



# Looked After Children Strategy

March 2019/2020



achieving  
for children

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This document has been designed to be viewed online to access linked documents

## Introduction

This looked after children (LAC) strategy outlines the values, principles and key priorities to support children and young people who are looked after in the Kingston and Richmond boroughs.

**Achieving for Children (AfC), the joint children's service for Kingston and Richmond, is passionate about ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and their families and will deliver the services they need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.**

This strategy sets out the intention of both boroughs to ensure all looked after children and young people are provided with the best possible care and support, in placements that are as close as possible to their home. It confirms our commitment to work in partnership with children and young people, their parents, carers, families and partner agencies. This is with the aim of ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and their families and delivering the services they need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

Achieving for Children has a shared vision for our looked after children across Kingston and Richmond boroughs, and whilst there are some differences, through having a shared approach, we believe we will be more able to fulfil the ambition we share for our looked after children and care leavers across our region.

**Alison Twynam**

Director of Children's Social Care

## **Our priorities for looked after children**

Informed by what our looked after children and care leavers have told us is important to them, we have identified nine key priorities that are at the heart of this strategy.

- **Our children and young people are respected and involved**
- **Our placements are safe and meet the needs of our children and young people**
- **Our children and young people are encouraged to develop positive relationships**
- **Our children have a clear understanding of their identity**
- **Our children are enabled to reach their educational potential**
- **Our children are healthy**
- **Emotional wellbeing**
- **Moving to adulthood**
- **Corporate parent**

## About the Children in Care Council (CICC)

Achieving for children supports the Kingston Cared for and Fostered Council (KCFC) and Children in Care Council Richmond (CICCR), which are the main mechanisms for young people to have their voices heard and issues recognised.

Both Children in Care Councils (CiCCs) meet separately on a regularly basis as well as jointly to discuss and plan events and projects, as well as undertake peer research into young people' issues.

The CiCCs meet quarterly with AfC directors, lead members, senior managers and foster carers to monitor the progress of the CICC Action Plan 2019/20.

KCFC and CICCR came together to produce their action plan for 2019/20 which was informed through hosting stakeholder events with children and young people and with foster carers, social workers and managers.

The action plan is split into three sections.

# AfC Richmond and Kingston Children in Care Council

## Joint Action Plan 2018/19



### Objective 1:

The CiCC to be supported to understand and raise awareness of the link between substance misuse and mental health issues for young people in care and leaving care.

Actions:		Professionals responsible to support CiCC	Achievement	Timescale
1	CiCC to complete their Youth Health Champions training with LAC nurse	Vicky Fraser	<b>CiCC has Increased awareness of the range of mental health issue experienced by young people looked after and how to support young people with these issues effectively.</b>	January 2019
2	CiCC will receive training about substance misuse issues and the link to mental health from the AfC substance misuse team	Lynn Lock Kayha	<b>CiCC will have an increased awareness of substance misuse and the types of substances YP misuse.</b>	February 2019
3	CiCC, LAC nurses or Substance Misuse team will support and promote monthly calendared drops ins for young people to attend as part of the Youth Club evenings	Michael Connors Lynn Lock Vicky Fraser	<b>CLA will be able to receive and know where to go to get support through monthly drop-ins specifically on substance misuse and mental health. At least 10 to 12 young people will have accessed the new drop in.</b>	February 2019

4	LAC nurses will continue and promote monthly calendar drop ins for young people to attend as part of youth club evenings	Michael Connors	<b>Key findings from drop-in service and conference are shared with professionals to inform them and is also presented to key decisions makers within AfC and Clinical Commissioning Group</b>	
5.	CiCC to present at whole social care away day event on their work and findings and how to support young people looked after with substance misuse and mental health issues			

Vicky Fraser, Interim Designated Nurse Looked After Children

Lynn Lock, Young People Substance Misuse Service Manager

Michael Connors , Youth Engagement Lead

## Objective 2:

**CiCC to be supported to understand and raise awareness of the signs of child sexual exploitation (CSE) for young people in care and leaving care**

Actions:		Professionals responsible to support CiCC	Achievement	Timescale
1	CiCC will receive training to be able to recognise the signs and indicators surrounding CSE and be able to support and signpost young people affected to the correct areas of support	Nikki King	<b>CiCC will be knowledgeable and confident in supporting others affected by CSE and be able to signpost to relevant professionals</b>	February 2019
2	CiCC to develop or commission a short drama piece or film resource about CSE that will support other young people in care and care leavers	Michael Connors Steve Slavin	<b>Film will be successful in raising awareness of CSE as well as providing young people with support tools and places to get support, advice and guidance</b>	May 2019
3	Finished film to be promoted on the AfC Info website and be circulated by LAC team manager and Leaving Care managers to promote to social workers, PAs and foster carers	Kuhan Valleekanthan Shaira Makorie	<b>CLA and care leavers will have a better understanding of CSE and be able to recognise the signs and indicators surrounding CSE in order to keep themselves safe and support others affected</b>	

Nikki King, CSE Youth Worker, Health and Wellbeing hub

Shaira Makorie, Leaving Care/UASC Team Manager

Kuhan Valleekanthan, CLA Team Manager

Michael Connors – Youth Engagement Lead



### Objective 3:

**CICC will support the promotion of education and careers choices through better sharing and publicising of new and improved information**

Actions:	Professionals responsible to support CICC	Achievements	Timescale
<p>1 CICC will work with 14-19 team to promote and publicise career support offered by the 14-19 team for those looked after and leaving care about education options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A levels</li> <li>● B TEC</li> <li>● Further education</li> <li>● NVQ</li> <li>● Apprenticeship schemes</li> <li>● Bursaries</li> <li>● Opportunities for VASC</li> </ul>	<p>Eamonn Gilbert Clare Huntingford Sobia Rabhi</p>	<p><b>CICC to publicise support available for young people using their new choices leaflet or poster and word of mouth</b></p>	<p>October 2018</p>
<p>2 CiCC will facilitate focus groups with young people to gauge the effectiveness of the new information leaflets and posters and provide recommendations on how to further improve the approach</p>	<p>Michael Connors</p>	<p><b>CiCC involved in consulting with young people on the effectiveness of the new literature available CiCC feedback their findings at CPP as well as quarterly managers meetings</b></p>	<p>March 2019</p>

3	With the support of the 14-19 team and Way2Work, CICC will facilitate a half-day open morning or post-16 session aimed at LAC and care leavers. The session will be informal and promote different options available post 16 for LAC.	Eamonn Gilbert Clare Huntingford Barri Ghai Suzanne Parrot	<p><b>Twenty young people will attend the open morning and be more informed of the options available to them.</b></p> <p><b>There will be more apprenticeships or traineeships taken on by care leavers than present.</b></p>	
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Eamonn Gilbert, 14-19 Partnership Manager

Clare Huntingford, Education Business Partnership manager

Barri Ghai, Manager Way2Work and Adult Community learning

Suzanne Parrot, Virtual School Head Teacher

# 1. The focus on achieving the priorities

## Our children and young people are respected and involved

- We will ensure that children and young people are respected and listened to.
- We will ensure that they are involved in the decisions made about their lives in an age appropriate manner and understand these decisions.
- We will ensure that they know where to access information, advice and support and how to complain.
- We will develop and implement a looked after children and carer participation strategy to ensure service users contribute to improvements in services. This has been revised to ensure it fits within the Signs of Success model currently being implemented by AfC.
- A working group will be set up to establish a more structured approach to young people chairing their own looked after children review. This has been revised to ensure it fits within the Signs of Success model currently being implemented by AfC.

### What this means in practice

- We meet with every looked after children at least every six weeks and see them alone. If young people are in a long term ratified placement and they wish for their visits to be reduced to twelve weekly, we will undertake some specific wishes and feelings work and discuss with the allocated independent reviewing officer (IRO).
- We ensure that children and young people are active participants in their review and meet their IRO before their review.
- The standard of LAC reviews has improved over the last two years through stabilising the process and procedure for information needed at reviews and involving young people in this process. This has led to better relationships with children and young people and raised the quality of care planning and assessments.
- We provide a variety of ways that children can express their views including independent advocacy.
- We have a strong and active Children in Care Councils which have access to senior officers of children's services to help influence and shape the delivery of services.
- The CICC's attend, and are active, in the corporate parenting group. The CICC's have reviewed our complaints leaflet to ensure it is user friendly and appropriately publicised and understood. The CICC Recruits Crew is involved in interviewing managers and social workers.
- Foster carers are invited to our robust permanency planning meetings.

## **What we need to improve on**

- We need to develop a more structured, child friendly way to enable young people to chair their own LAC reviews. A working group has been set up.
- We need to stabilise the workforce in the Children Looked After team to ensure consistency of social worker for our young people.
- We need to revise our current Leaving Care offer to ensure efficiency and innovative practice.
- We need to review partner ownership of corporate parenting responsibility regarding NEET and apprenticeships.
- We need to review the local offer for our unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

## **Our placements are safe and meet the needs of our children and young people**

- We will implement our commissioning strategy for sufficiency and placement stability to help deliver improved options for looked after children.
- We will ensure that we have a range of placements available for our children and young people.
- We will ensure that children and young people have a variety of ways to express any concerns they have and act promptly on these.
- Placements feel like home and changes are kept to a minimum.

## **What this means in practice**

- There are very few unplanned placement changes.
- Independent reviewing officers meet with children alone prior to their looked after review.
- A clear escalation process is in place to ensure that IROs can bring concerns to the attention of managers in a timely manner.
- 'Voice' is available for independent advocacy.
- Concerns and complaints are responded to promptly and the local authority designated officer (LADO) is involved if required.
- We are currently looking into more local placement opportunities for our young people and care leavers as they move towards independence. This has partly been achieved with the addition of Greenleas our 17 bedded provision for care leavers.
- When possible, the commissioning team will visit placements, including residential, before moving children to ensure the quality of the service they offer.

## **What we need to improve on**

- Increase the number of the in-house foster carers who are local to the Kingston and Richmond areas through an improvement in recruitment and retention processes.

- Increase the variety of accommodation to meet the different specific needs of our young people.
- Forge productive working partnerships with the housing department to ensure appropriate allocation in conjunction with the AfC sufficiency strategy.
- Further develop effective interventions to deal with county lines, gang affiliation, modern day slavery, radicalisation and criminal exploitation.

## **Our children and young people are encouraged to develop positive relationships**

- Children and young people will be encouraged and have the opportunity to develop strong peer relationships. They will be enabled to sustain family relationships with parents, siblings and extended family in a safe and positive way.
- Children and young people will have access to more specialist support if required to ensure needs are met.
- We will develop a coordinated strategy with partners to increase LAC participation in extra-curricular activities. This includes arts and cultural events and organised sports activities to contribute to better enjoying and achieving outcomes for looked after children.

### **What this means in practice**

- Where possible, placements are local and priority is given to children and young people to help them continue in the same school or education establishment where this is in their best interests.
- A permanency planning process ensures that early decisions are made and any drift is avoided. Extended families are always considered as part of the planning process and children are placed with extended family where it is safe to do so.
- Expert in-house contact supervisors are able to help facilitate contact with extended family and siblings where appropriate.
- Contact with family and siblings is always considered as part of planning, including adoption and special guardianship support plans.
- A looked after CAMHS therapist is made available to provide bespoke assessment and intervention as required.
- The participation team runs a variety of activities through the year for looked after children and their friends, including a monthly youth club.

### **What we need to improve on**

- We need to work on widening the choice of placement opportunities locally for young people as they move towards independence.
- We need to fully develop our Emotional Health offer and ensure our therapists are used creatively to focus on impact and outcome.
- Our children have a clear understanding of their identity.
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- Children and young people will know who they are, why they are looked after and understand their background and heritage.
- They will feel valued by others and their individual needs arising from race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability will be understood and met.

### **What this means in practice**

- A genogram is undertaken for all young people to aid understanding of their family and identity.
- Life story work will be considered with all looked after children where there is a decision of permanency.
- A looked after children's emotional health therapist will be able to provide a service around identity and belonging as required.
- At point of placement, a robust matching process will be in place to consider issues of identity and belonging.
- Where there is not the same cultural identity for the child or young person within their placement, opportunities to ensure close cultural links will be considered and sought accordingly.

### **What we need to improve on**

- The standard of social work assessments continues to improve across all social work teams to ensure a thorough understanding of children's histories is recorded. Continued work has been undertaken to get consent from parents at the earliest stage of the LAC process to get access to the child's and parents' medical history.
- We need to continue to work with our health partners to improve the timeliness of initial and review health assessments
- We need to continue to involve our young people in their care planning using the Signs of Success model
- We need to continue to develop the use of mapping meetings to enable us to work holistically

### **Our children are enabled to reach their educational potential**

- Children and young people will attend school and be supported to ensure full attendance. Where required any additional needs will be identified and support provided.
- Young people leaving care will be encouraged and supported to enter further education, employment and training.
- We need to ensure that timeliness and quality of personal education plans (PEPs) are monitored to contribute to better environment and achievement outcomes for looked after children.
- We need to identify the pattern and duration of exclusions of looked after children from schools to identify examples of good practice where exclusion of looked after children is low and develop strategies to reduce exclusions.

### **What this means in practice**

- 100% of our children and young people will have a personal education plan.
- Additional needs will be identified through a bespoke educational psychology service and, where required, a special educational needs (SEN) intervention will be initiated.
- Placement changes will be kept to a minimum. Transition from Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 will be carefully managed and young people supported with this change.
- Care leavers moving to university will have stability of care over the period of their A Levels through to their move to university.
- AfC has now signed up to the ePEP system which enables all relevant professionals to input information onto a centralised database. This will ensure greater oversight and communication between professionals to achieve good educational outcomes.
- Discussions around staying put are now being held at the LAC review when a young person turns 16. Richmond now has seven young people staying put.

### **What we need to improve on**

- When transitioning between placements, greater joint working needs to be undertaken to ensure children's and young people's education is disrupted as little as possible.
- The relevant partners are to be invited to permanency planning meetings to ensure there is a multi-agency overview
- We need to further develop the 'Staying Put' offer to make it an attractive option for foster carers.
- We need to further develop our ratification procedure to reduce drift.

### **Our children are healthy**

- The health needs of children and young people will be assessed and reviewed in a timely way.
- Where required, they will have access to specialist health services including those related to additional needs or disability.
- Our children and young people will be encouraged to lead healthy and active lifestyles.
- Our children will have access to information on the risks of alcohol and substance misuse, and be appointed through specialist services, if required.
- We will develop clear actions to ensure health outcome targets are met for looked after children's entitlements to good access to health services, including where required advice on healthy diet, sex education, obesity reduction, and increased physical activity.

### **What this means in practice**

- All children coming into care to have a looked after child medical with a medical practitioner. This is to be reviewed annually by an appropriate health professional.
- Children with disabilities to have access to integrated services.
- We now have a new permanent LAC nurse and designated doctor. A system has been put in

place to ensure that there is robust oversight of upcoming health reviews. A new system has been implemented to try and tackle the ongoing challenge of achieving timeliness of initial health reviews.

- The merger of the Multi-agency team and Looked After Children team continues to ensure that there is closer working relationships between social workers and AfC's emotional health therapists to ensure appropriate and timely interventions are put in place. 'Think Space' has been better used for professionals to critically reflect on children to ensure appropriate services are being accessed.

### **What we need to improve on**

- The timeliness of initial health assessments and the out of borough health reviews.

## **Emotional wellbeing**

- Children and young people have their need for any additional emotional support recognised and addressed, and are given the knowledge and skills to achieve emotional stability, resilience and self-confidence.

### **What this means in practice**

- There is a good understanding, when forming care plans, of the support that needs to be in place to give a sense of security and belonging.
- Good attachments to key adults in a child's or young person's life will be retained and where possible strengthened, to improve sense of self and wellbeing.
- The achievements of a permanent LAC work force have improved the stability of the social worker's and young person's relationship. This has placed us in a better position to provide extra support or praise at significant times in their lives.
- Through our Culture4Keeps program and virtual schools activities, looked after children are provided with a wide range of activities to engage in such as art and theatre projects, learning musical instruments, one off activities such as Go Ape, visits to farms and visits to sports stadiums.

### **What we need to improve on**

- We need to identify ways for embedding the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) as a tool for assessing and evaluating the emotional needs of LAC and using this knowledge information to inform reviewing and care planning and using this information to help in service development.
- There is ongoing work to strengthen transitions when children transfer social workers and/or teams.
- We need to give better recognition to the understanding of the link between health, school, placement and family, and an individual's own sense of emotional wellbeing. With the merge of the MAT and LAC team, greater relationships have been formed between social workers and wider professionals to ensure a more rounded holistic approach.



## Moving to adulthood

- Children and young people enter adulthood in a planned way, with a home to live in, the skills to look after themselves and the ability to earn a living or continue in education.
- They feel confident about the future.
- The quality of our pathway planning will be improved further through having a quality assurance auditing process, with a view to evidencing an increase in the contribution from our young people into their planning.

### What this means in practice

- We ensure good transition from the looked after children worker to the 16+ personal advisor.
- Clear expectations to be in place, to help young people prepare for independence and have the life skills to achieve this.
- Opportunities will be given for young people to build confidence over a prolonged period for more independence and self-responsibility.
- A range of accommodation options to be considered to facilitate any plan for further education. Ensure all necessary information has been obtained for the young people in a timely way that will be needed when moving towards adulthood, such as birth certificate, National Insurance number, bank account, etc.
- A clear understanding of plans is in place for the young person and their placement arrangements, before any changes, be that at 16, 18 or later. This should include, where appropriate, any changes in funding or accessibility to benefits, such as housing benefit.
- Mybank workshops have been rolled out to develop young people's budgeting skills which they receive an accredited certificate for. Cooking workshops and sexual health sessions also take place.

### What we need to improve on

- We need to improve the range and quality of placement provision for 16+ and options for supported and semi-supported accommodation. There is an ongoing accommodation review taking place to ensure regular scoping for suitable accommodation for looked after children and care leavers. It also looks at the current providers we use and ensures they are of a high standard and good quality.

## Corporate parent

- At the core of everything we do is our understanding of our responsibility as a corporate parent.
- Elected members and council officers will understand their role and how to ensure children and young people receive the best possible service across Kingston and Richmond boroughs.

### **What this means in practice**

- The corporate parenting panel meets every two months and is chaired by the Lead member.
- Training has been provided for elected members and is well attended.
- The Children in Care Councils are active participants in the panel and able to contribute and offer challenge.
- We have our annual achievements awards which are attended by local members. Local members also have attended state holder events held by the CICC.

### **What we need to improve on**

- An increase in the sense of corporate responsibility across all the statutory agencies in the support for our looked after children, improving the impact of multi-agency support.
- We need to ensure good mechanisms are in place for challenge and counter challenge between social workers, carers, young people and so on, to realise the ambition we have for looked after children in Kingston and Richmond.
- We need to continue to build a multi-agency partnership and engagement strategy to help understand the effectiveness of our corporate parenting approach. This should include challenge and rewards, such as looked after children achievement awards.

## 2. Multi-agency working

### Our partners

The Kingston and Richmond boroughs will continue to work hard with partner agencies, supporting them to play their part in ensuring that children and young people who are looked after achieve their full potential.

There is a dedicated multi-agency team in both authorities comprising of professionals from health, mental health and participation that work together alongside social workers and the virtual school to ensure that the needs of looked after children in Kingston and Richmond are appropriately met. Both these multi-agency teams and virtual school provide specialist educational, health and mental health assessment, input, intervention and support programmes and work collaboratively with all key professionals to improve health and education outcomes.

### Our role as corporate parents

The corporate parenting panel (CPP) plays a vital role in ensuring we are doing all we can to improve the services and outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers. Although there are separate CPPs in Kingston and Richmond, there is a close co-ordination between senior officers to help share learning and understanding. The role of the CPP is to ensure that there is a shared commitment to:

- achieving improved outcomes for looked after children
- agree and averse implementation of the strategy to drive improved outcomes narrow the achievement gap experienced by looked after children
- ensure that our looked after children are supported in life, and services are designed in order to meet their needs

Changes in the CPP are being considered to ensure a wider representation on the panel of partners. This may include membership from, education, health, councillors, young people, alongside senior officers for childrens' social care services.

Members of the Children in Care Councils attend the panel to contribute to the documentation and scrutiny of plans, alongside being able to challenge the approaches made and influence the shaping of services to help improve delivery.

The CPP ensures a response to the looked after children action plan and has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing services provided for looked after children to ensure we are improving and building on good outcomes for children.

### **3. Associated plans, strategies and policies**

The looked after children strategy forms part of a suite of documents, policies and processes that help inform our work and ensure our focus on the outcomes and achievements of our looked after children and young people.

Services central to ensuring our looked after children receive appropriate services at the point of being received into our care, are outlined in our guidance for PEP and process for referring a child for an initial health assessment. There is also a clear flow diagram of duties and the fostering processes we follow when a placement is sought, alongside our fostering service statement of purpose.

A key pillar of our strategy is to avoid any drift in planning for our looked after children, and should all avenues to facilitate a return to family and friends be exhausted, a permanency planning process will be progressed. This ensures a step-by-step permanency route is advanced as it is acknowledged that a sense of stability and belonging is an important feature of any child's life.

Our commitment to children and young people remains as our looked after children prepare for independence. We have a financial policy for 16+ young people in place as well as a staying put policy. It helps that any plans regarding care leavers are undertaken in a planned way alongside the young person's needs and circumstances.

This approach is overseen by the members of the corporate parenting panel and is aligned with our statutory duties and responsibilities.

## Our commitment

This strategy outlines our commitment to doing our very best to ensure we keep the promise made to our looked after children. We believe that through the declaration of our priorities and outlining what we believe we can achieve will help improve the lives and outcomes for our looked after children and young people.

## Some comments from our looked after children and young people in Kingston and Richmond

### What things do you like about social workers?

“She is polite and understands my needs”

“She pays an interest in the things in my life”

“I feel confident when talking to him”

“They are kind and helpful, helping me work out what to do in the future”

### What do you not like about social workers?

“When they don’t know half the stuff about me”

“When they leave after six months”

“Lots of different social workers for me is a bad thing”

“When they are more concerned with paperwork than young people”

“Maybe not paired with the right person for me”

### What would you like social workers to ask when they meet with you?

“Ask about my brothers and sisters and know their names”

“Talk to different family members”

“Ask about my health”

“Ask if I have any problems”

“How have things been?”

## Appendix 1: Key legislation, regulations and guidance

The **Children Act 1989** established the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount, and placed a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area, as well as introducing the term 'looked after children'.

The **Children and Young Persons Act 2008** aimed to improve outcomes for children and young people who are looked after or who are at risk of needing to be looked after. This included a new duty on local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children.

The **Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000** strengthened provision for care leavers by placing a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the needs of young people aged 16 and 17 who are in care or care leavers, and to keep in touch with care leavers until they are at least 21.

In March 2011, the Government published a **revised legal framework**, covering all aspects of a child's journey through care, including health, education and ensuring the child's voice is heard in the care process. The framework also includes regulations and guidance relevant to children's homes and fostering services providers. These regulations and guidance are designed to work together as a coherent whole, helping give local authorities the tools to ensure high quality care for all their looked after children.

The **Children Act 2004** has provided a legislative framework for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and families. It introduced the **Every Child Matters** programme for change.

In 2007, Lord Laming carried out a further review of child protection resulting in the guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children**. The coalition government formed in May 2010 commissioned two reviews, the Munro Review of Child Protection and the Allen Review of Early Intervention.

**Working Together to Safeguard Children** continues to provide statutory and non-statutory guidance for how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.

### Primary legislation

#### Children Act 1989

This major piece of legislation established the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount, and placed a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area. (Crown, 1989)

#### Children and Young Persons Act 2008

This act sets out legislation to improve outcomes for children and young people who are looked after by the state or who are at risk of needing to be looked after. This includes a new duty on local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children. The effect of the act is to amend relevant sections of the Children Act 1989. (Crown, 2008)

## **Adoption and Children Act 2002**

This act aligns adoption law with the relevant provisions of the Children Act 1989, to ensure that the child's welfare is the paramount consideration in all decisions relating to adoption. It places a duty on local authorities to maintain an adoption service and provides a new right to an assessment of needs for adoption support services for adoptive families and others. (Crown, 2002)

## **Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**

This act strengthens provision for care leavers by placing a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the needs of young people aged 16 and 17 who are in care or care leavers, and to keep in touch with care leavers until they are at least 21. Each young person is expected to have a young person's advisor to co-ordinate the provision of support and a pathway plan to map out a clear route to independence. (Crown, 2000)

## **Regulations and guidance**

### **Sufficiency: Statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children (2010)**

This statutory guidance provides clarification on the sufficiency duty placed on local authorities under 22 (G) of the Children Act 1989 to secure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of their looked after children and young people. It is designed to guide local authorities to modify their commissioning practices to ensure they have sufficient accommodation to meet their needs and ensure that they have a strategic plan around commissioning placements for their looked after population.

### **Guidance on the Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who maybe homeless and/or require accommodation (2010)**

This national guidance clarifies the responsibilities of local authorities under section 20 of The Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of The Housing Act 1996 with regard to young people aged 16 to 17 years at risk of homelessness or requiring accommodation following the House of Lords judgment in R (G) v Southwark (2009) UKHL26. In particular, it concerns itself with the functions of children's services and housing services when young people seek help from or are referred to local authorities because of homelessness.

### **Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations (2010)**

These documents specify the requirements for care plans, including health and education plans, placement decisions and monitoring, and case reviews. They consolidate previous regulations and guidance, providing a central source of reference for local authorities' work with looked after children.

## **Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children: Statutory Guidance for local authorities (2010)**

When a child becomes looked after, either on a short-term or long-term basis, it is the duty of the local authority as a corporate parent, to safeguard and promote their welfare. This means that alongside planning secure and reliable care and responding to the child's need to be well and healthy, local authorities have a specific responsibility to support their educational achievement. This document describes what local authorities need to do to demonstrate they are actively fulfilling their legal responsibilities to implement this duty.

## **Statutory guidance on promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children**

This guidance clarifies funding and other responsibilities and emphasises the need for local authorities, PCTs and SHAs to effectively commission health services for looked after children in their area. The document gives background information and context for the guidance including recent statistical information and evidence from research and practice as well as information about how to commission effectively. (DCSF, DH, 2009)

## **The Pupil Premium**

The Pupil Premium for looked after children is a government initiative. It is in addition to the school's budget. Schools will be able to spend the premium in a way that best supports the raising of attainment of children who are in the care of local authorities in agreement with supporting professionals. (DFES, 2013)

## **Improving the educational attainment of children in care (looked-after-children)**

This guidance seeks to transform current levels of educational attainment for looked after children. It sets out the different elements that should be in place in a local authority to achieve this. One of the key elements is the appointment of a 'virtual school headteacher' to track the schooling of every looked after child and to ensure appropriate additional provision. (DCSF, 2009)

## **Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004**

This guidance sets out the essential actions local authorities should take to comply with the duty to promote educational achievement. (HM Government, 2005)



# Integrated Permanence Team

