 'child's voice' gathered from a number of consultation exercises with young people themselves. For the most part, their feedback and experience of the care they receive has been very positive – but we need to ensure that we listen and act when young people tell us they need more support at the start of the care process, and with their emotional and mental health.

The document sets out our vision, our three key priorities and the cross-cutting themes that will inform our work. It also describes the most immediate actions we will take in order to start implementing the strategy, and how we will be able to tell if we are making a difference.

We will need to work in close partnership with all the organisations represented on the Children's Trust in order to achieve this – but the council has a special responsibility to act as a positive corporate parent to those in our care, one which it takes very seriously and very readily accepts.

We are proud of the fact that children and young people in our care, and those who leave care in the East Riding, do so with some of the best results and most positive life plans in the country. This ambitious strategy will ensure that we - and they - can go even further.

Cllr. Julie Abraham

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Kevin Hall

Director of Children, Families and Schools, Chair of the Children's Trust Board

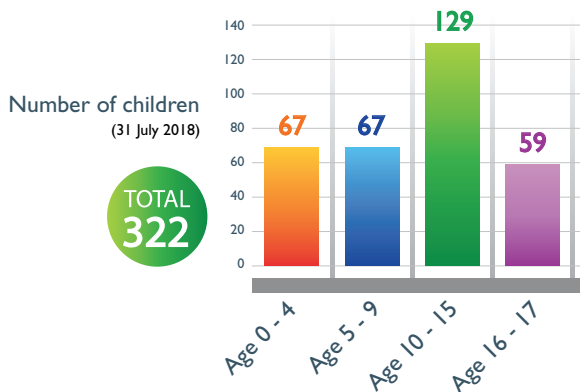
2. The Plan on a Page

Our ambition is for all children and young people in the East Riding to be happy, healthy, confident and safe. We will work in partnership to remove barriers to achievement and narrow the gap so that everyone can reach their potential.

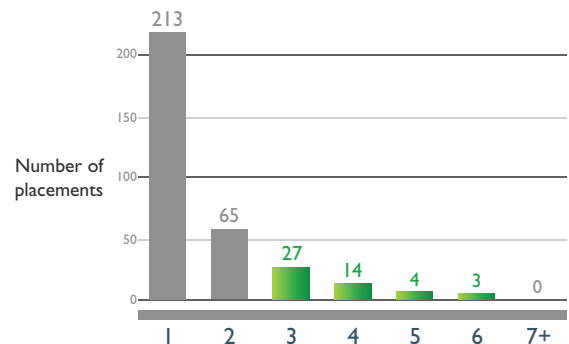
East Riding of Yorkshire - Strategy for Children who are Looked After and Care Leavers 2018 - 2023 <i>"We want all children in East Yorkshire, whoever looks after them, to be happy, healthy, confident and safe."</i>			
SCOPE	All Children Looked After by East Riding of Yorkshire, wherever they live, as well as vulnerable children on the edge of care ("children in need"), Care Leavers up to the age of 25, those who have been adopted, and those subject to Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders.		
OUR THREE PRIORITIES	① Embed and Extend Building on our excellent outcomes for health, education and employment to ensure that these are sustained and extended, and that support and encouragement is available from early years to age 25, for all levels of need and vulnerability.	② Invest and Improve Offering even better support to Foster Carers to expand their skill set and confidence to achieve the best possible outcomes to improve initial placement stability and reduce out-of-area placements.	③ Challenge and Change Encouraging all staff and Carers to take a proactive, positive and holistic approach to the individual needs of each child and birth family, with a mature approach to risk, and a sensitive understanding of any social/emotional/mental health issues.
CROSS-CUTTING THEMES	Ambition We want absolutely the very best for every child looked after in East Riding. Relationships We aim to build positive, professional relationships, with children and families as equal partners. Personalisation Every child and every family is different: we will recognise and celebrate this. Resilience We will nurture well-being through an informed approach to social, emotional and mental health. Prevention We will intervene at the earliest possible time, and plan for positive outcomes from the outset.		

3. Context: Key Facts and Figures

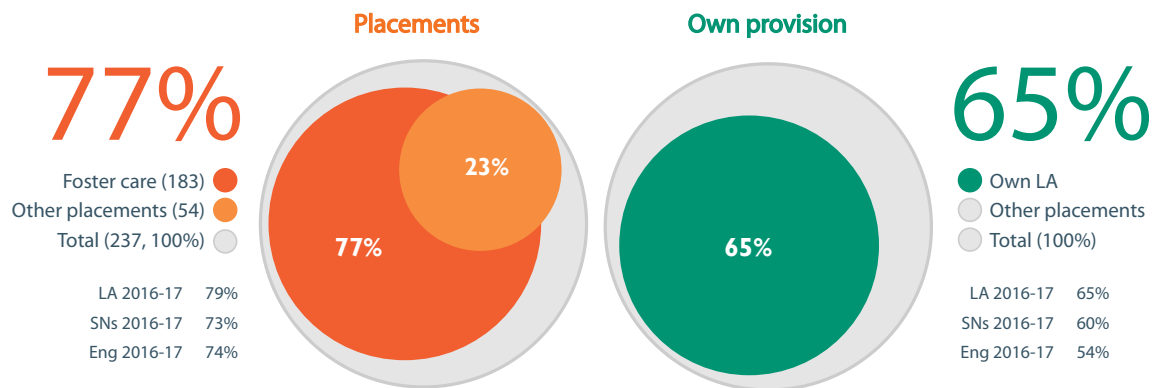
LAC numbers by age banding



Number of placements in the last 12 months

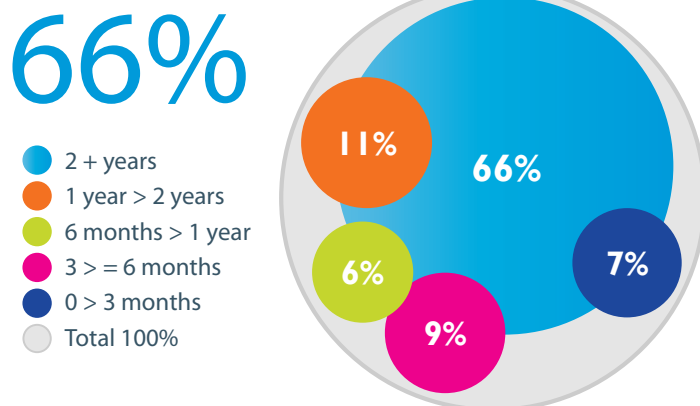


CLA placements by type and provision

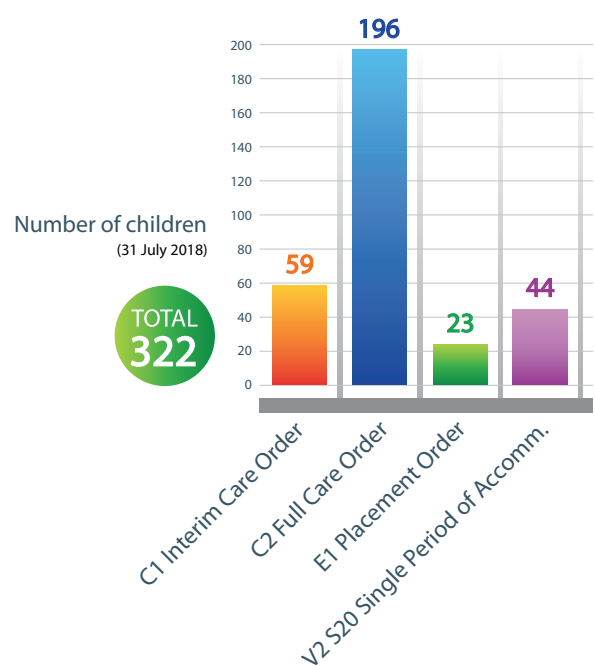


Duration of placements

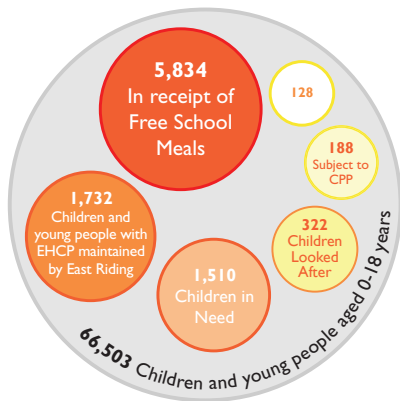
Duration of latest placement for each current CLA aged under 16 who has been looked after for 2½ years or more



LAC by legal status

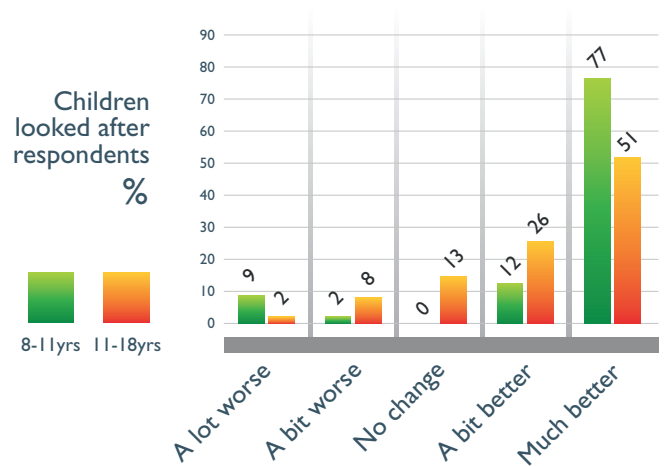


East Riding of Yorkshire Council Snapshot for Children and Young People



- 66,503 Children and young people aged 0-18 years
- 5,834 In receipt of Free School Meals
- 1,732 Children and young people with EHCP maintained by East Riding
- 1,510 Children in Need
- 322 Children Looked After
- 188 Subject to Child Protection Plan
- 128 Care Leavers in receipt of leaving care services

Is your life getting better?



72%

of care leavers 16-21 years old are currently in **Employment, Education** or **Training**.

Children aged 5+ who were adopted

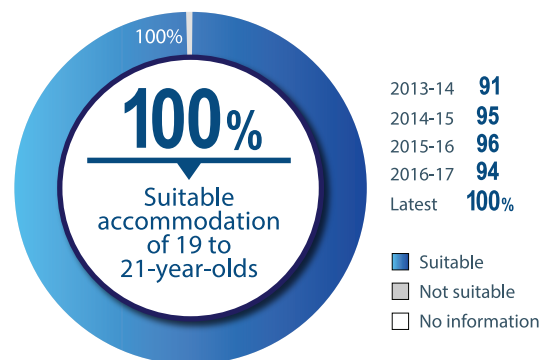
4 of the 39 children aged 5+ who ceased to be looked after in the last 6 months were adopted



Comparing 5+ adoptions

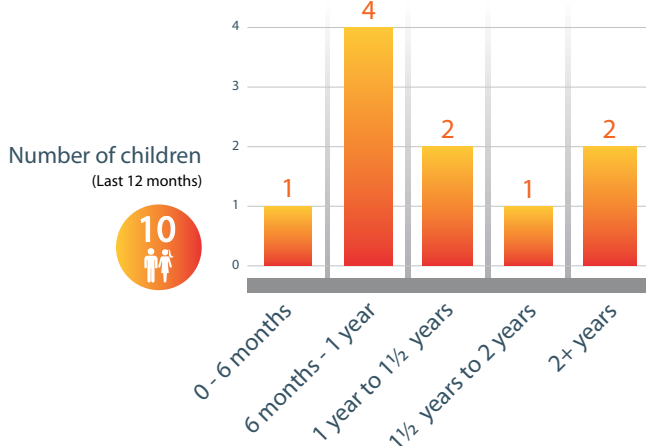
LA last 6 months	10.3%
LA 2013-16 (3 yr average)	10.0%
SNs 2013-16 (3 yr average)	5.0%
Eng 2013-16 (3 yr average)	7.9%

Suitable housing



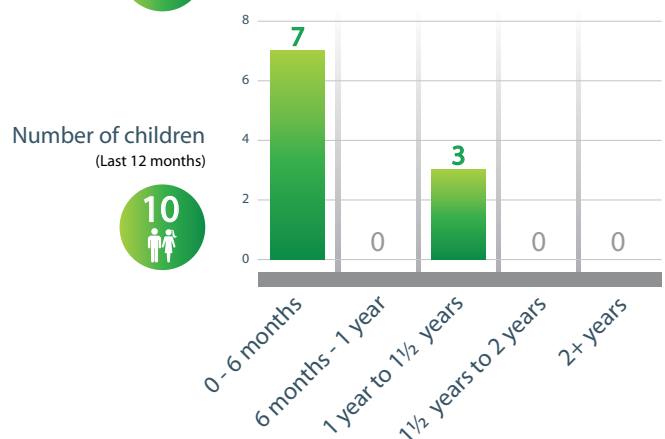
Time between entering care and placed with family

443 DAYS Average number of days from the date entering care to moving in with adoptive family



Time between placement order and deciding on a match

186 DAYS Average number of days from the date of the placement to the date matched to prospective adopters



4. Scope, Priorities, and Cross-cutting Themes

SCOPE

This strategy is intended to apply to all of the Children who are Looked After by East Riding Council, including those placed outside the County. It is also relevant to children placed for adoption, children subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and Child Arrangements Orders (CAOs), and Care Leavers. In July 2018 there were 322 children and young people in our care, and approximately 90 families with SGOs or CAOs.

We also regard Children on the Edge of Care as within the scope of this Strategy, although the main actions relevant to this group are described in other documents, such as the Parenting Strategy. However, by including them within the scope, we are sending an important signal to all those who work with Children who are Looked After that our collective responsibilities extend to preventative work, as well as to work with birth families.

This strategy is therefore considerably broader in scope than its predecessors.

VISION

There is an over-arching vision for all children and young people in East Riding, set out in the Strategic Plan 2017-2020¹:

Our ambition is for all children and young people in the East Riding to be happy, healthy, confident and safe. We will work in partnership to remove barriers to achievement and narrow the gap so that everyone can reach their potential.

This clearly applies equally to those young people who are the subject of this document, whoever looks after them.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Children's Trust partners are determined to promote positive outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people. The priorities in this document have been constructed after a review of progress since our last Strategy, as well as listening to what our children and young people have told us is important to them. They are underpinned by the recently refreshed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers²: a promise given by the council and its partners about the quality and nature of care that any child or young person can expect if they become looked after.



¹ www.eastriding.gov.uk/council/plans-and-policies/other-plans-and-policies-information/children-and-families

² eastridingchildcare.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/pledge_to_children_in_care.pdf

OUR THREE NEW STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

① Embed and Extend

Children and young people who are Looked After in East Riding have excellent outcomes for health, education and employment compared with those in similar councils elsewhere. We need to ensure that at the very least this progress is sustained. Ideally, though, it needs to be extended, because it still doesn't match that of other children and young people of the same age who also live in East Riding.

At the same time, we want to build on the excellent support arrangements we already offer to ensure that they are available to all those within the scope of this strategy, particularly those who have been adopted (and their families), those in the early years, and Care Leavers up to the age of 25. This support should be available for all levels of need and vulnerability.

② Invest and Improve

Resources in the public sector remain severely constrained. Nevertheless, the council and its partners will continue to invest in this area to the fullest possible extent in order to drive forward improvements. For example, we want to offer even better support to Foster Carers so as to improve initial placement stability as this is the one area where the objective performance measures suggest we are not doing as well as we might. It is also important to young people. At the same time, we need to reduce out-of-area placements, which will save money in the longer term.

In fact, we want to expand the skillset and confidence of all those who work in this area, including the excellent staff who work in our children's homes, to help engender a shared determination to achieve the best possible outcomes.

③ Challenge and Change

This priority recognises that we will not move further by resting on our laurels. We want to encourage staff and Carers to take a proactive, positive and holistic approach to the individual needs of each child and family, developing personalised approaches because every child is different. This includes recognising the particular needs and outlooks of those from other cultures.

We may arguably have sometimes – for good reasons – been somewhat risk-averse: this strategy signals that we want in future to take a more mature and balanced approach to risks, recognising that this is often the path toward true innovation.

We need also to take our staff and our carers into possibly unfamiliar territory, responding in particular to what young people have told us is important to them. These include networks of relationships to help overcome feelings of isolation – and, indeed, a whole range of social, emotional and mental health issues that young people may be facing.

Finally, we need to be especially sensitive to any issues that may arise around sexuality or gender.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

In order to ensure some fresh thinking and a step change in our work with Children who are Looked After, in addition to the three Strategic Priorities described above, we will now introduce five new cross-cutting themes which apply to all of them and which will help to inform our future work:

Ambition

We want absolutely the very best for every Child Looked After in East Riding. We need to ask ourselves if we are truly being as ambitious for the young people in our care as we would be for our own children? How can we ever be satisfied until health, emotional health, educational and employment outcomes for Children Looked After match those of their peers? We need to reinvigorate our approach.

Relationships

We aim to build positive, professional relationships, with children and families as equal partners. In the past we might have shied away from the term “*relationship*” because it can be used in all sorts of contexts – but we are talking here about professional and appropriate relationships which take equal account of all parties’ views. We need to strive harder to ensure that young people are never patronised, but supported and encouraged to construct and monitor their own care plans, and to take control of their own destinies.

Personalisation

Every child and every family is different: we will recognise and celebrate this. What works for one child (or family) may not work for another. Their circumstances, backgrounds, capabilities and aspirations may be entirely different. Our policies and practices need to be capable of differentiating between each unique individual – one size does not fit all.

Resilience

We will nurture well-being through an informed approach to social, emotional and mental health. This is the most important thing that came out of the consultation with young people. It is often described as supporting young people’s ability to ‘bounce back’. Others have described it as converting ‘toxic stress’ into ‘tolerable stress’ by supporting young people to achieve favourable outcomes. One important thing to note is that promoting resilience does not necessarily mean removing risk – it means shoring up the resources for dealing with it.

Prevention

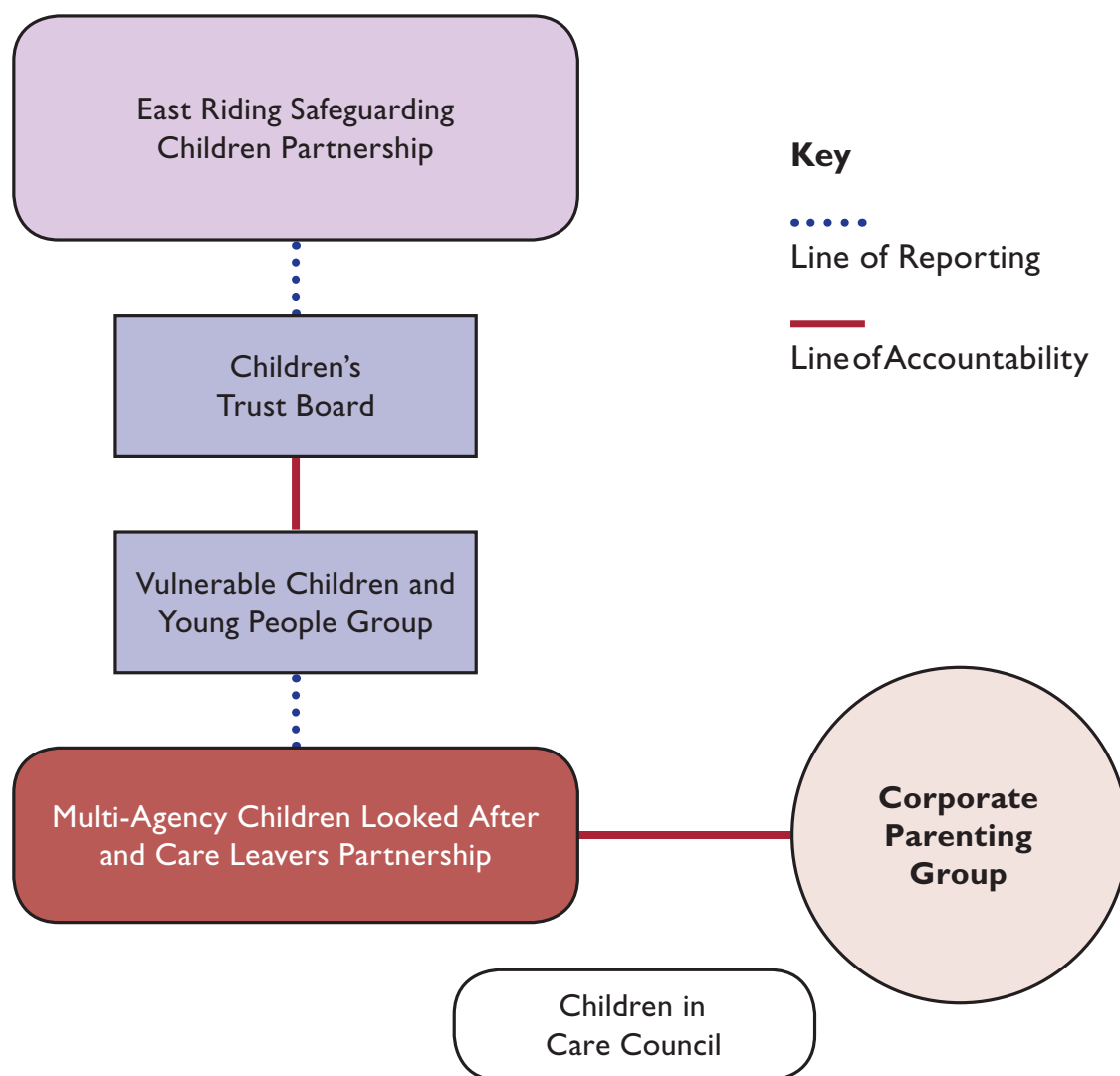
We will intervene at the earliest possible time, and plan for positive outcomes from the outset. There is ample evidence that problems in the teenage years – or in later life – can be avoided altogether if they are recognised and tackled early. We need to do more work in the early years to ensure that we have maximised children’s chances to form positive and loving attachments. Our work here will be informed by the complementary East Riding Parenting and Early Intervention Strategies.

Taken together, these strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes will serve as a vote of confidence in our present approach, and as a spur to further action. The next section describes the key initial actions we will take to give life to the strategy, and how we will know we are making a difference.

5. Key Actions and Performance Measures

	Key Actions	How we will know we are making a difference
EMBED AND EXTEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review all our services to ensure they apply equally to the most vulnerable, including those with special educational needs ▶ Ensure we have a credible offer for older Care Leavers for them to access support up to age 25 ▶ Extend services to those who have been adopted, so as to anticipate any problems at a later stage ▶ Expand the range of ways in which children who are looked after can influence services ▶ Improve our awareness of, and capacity to respond to, mental health issues ▶ Embed and extend the use of the SDQ and early assessment tools ▶ Ensure PEPs are produced even in the early years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of Children Looked After ▶ Care Leavers in suitable accommodation ▶ Care Leavers in employment, education or training ▶ Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (3-year average) ▶ Number of CLA providing views in to CICC meetings ▶ Surveys of CLA and Care Leavers ▶ % of SDQs completed and annual improvement in SDQ scores
OUR THREE PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Specific actions to improve early placement stability, but recognising that a degree of experimentation at this stage may be appropriate ▶ Recruitment initiatives to improve the availability of high-quality Foster Care placements, including further development of incentives and development opportunities ▶ Develop a Shared Care scheme to support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) up to the age of 25 and their families. ▶ As capacity improves, targeted action to bring out of area placements nearer home ▶ Provide practical and emotional support for Foster Carers, and those working in our Children's Homes, who are crucial to the success of this strategy ▶ Invest in training for staff as needed to support this strategy ▶ Tackle unnecessary school exclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children in Care with three or more placements ▶ Stability of Placements - Denominator Children aged under 16 in Care for 2.5 years or more. ▶ Number of foster carers recruited ▶ Percentage of LAC in foster care, residential or family-based placements ▶ Number of Emotional Health / Resilience team consultations ▶ Number of school exclusions ▶ School Absences for Children Looked After (CLA) ▶ Reduction in the number of Children and Young People living away from their families.
CHALLENGE AND CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Seek to build positive professional relationships with children and families from the outset, taking account of wider social networks ▶ Build positive thinking around, and support for, birth families into our approach, including restorative practice ▶ Challenge ourselves to ensure we are sufficiently sensitive to any issues around sexuality or gender ▶ Ensure there is meaningful 'co-production' of care plans which take account of talents, interests and social competencies ▶ Make sure all staff are confident and competent to address issues around emotional resilience and mental health, drawing on external support only when necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of Shared Care Scheme (SEND) ▶ The rate of CLA first time entrants into the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 ▶ Teenage Pregnancy rates ▶ Number of CLA that have completed their own personal profile ▶ Number of Children and Young People accessing support from Emotional Health / Resilience team

6. Ownership and Governance



The Partners in Practice (PiP) programme aims to be a genuine partnership between local and central government by bringing together the best practitioners and leaders in children's social care to improve the system. The Partners in Practice are among the strongest local authorities in the country and through the programme they are:

- ▶ Continuing to demonstrate what works and drive innovation to build understanding of the conditions needed for excellent practice to flourish
- ▶ Driving sector led improvement through peer support to authorities who need to improve
- ▶ Supporting DfE to shape and test policy on wider programmes and reforms

In February 2018 East Riding of Yorkshire Council Children's Services were awarded Partners in Practice status.

More information is available at www.innovationcsc.co.uk/partners-in-practice

Annex A

How we put this strategy together

In compiling this Strategy, we took account of six broad areas:

- ▶ National policy guidance and best practice;
- ▶ Other relevant local plans and strategies;
- ▶ The statistical evidence
- ▶ A review of progress since the last strategy;
- ▶ The views of professionals working in this field, including foster carers;
- ▶ The views of young people in care, or leaving care.

The last element was the most important and is the subject of a separate **Annex B**.

NATIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE

Although this is a local strategy, it takes account of current *national* guidance and best practice. In particular, in preparing this document we have had regard to:

- ▶ Statutory guidance on promoting the health and well-being of looked after children³
- ▶ The Rees Centre report into Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children in England⁴
- ▶ Keep on Caring: Supporting young people from care to Independence⁵
- ▶ www.local.gov.uk/get-act-children-and-social-work-act-2017⁶

OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES

This strategy also sits within a *local* strategic framework which includes the over-arching East Riding Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2020 produced by the Children's Trust. Care has been taken to ensure consistency between the two documents. In particular, this Strategy is consistent with the *three strategic priorities* set out in that document:

- ▶ Deliver an excellent educational experience for all, with attainment and achievement gaps narrowed
- ▶ Provide the support that parents and carers need, when they need it
- ▶ Promote good health and well-being for our children and young people, recognising the importance of emotional and mental health

Other relevant plans and strategies are listed in **Annex C**.

³ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf

⁴ reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenOverviewReport_Nov2015.pdf

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-on-caring-supporting-young-people-from-care-to-independence July 2016

⁶ www.local.gov.uk/get-act-children-and-social-work-act-2017

THE STATISTICAL EVIDENCE

We have reviewed a full range of statistical information to analyse trends over the last three years. Some of the key data is below.

	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
YEAR-END LOOKED AFTER POPULATION	261		288		312	
LOCAL PLACEMENTS	199		203		222	
OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS	62		85		90	
STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS OF CLA: 3 PLACEMENTS OR MORE	14.2%		14.8%		15.4%	
KS2 – % IN READING, WRITING AND MATHEMATICS	CLA	20.0%	CLA	33.0%	CLA	36.0%
	ERY	53.0%	ERY	61.0%	ERY	64.0%
	Y&H	50.0%	Y&H	58.0%	Y&H	62.0% (Prov)
	SN	53.8%	SN	61.7%	SN	64.7% (Prov)
	Eng	53.0%	Eng	61.0%	Eng	64.0% (Prov)
KS4 – AVERAGE ATTAINMENT 8 SCORE PER PUPIL (CLA – IN MAINSTREAM)	CLA		CLA		CLA	
	ERY	52.0%	ERY	47.2%	ERY	48.7% (Prov)
	Y&H	48.9%	Y&H	45.4%	Y&H	44.9% (Prov)
	SN	50.5%	SN	47.0%	SN	46.9% (Prov)
	Eng	48.5%	Eng	44.6%	Eng	46.2% (Prov)

What the statistics tell us is that our care population has increased and there remains an issue around **placement** stability in the early stages which we need to address. We make relatively high use of in-house and local placements but also rely on out-of-County placements, and relatively low use of Special Guardianship Orders and similar arrangements.

The **education** outcomes for children in East Riding are some of the best in the county – however, the gap between their attainment and that of their peers is still too wide. It needs to be emphasised that cohort sizes are very small, making trend analysis hard.

The **health** needs of children and young people looked after in East Riding are assessed, planned for and met through continuous placement planning and child care reviews. The designated looked after children nurse works with professionals and carers to ensure that services are responsive and timely. Immunisations are nearly all up to date (87%) and most health assessments (94%) and dental checks (85%) are undertaken annually. Our Children Looked After score highly on the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), this reflecting the prevalence of complex emotional difficulties.

Outcomes for **Carer Leavers** are positive: 100% Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (March 2018). Relatively low numbers of Care Leavers are NEET with 75% of Care Leavers in Education, Training or Employment as of March 2018, though this will always remain a priority for us.

The number of young people '**staying put**' has increased – there are currently 29 staying put placements and rising as of August 2018 a rise of 53% (in the last twelve months) from 19 placements in October 2017. This has been a major achievement since the last Strategy.

PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST STRATEGY

Our previous Strategy for Children Looked After in East Riding covered the years 2014-2017 and set out six priorities:

1. Ensure that they stay safe in their home and community
2. Ensure that they have stable placements
3. Improve their health and well-being
4. Improve their education and enjoyment
5. Improve their positive contribution outcomes
6. Support young people to achieve economic well-being

We believe we can demonstrate progress against all but the second of these priorities, as the statistics in the previous section confirm. For this reason, we decided not simply to roll these priorities over into the new Strategy, but to start afresh.

There have been many other developments over the past few years in the support for Children Looked After, including:

- ▶ working closely with our Children in Care Council to review our Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers.
- ▶ development of the Virtual School, including specific support for children that have been adopted; creation of early years PEPs.
- ▶ Bi-annual fostering conference, widespread social activities and broad range of skills and training developments for carers.

- ▶ free access to sport and leisure facilities through our My Time Active scheme for all children in care, their carers and Care Leavers up to the age of 25; collaborative work with Sports, Play and Arts services including the annual CLAmpics event to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and fun physical activity.
- ▶ partnership arrangements with the Children's University and Bookstart Letterbox scheme to improve literacy and numeracy skills
- ▶ engagement with Coram Voice and University of Bristol for Bright Spots survey.

THE VIEWS OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THIS FIELD, INCLUDING FOSTER CARERS

Foster Carers are invited to play an active role in the delivery of the service and their views are gathered systematically during the recruitment and assessment process. For those who are approved as foster carers ongoing feedback is gathered formally and informally and the service works hard to offer events and activities for carers, their children and Children Looked After.

The East Riding understands that fostering is a family commitment which means the view of the whole family are important and foster carers' children are consulted as part of the assessment process. The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) visits all newly approved foster carers to welcome them to the East Riding Fostering family as well as gather their views about the process so that they can influence and shape the development of the service.

The development journey for a newly approved foster carer continues with attendance at 'skills to foster' training and experienced foster carers support its delivery and the views of carers are sought as part of the training process. There is a collaborative approach to identifying the strengths and areas for development of the newly approved carers so that they can be supported to be the 'best they can be'.

Carers are supported to share their views during their formal supervision, providing the opportunity to feedback on each placement; the impact on their own children; support provided; partnership working, and own skills and development needs. The annual review process completes the improvement cycle and is an opportunity for foster carers to share their view with a professional who is independent of the fostering service. They are invited to comment on the support offered by the professionals who support the child in their care as well as the fostering service.

The Fostering Service also provides planned events throughout the year to show how much the East Riding values its foster carers and celebrate their hard work and dedication. These include informal consultations to ensure they are meeting foster carers needs. Feedback from carers is also received through our Face Book page as well as the monthly fostering newsletter.

Future developments include the Head of Service and senior managers meeting regularly with foster carers so they can share their views and ensure their involvement in co-production of service delivery and improvement.

Annex B

The views of Children who are Looked After or Leaving Care

VOICE OF THE CHILD

We are committed to understanding how children and young people experience our services and we adopt a range of ways in which we seek this out. Our workforce understands the importance of direct work with children and utilise a range of creative ways and direct work tools to engage children. The child's voice is a feature in all assessments and which is used to inform plans. As part of our social work career pathway our social workers undertaking their ASYE and progression portfolios seek a range feedback from the children and families with whom they work.

Our rights and participation team facilitate children and young peoples' attendance at child protection conferences and seek feedback about their experiences at their reviews. All children who are looked after complete viewpoint which is use to informed their reviews and planning. All our young people are actively engaged in resident meetings at our children homes.

In association with Barnardos we have developed a project seeking the views and understanding the experiences of our LGBTQ young people.

Our THIRT3EN website⁷, was created in partnership with our young people and the local radio and it affords us the capacity to seek feedback, understand relevant issues and respond to emerging needs and demands (over 350,000 hits).

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL (CICC)

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) takes place monthly, usually after school and is usually attended by a core group of around 22 young people who are regularly involved. It is an opportunity for young people to *'have their say and make a difference'*. Attendance for their hard work and commitment is rewarded by vouchers, activities and a summer residential holiday.

During the past year members of the CiCC have been very busy, having been involved in undertaking presentations at the Fostering roadshows and Skills to Foster training; talking about their experiences at the Independent Visitor training and running Young Peoples' Interview panels as part of recruitment activity across the service.

They have presented their E-safety 'Who wants to be a Millionaire Quiz' to Senior Managers, ERSCB Online Safety Group, Safeguarding Team Cluster meetings, at the Elected Members training and the Corporate CiCC. They have also been heavily involved in numerous consultations: development of the new My Care Plan, Child Sexual Exploitation and the PEP forms.

The CiCC made an Anti-bullying film working with East Riding College for the Regional CiCC Event in November 2017 and a Knife Crime advert for "Thirteen" which Viking FM radio continue to play.

⁷ assets.vikingfm.co.uk

In May 2018 the CiCC attended another Regional Event in Leeds where their theme was communication, members had worked on a letter they would like to receive when their social worker changes or leaves.

In August 2018 looked after children, including members of the CiCC, attended a Bright Spots Fun Day held at Longcroft School in Beverley. There were a number of activities and an opportunity to be involved in the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey feedback.

THE GROOVY STARFISH GROUP

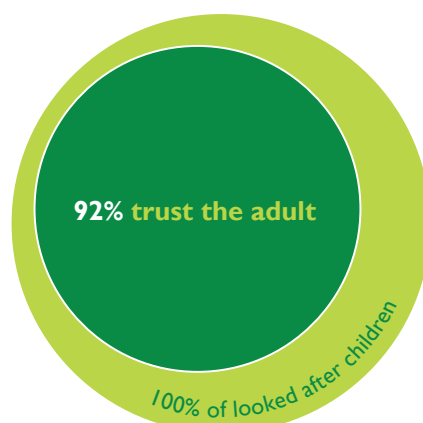
The Groovy Starfish group is for Children Looked After aged 4-10 years old and is held each school holiday. It is a time to have fun, make new friends and take part and explore new experiences through themed based activities. At the end of each group the children give feedback regarding the activities and what they would like to do at future groups. A planned transition to the Children in Care Council takes place when they reach 11 years old.

BRIGHT SPOTS

In February and March 2018 the local authority in conjunction with Coram Voice and the University of Bristol undertook the Bright Spots survey for Children Looked After aged 4-18 years old and also Care Leavers. The survey provided a great opportunity to independently hear the views of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers to better understand how they perceive their care, well-being, the people they know, their rights and the chances they get. 81% of our 4-18 years old completed the survey along with 69% of our Care Leaver population.

The feedback results showed that the majority (80%) children and young people in care felt their lives were improving; children and young people reported higher levels of support for their education than children in the general population. There were high levels of trust in social workers including all children aged 4-7yrs. Looked after young people (11-18) appear to be thriving when compared to the general population and other looked after young people; a greater proportion of our young people had very high scores (9 or 10) on the well-being scales. There was also a higher proportion of young people aged 11-18yrs (94%) that felt included 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes' in decisions their social workers make compared to 88% of young people in other authorities.

The Care Leaver survey revealed very positive comments from all the young people about their personal advisors; all thought it was easy to contact their worker all or some of the time and everyone knew who their worker was. There was a high value placed on support received.



92%

Almost all children and young people **trusted the adult** that **they lived with**. Similarly, almost all had trusted an adult in their lives.

FOCUS GROUPS

In addition to the consultation mechanisms and exercises outlined above, we conducted two special focus group sessions – one with Care Leavers, and one with the Children in Care Council – to discuss issues of particular relevance to the construction of this Strategy. Both were well-attended, and the feedback was frank and constructive.

One of the most important issues to come out of the session with the **Children in Care Council** was that no two children in care are alike, nor do they necessarily share the same views. Clearly there are some common experiences, but in other respects the young people are as different from each other – each an individual – as their peers. This has led us to develop strategies and services in a more personal way, avoiding a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

The young people expressed a desire to be seen as ‘normal’, avoiding any experience (such as being taken out of class, or unable to participate in a school outing) which might suggest otherwise. There was also agreement that as they got older, e.g. on transition to secondary school, it could be harder to form relationships with their peers, which could lead to loneliness and a sense of isolation. Many would appreciate help with such issues.

Some young people had undergone considerable instability at the outset of their placements, which they felt had not been helpful. Many had been supported by a large number of different social workers during their time in care, sometimes running into double figures. They reported a variety of views in terms of their relationship with their current social worker, ranging from the very positive to the fairly negative. Clearly what is most appreciated is a professional approach, accompanied by excellent listening skills – and being treated like a ‘normal human being’. The young people emphasised the need to take action if they ever pressed an alarm bell, such as if a foster placement was in danger of breaking down.

The majority of the young people had very positive aspirations for the future.

The focus group of **Care Leavers** was universally complimentary about the services they were receiving from the Pathway Team, and their relationship with their individual worker. They appreciated the new opportunity to access such support until they were 25. But they too spoke of the potential for isolation as they moved out into the world – and the need for support in developing some genuine ‘connectedness’. There were particular issues for those from minority communities that are not widely represented in East Riding. However, like their younger peers, the Care Leavers had a very positive set of ambitions for the future, and were generally clear on the steps they would need to take in order to get there.

I love the people I am with. I am glad I am not with anyone else.

8 - 11 years

My ex-foster carers who I live with are really lovely – they encourage me in everything I do.

(worker) really has been a massive support network to me, not only for housing, but emotionally there for me whenever I have needed her and when I've been really down would be lost without her!

I like it best when Social Workers treat me like a grown-up, like a real person.

There aren't many people who look like me in East Riding.

– Care Leaver who was formerly an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker

Annex C

Other relevant Plans and Strategies

This table identifies the most important plans and strategies that support the delivery of the ambition and priorities within this strategy.

Strategy	Time Frame
'Our East Riding' – the East Riding Community Plan	2016 - 2020
Building Brighter Futures – Children and Young Peoples Plan	2017 - 2020
Special Educational Needs Strategy	2018 - 2020
Early Intervention Strategy	2013 - 2018
Health and Well-being Strategy	2019 - 2022
Children and Young People Joint Commissioning Strategy	2019 - 2022
East Riding Parenting Strategy	2017 - 2022
Youth Justice Plan	2018 - 2019
Strategy for people with Autism	2019 - 2024
Families in Poverty Strategy	2018 - 2021
Healthy Weight Strategy	2018 - 2023
Future in Mind Transformation Plan	2016 - 2020
Anti-Bullying Strategy	2017 - 2020

Annex D

Key Contacts

The East Riding Fostering Service

- @ FISH@eastriding.gov.uk
- (01482) 396469
- www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/children-and-families/fostering

The Pathway Team

- @ pathway.admin@eastriding.gov.uk
- (01482) 396666

Children Looked After and Care Leavers (Corporate Parenting)

- @ corporateparenting.admin@eastriding.gov.uk
- (01482) 396666

Children's Participation and Rights Service

- @ rights4u@eastriding.gov.uk

Children's Commissioning and Quality Monitoring Team

- @ childrens.commissioning.team@eastriding.gov.uk

Vulnerable Children Education Team (Virtual School)

- @ VCET@ eastriding.gov.uk
- (01482) 392128

(Regional Adoption Agency)

- @ www.oneadoption.co.uk
- (01482) 396673
- www.oneadoption.co.uk/north-humber/about-one-adoption-north-humber

National Recognition

Pathway Team - Social Work Team of the Year



Jessica Raper - Newly Qualified Social Worker of the Year



Bridget Bennett MBE 2019



Bridget (Fostering Agency Decision Maker) was honoured for her work with children and families across the East Riding.

Helen Rawdon MBE 2019



Helen Rawdon received her honour for services to fostering in the East Riding. She began working as a foster carer in 1989 and has since provided care and support for more than 150 children and young people. She fosters babies and children and offers supported lodging placements to a range of vulnerable young adults, including care leavers.

NOTES

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To request another format, please contact us on

Tel: (01482) 396673 or Email: corporateparenting.admin@eastriding.gov.uk



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