

LINCOLNSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2018-2021

WE BELIEVE YOU CAN ACHIEVE

We want all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to feel safe, loved, be heard and to realise their potential, through nurturing, resilient parenting and support.

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1. OUR MORAL PURPOSE

We believe you can achieve.

We want all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to feel safe, loved, be heard and to realise their potential, through nurturing, resilient parenting and support.

This strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers sets out Lincolnshire's ambitions for the next three years. We have high expectations for all children and young people in Lincolnshire, and the vision, principles and plans in the document apply to some of the most vulnerable children and young people within our community, namely those for whom we have corporate parenting responsibilities.

Our overarching aim recognises that we want all children and young people to be cared for within their family/ local community. We will support families to provide nurturing, resilient parenting so children and young people realise their potential within their birth family. Children, young people and families in Lincolnshire will be helped to make changes for themselves, seen as a positive solution to the challenges they face, and are able to get support easily and be understood as a whole family.

Where children and young people do need to be looked after by Lincolnshire, we will support quality family

and friend time. We will do everything we can, across our partnership, to care for them and nurture their aspirations so that they feel safe, loved and are heard. This will support them to realise their potential. It not only applies when children are in care, but also where we have a duty to support them as previously Looked After Children.

Working with our partner agencies and communities, we will individually and collectively provide nurturing, resilient parenting and support, as we would for our own children. This strategy sets out what we will do to achieve this vision.



Cllr Mrs Patricia Bradwell OBE,
Executive Councillor Children's Services



Debbie Barnes OBE,
Director of Children's Services



2. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Despite good work with families where children and young people are at risk of needing to be looked after, the numbers of children in the care of Lincolnshire County Council has continued to rise in recent years. In the last three years we have seen a total 4.4% increase in Lincolnshire. However, this is below the national average.

At March 2018 there were 659 children and young people in our care. At 47.0 per 10,000 population, the

Lincolnshire rate is lower than other local authorities in similar circumstances. Nationally the figure is 60.0 per 10,000 population.

Our aim will always be for appropriate children and young people to be in our care, for as short a period of time as possible, and decisions to bring a child or young person into care will be based on their needs and how we might make things better for them.

3. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The number of Looked After Children has continued to increase steadily over the last nine years. At 31 March 2017 there were 72,670 Looked After Children in the UK, an increase of 3% on 2016. Unquestionably there are poorer outcomes for some Looked After Children and Care Leavers – this is often due to their experiences before coming into care, for example, there is an over representation of Care Leavers in the homeless and prison population.

There are concerns over those young people experiencing poor mental well-being, and others whose education is

weaker as a result of poor attendance and exclusion, resulting in further disengagement. However, Looked After Children tend to make slightly better educational progress than children in need which indicates, as highlighted in the Rees Centre Study of 2015, that being in care can have some positive benefits. The research reinforces that when care is good, Looked After Children make better than expected educational progress whilst in care.





4. WHAT OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS SAY

In the creation of this strategy we are really pleased to have had direct contributions from six children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority and six young people who are currently receiving services as a Care Leaver from Barnardo's who deliver Lincolnshire's Care Leaver service. They all shared similar views regarding their priorities for change and what was most important to them. These are:

- Supporting families in crisis to maximise their potential so that they can continue to care for their child with support through wider family networks
- If children have to be removed from their families, they want to stay in touch with their family, and if possible, have lots of contact with them
- Listening to Looked After Children and Care Leavers and taking their views into account on matters affecting them. They specifically mentioned allowing Looked After Children to have a say in rules around bed times, friends for sleep overs etc.
- Looked After Children want to be allowed to make mistakes and live in a culture of learning and having second chances.

This feedback has been taken into account and is reflected within our shared priorities.

All of the children and young people recognised the unique and important relationship they have with their foster carers. Some were clear that they are not their parents and no matter how good that relationship is, they felt they were supported rather than parented by them. Some children and young people did feel they were their parents. This highlights that our services, whilst needing to meet the needs of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers, must recognise the unique and individual needs of each child and young person. This feedback is reflected in our moral purpose which all young people felt related to them.

All children and young people recognised the importance of relationships. All young people spoken to wanted more quality time with their social workers and time to get to know them. Everyone said that when there has to be change, either of their worker or when they move to having a leaving care worker, they highlighted how

important it was to them to have more time to get to know their new workers. All children and young people were clear in their views that it is easier to work with someone if you know them and they know you.

Young people wanted practical advice to be available to prepare them for their move into adulthood and independence. Skills such as cooking and budgeting are useful, but also important to help them understand the realities of living alone and how to manage more emotional experiences such as loneliness. This was considered a priority area that needed to be improved.

All the young people accessing Care Leaver services told us about their positive experiences of the apprenticeship scheme, and they wanted information about this to be shared with all Looked After young people so they can all benefit from the scheme. This is celebrated in our 'what's working well' section on page 12.



5. PRINCIPLES

The way we deliver our parenting responsibilities to our Looked After Children and Care Leavers is critical to ensure they all have a good experience and upbringing. We believe if the whole workforce across the corporate parenting partnership develop good relationships with young people, based on the principles outlined below, the experience of care by all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers will be improved. These principles are integral to what we want to achieve for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Embedding a relationship-based approach and embracing this way of working is crucial to the successful implementation of our strategy.

These Principles are:

Listening to and responding to the “voice of the young person”

Children and young people need to be consulted at all stages of their care journey as involving them can improve the quality of decisions and lead to more stable school placements and living arrangements.

We recognise that Looked After Children and Care Leavers may not readily talk about their worries or concerns, so it is essential that our entire workforce pay attention: not only to what children and young people say, but also what they do not say. How they behave and react may tell us more about how they are feeling. We will aim to spend quality time alone with each child or young person so they feel more comfortable expressing their feelings and enable them to build trust with us.

The corporate parenting partnership has numerous strategies in place for gathering the voices of children and young people, both informally and formally, on both an individual and targeted group basis. This strategy has been informed through listening to the views of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers and will continue to be reviewed in light of their comments.

We wish to offer our thanks to Children’s Services Participation team and Barnardo’s Leaving Care Services, but a special thank you and acknowledgement must go to the young people who have taken the time to share their experiences. We recognise their work in the acknowledgment section in this strategy.

To ensure that we continue to listen and hear the voice

of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, we have established a user focus group and refreshed the V4C (Voices for Choices) group and the ‘Tell Us’ survey. The Young Inspectors have been involved throughout the process and we remain committed to working with all our partner agencies so that we collectively and individually listen and hear the views and wishes of our children and young people. The Independent Reviewing officers have a crucial role to question and challenge all partners on behalf of children and young people in our care and to ensure the views of young people are heard.

A nurturing committed workforce

We know that Looked After Children and Care Leavers benefit from developing secure attachments with their caregivers and those people who are responsible for them. Sensitive, responsive, restorative and caring



parenting is associated with secure attachments. Children and young people who have experienced maltreatment are significantly more likely to develop poorer attachments, so we must ensure that our Looked After Children and Care Leavers experience sensitive, nurturing and restorative care, given to them by a highly trained and committed workforce, especially our foster carers.

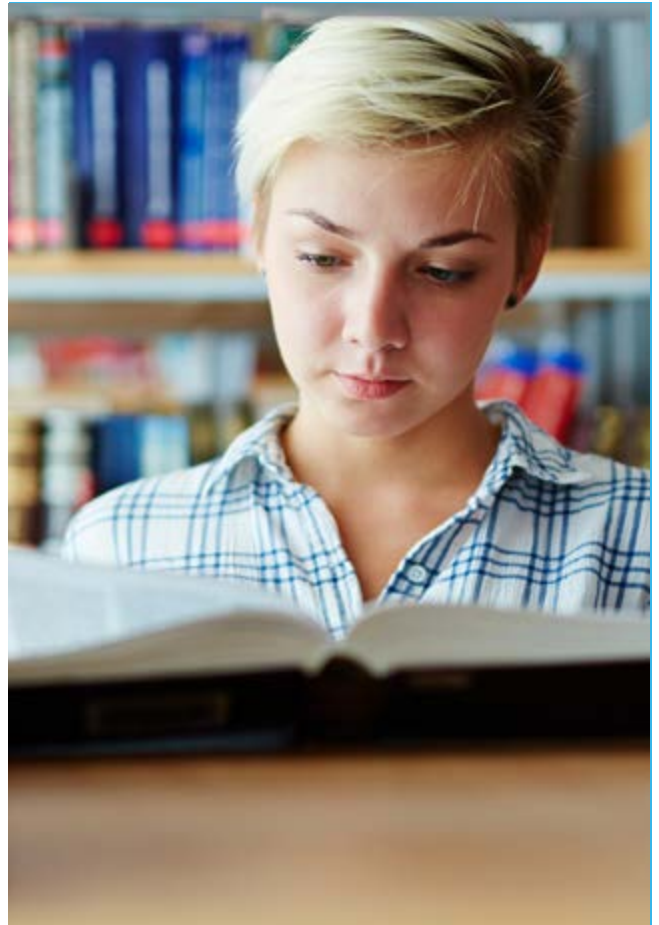
The Lincolnshire corporate parenting partnership will shout loudly and proudly about their aspirations for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Collectively we aspire for all young people to feel safe and loved, listened to and heard, so that they can realise their potential. The strength of the relationship between our workforce and our Looked After Children and Care Leavers is critical to this ambition as it is relationships which lead to positive experiences and a sense of belonging.

Through professional development and effective supervision we will support our workforce to develop and maintain positive and restorative relationships with young people. Led by the leadership teams in each agency, we will create a culture where staff are enabled to have difficult conversations and are able to challenge within their own agency and across agencies so they can truly act as advocates for our children and young people.

Strong family and friend relationships

Across the entire workforce we are committed to developing positive relationships with children, young people, families and their carers. To assist in building strong relationships, we will prioritise stability in the lives of children and young people. Stability in terms of where they live, where they go to school, how they spend time with family and friends, and ensuring consistency of key worker. When relationships and changes have to happen, we are committed to supporting our Looked After Children and Care Leavers through these changes.

We acknowledge the importance of working in collaboration with young people and families and not 'doing to them'; if we do get things wrong we will say so, and we will actively encourage young people to tell us.



Across the partnership there is a commitment to using new technology to enable young people to maintain links and time with family and friends, and grow other important relationships.

Identity and sense of belonging

Inside each and every one of us is a desire to be rooted and to belong. It is essential that our care creates a sense of place and belonging. We want our Looked After Children and Care Leavers to have confidence that we know who they are and that they know we will help them to understand what makes them who they are.

In a complex and uncertain world, knowing who you are and your place in that world matters. It is important to know the place we are from, the place where we live; and to know the place where we would like to be. Place



is about identity and understanding our roots and our connections to where we live and where we came from. For our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, who may be uncertain about where they belong, we must help them to understand this. A sense of belonging will help our Looked After Children and Care Leavers to develop the skills needed to support them to be independent as they approach adulthood. A sense of belonging can reinforce that it's okay to make mistakes as we grow, in fact it is important that Looked After Children and Care Leavers know making mistakes is a normal part of growing up.

Partnership working

Evidence indicates that high-performing local authorities are those with strong leaders who have an aspirational vision of effective corporate parenting for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. These authorities embed partnership and multi-agency working at the heart of the planning process and ensure that children and young people are fully engaged in the design and delivery of services.

The corporate parenting partnership across Lincolnshire is committed to providing strong, visible leadership to

raise aspirations and attainment, and promote joint working to meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Partner agencies in Lincolnshire undoubtedly want to do the best they can and achieve the best possible outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The partnership is committed to improving the lives of children, young people and Care Leavers and believes that an important element in making this happen is to ensure that all staff working with Looked After Children understand the local offer which is available for them, how to access it and to how to advocate for them. This Looked After Children Strategy will be fully endorsed by the following agencies:

Lincolnshire County Council, all seven district councils within Lincolnshire, Barnardo's Leaving Care Service, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, all health providers, schools (including maintained and academies) and the police.

It is important to remember the value of the Independent Reviewing Officers, and the role they have in ensuring partners and all agencies work together to support young people.

6. SO WHICH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DOES THIS STRATEGY REFER TO?

Where Lincolnshire acts as the corporate parent:

- Children and young people cared for by Lincolnshire or supported with accommodation. This includes those taken into care under a voluntary agreement with their parents, children and young people where a care order, or interim care order has been made; emergency orders for protection; and those compulsory accommodated – including those remanded.
- Care Leavers who have previously been Looked After by Lincolnshire.
- All children and young people in the care of Lincolnshire, irrespective of whether they are living in the county or not, are included in this strategy. Where our children are placed outside our geographical boundaries we will liaise with other local authorities and partner agencies to ensure they access the services they need, they are supported to achieve, feel loved and cared for, feel they belong and are able to realise their potential.

When another local authority is the corporate parent:

- For those placed in Lincolnshire by other local authorities, there is an important role for Lincolnshire County Council and partners to ensure there is an awareness of all universal services available to them, including health and education. Universal and targeted support may be provided by health, education and police services to those young people placed in Lincolnshire by other local authorities where Lincolnshire County Council doesn't have corporate parenting responsibilities. Liaison with the host authority through the head of the virtual school and designated safeguarding staff in health is essential to supporting these young people.

Previously Looked After Children:

- For previously Looked After children living in Lincolnshire, we will provide advice and information. This includes those children who have left care under a child arrangement order, special guardianship order and adoption order. Although we are not the corporate parent in these cases, we will provide education and health-related advice and guidance so their families can help them to realise and reach their potential.



7. WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

We have lots to be proud of in Lincolnshire:

- Lincolnshire was previously inspected under the single inspection framework in 2014 and received an overall judgement of 'Good' with adoption assessed as 'Outstanding'
- All children's homes in 2017 were judged by Ofsted to be outstanding or good
- There is a strong fostering strategy in place which means that 77.5% of Looked After Children lived with our own in-house foster carers.
- We were awarded the First4adoptions – Adoptions excellence award for our adoption services
- Supportive Superstars (our way to thank the children of our foster carers for sharing their mum/dad) was shortlisted for the Children and Young People Now Awards in 2017
- 95% of Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation and we have strong relationships with our supported accommodation providers
- 67% of Care Leavers are in education, training or employment. The support offered to Care Leavers is good and we are keen for all Care Leavers to do well. Our Care Leavers praise the apprenticeship and pre apprenticeship work preparation scheme which is delivered through Barnardo's
- In January 2018 we had 20 Care Leavers in university
- There is an emerging 'Care2Learn' approach which supports schools to provide a nurturing environment and where foster carers champion education: this means that everyone is committed to give the child a thirst for learning.
- The Clinical Commissioning Groups are committed to supporting and prioritising the physical health and emotional well-being of Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- Lincolnshire is a 'Partner in Practice' identified by the DfE as a local authority whose social care practice is strong and where innovation can assist other local authorities.
- V4C (our Children in Care Council) and other mechanisms to hear the voice of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, all work tirelessly to ensure their voice is heard
- Lincolnshire's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has been judged as outstanding by the CQC in their inspection in 2017
- The FAB awards (Fantastic Amazing Brilliant) and the Big Conversation, enable us to celebrate the achievements of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers and ensure that their voice is heard.



8. CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES

When a child comes into care, the council becomes the corporate parent. Put simply, the term 'corporate parent' means it is the collective responsibility of the council, its elected members, all employees, and its partner agencies to provide the best possible care and upbringings for the children who are looked after by us.

A child in the care of the council should be able to look to the council to be the best parent it can be. Every member and employee of the council has statutory responsibility to act for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child. Our partners also share this responsibility to be a good, caring corporate parent.

Every good parent wants the best for their child, to see their child flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, and enjoy healthy relationships with their peers. We want young people to make the most of leisure opportunities, gain hobbies and interests, and to grow towards adulthood well equipped to lead independent lives. We want our young people to make their way as adults in higher education, to have good careers and jobs, and to be financially secure. That's why, across the corporate parenting partnership, we have the same aspirations for our Looked After Children and Care Leavers as we would for our own children, taking seriously our moral and legal responsibility for enabling them to experience happy and fulfilling lives.

In Lincolnshire we have worked to develop our own corporate parenting guidelines and culture, we acknowledge and endorse the new corporate parenting principles set out in statute. These are:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

9. DEVELOPING A LOCAL OFFER FOR ALL OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS

Across the corporate parenting partnership, we are committed to articulating what we offer to our Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Describing and explaining what all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers can expect from the council and its partners is important and will enable us to act as advocates for all young people, challenging each other to make sure we do our best for our children and young people.

Our Local Offer to Care Leavers can be found here – [Core Offer to Care Leavers](#)

In addition, all children and young people are able to access universal and early help services which are available within the community. The Local Offer which describes what services Lincolnshire can offer our communities can be found on [Our Local Offer](#) page. We will continue to develop this offer so we and our young people know what services are available in the community to support our Looked After Children, Care Leavers and their carers.

10. OUR PRIORITIES

By capturing the work we are proud of, and by talking to Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as well as undertaking an analysis of need, we have been able to identify priorities that need to be addressed over the next three years to further improve our services.

These priority areas are:

- We will support families in crisis to maximise their ability to continue to care for their own child
- Where families are unable to care for their child, we will maximise opportunities for family and friend time so children and young people continue to feel part of their family network
- We will support our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- We will support the emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- We will work in partnership with schools and further education establishments and carers to provide good learning opportunities for all
- We will work with young people so they have the skills and abilities to develop healthy adult-based relationships and best equip them for independence and their future
- We will develop accommodation pathways so young people have choice and can access accommodation which supports them to prepare for the future in a planned and supportive way.

Actions to deliver our priorities are outlined in Appendix 1.



11. CONCLUSIONS

This strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers sets out our ambitions and principles. It is underpinned by our moral purpose as Corporate Parent. It clarifies to whom the strategy applies and sets out how we want to work, what we want to achieve with our young people and how we want to work together with families to strengthen the family unit even when their child is in care.

We have, through analytical self-evaluation, defined what is working well, what we want to improve and how we are going to do it. We have acknowledged the role of all our partner agencies, and how historically we have all been committed to improving the lives of children, Looked After Children and those who have left our care.

The Lincolnshire Looked After Children and Care Leaver's Strategy for 2018-21 provides strategic and operational direction for all our work, how we approach working with our young people and how we should approach innovations and developments in the coming years.

We have highlighted that an important element in making this happen is the strength of our partnership and the commitment and energy given to supporting all our Looked After Children and our Care leavers. We will ensure that all staff understand the Local Offer which is available to all young people, how to access it and how to advocate for it.

We have identified seven main priorities for everyone to address in the next three years. We have set out what we will do to achieve the priorities, and how we hope to engage children and young people in the progression of this strategy and the ambitions we have set ourselves. We will create a comprehensive action plan with key milestones so Looked After Children and Care Leavers can challenge our progress once this strategy has been agreed.

In summary, we made our aspirations clear at the outset of our strategy:

We want all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to feel safe, loved, be heard and to realise their potential, through nurturing, resilient parenting and support.

This not only applies when children are in care, but it also applies where we have a duty to support people as previously looked after children. Working with our partner agencies and communities, we will collectively provide nurturing, resilient parenting and guidance to our young people, as we would for our own children. We recognise that whatever judgements are made upon our services both internally and through external bodies, the most important judgements are those made by the children and young people themselves. In all matters, we will ask ourselves:

- have we made a positive difference to their lives?
- have we been ambitious on their behalf?
- have we given them every chance of realising their potential?
- have we listened to them?
- have we treated them as individuals?

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will further support families in crisis to maximise their ability to continue to care for their own child (Children's Services, Early Help teams, Health, Social Care teams and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop our early help offer to respond to situations where families/carers are in crisis. We will work to maintain the living arrangements for the child/young person where possible. • Ensure our approach is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency with a range of specialisms to meet the needs of young people and their families. Our workforce will have access to specialist consultations to help them to understand how they can better support families, ensuring we address the cause of the crisis and not just the symptom. • Ensure we have in place a structured and consistent approach which is understood by all. The offer is encapsulated within an early help offer which is restorative in nature and which has its foundations in relationship based practice. We will value the importance of relationships and ensure continuity of support to families of young people. • Recognise that different pathways are required to meet the individual needs of young people based on age. • Recruit specialist foster carers to help meet needs, including short term support to families in crisis which can include respite to enable them to reflect on how they can best meet the needs of their own child and recover from crisis points. • Provide opportunities for children and their families to experience positive activities. • Refine and promote the Local Offer so families know how to access support and which services are out there to meet their needs. 	
<p>Where families are unable to care for their child, we will maximise opportunities for family and friend time so they continue to feel part of their family network (Contact Service, Looked After Children teams and Leaving Care Service)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise family group conferencing to enable families at every opportunity to find their own solutions. • Enable the workforce to work in a way where they honour the importance of families, and use their authority as a professional in an honest way. • Utilise virtual mechanisms which enable children and young people to stay in touch with family and friends. • Review of contact service so it is transformed into a service which better supports family/friend time . • Further develop life story work so children and young people have an identity, feel that they belong and understand where they connect in their community and have a sense of belonging. • We will ensure our recording systems enables us to accurately record a young person's life, their history and record in a way which makes records purposeful and relevant to them. 	
<p>We will work with our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Children's Services, Leaving Care Service and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of our role as corporate parents, advocating good support, wellbeing and outcomes for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. • Corporate Parenting Panel will regularly request reports on the progress and achievements of Looked after Children and Care Leavers and address any significant barriers to their learning, health and safety. • Further develop the Independent Reviewing Officers role to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. • Recruit Young Inspectors, who have experience of being in care so they can provide additional insight and challenge to managers and services. 	

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will work with our workforce to create a culture where we are all strong advocates for Looked After Children and Care Leavers – continued (Children's Services, Leaving Care Service and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the views of a 'participation group'/voice for the child on how best the lives of Looked After Children and Care Leavers might be improved. Consider how best they can get their message across – e.g. DVD. • Develop the role of designated teachers and the Virtual School to further raise awareness of young people's needs, and help them to advocate for Looked After Children and Care Leavers • Review the guidance we give to staff for assessing identity needs of a young person • Create a robust escalation process between services so each agency has a key strategic lead for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. • Undertaking thematic review of the support and advocacy offered to Looked After Children and Care Leavers • Deliver a series of workshops to celebrate the achievements of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, demonstrating that resilient parenting has a positive impact • Develop a training offer so our staff understand the importance of making sure young people have a sense of belonging and an identity. Develop our staff so they understand the importance of relationship based practice and grow peoples knowledge of the services available through the Local Offer so professionals and families can challenge and act as advocates for young people • The council and the police will work together to embed the protocol to reduce the criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. We will do this through embedding a restorative culture and restorative approaches. 	
<p>We will support the good emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Virtual School) (Quality, Standards Department and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the success of the Virtual School Head (VSH), by working with the CCG's to progress the development of a similar oversight role of a Virtual Mental Health Lead (VMHL). This is to ensure that every child and young person in the care of the local authority is getting the support they need to maintain or improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing. • Enable the strengths and difficulties questionnaire to be supported by a broader set of measures which can trigger a comprehensive mental health assessment. • Ensure that assessments focus on understanding of the individual's mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that is it based on a knowledge of the context of their current situation and past experiences, rather than solely focusing on the presenting symptoms. The young person, their caregivers, family (where appropriate) and professionals' viewpoints should also be included. • Support caregivers so their own mental health and wellbeing is positive and resilient. • Ensure that everyone working directly with Looked After Children and Care Leavers receive training about children and young people's mental health so they are equipped with the appropriate skills to support young people. • Ensure the statutory review of a child's care plan by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) includes at each meeting a review of whether or not the mental health needs of the young person have been met. 	

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will support the good emotional well-being of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers – continued (Virtual School) (Quality, Standards Department and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the knowledge and intervention skills of the whole workforce. These skills should enable care givers to understand and support young people around the impact of a lack of attachment and experiences of trauma, enhance child development and be aware of cognitive behavioural therapies and interventions. • Ensure there is strong collaborative working relationship between schools, health services and the local authority. • Further develop and expand the concept of mental health first aid in schools - looking to create a change of culture where there might currently be limited empathy and knowledge of the needs of Looked After Children amongst school leaders. • Further strengthen practice between general practitioners and schools. • Working with all partners, we will provide restorative approaches to those already engaged in the Criminal Justice System and to reduce further criminalisation of young people as this will enable them to get back on track to achieve their aspirations as law abiding citizens. 	
<p>We will work in partnership with schools and carers to provide good learning opportunities for all (Looked After Children teams and Virtual School)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Caring2Learn, learning what works so these aspects of the project can be implemented across all our schools. • Develop strong partnerships and responses to reduce student absences and exclusions from school. • Rigorously apply our own and national guidance around the quality of 'off-site' educational settings. • Reduce school moves whenever possible to help maintain placement, permanency and enhance educational stability. • Improve access to further and higher education and the understanding Looked After Children and Care Leavers have of these providers. • Apply work based research practice to workforce (e.g. PALAC). • Celebrate the achievements of all our children and young people. • We want to make sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All Looked After Children have access to good nursery provision. – All Care Leavers with children have access to free child care and early education. – Looked After Children are admitted to good settings and schools without undue delay. – All Looked After Children make good progress based on prior attainment including those accessing SEND specialist provision, through highly effective education plans. – That there is a designated teacher in all educational settings including further education. – All designated teachers have access to good training and professional development. – All Education Health Care Planning is carried out on time and required interventions are implemented in a timely way. Where a place in a special school is required, the young person is admitted promptly. – All Looked After Children are encouraged to attend extra-curricular and recreational interest they enjoy. These are available through the Local Offer. 	

APPENDIX – PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Priorities	Actions	Progress
<p>We will work with young people so they have the skills and abilities to develop adult based relationships to equip them for independence and their future (Children Services, Adult Services and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our assessment processes to ensure that we plan early, and truly understand what the young person wants to achieve in adulthood. • Recognise the risk and impact of transitions for all children and young people. We will plan to meet individual needs in a co-ordinated way, drawing on the strengths of the young person and their wider networks, so they know what the future holds as they move into the adult world. • At each key transition, whenever possible, involve a child or young person's family and the wider network, especially those who know them best. • Value the importance of relationships and work flexibly where ever possible to minimise the negative impact of transitions and changes in relationships. • Prepare children and young people for transitions in their lives. We will place a specific emphasis on those young people aged between 14-25. The key points of transition for us to consider are: all school key stages to education training and employment; the transition between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and adult mental health; transition between children's social care to adult services, specifically considering those with special education needs and disabilities to ensure they have best access and support to further learning and the world of work. We will also consider the transition between Youth Justice Services to the adult Probation Service. • Explore how we can have an information system or agreement in place which allows all professionals to access information about all those involved with a child and young person. We aspire to have all relevant records available to be viewed by all workers at any time, and for those and records to be written in the third person, so we are always writing to the child/young person when we create records about them. 	
<p>We will develop accommodation pathways so young people have choice and can access accommodation which supports them to prepare for the future in a planned and supportive way (Children's Accommodation Board & Housing Health and Care delivery group and all partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with housing authorities, secure an enhanced accommodation offer for all those leaving care to ensure support and preparation so they can live independently in their community. • As nurturing and resilient parents, we will never stop doing our best for Looked After Children and Care Leavers as we would for our own children. We will never refer to them as being intentionally homeless and will work together to prevent homelessness. • Ensure Care Leavers are exempted from paying council tax until they are 25 years old. • Re-commission supported accommodation provision so that the provision is more responsive to more complex young people and better reflects the principles in this strategy. • Seek to develop in-house provision to ensure we can meet the needs of our most challenging young people in locally sourced options. • Provide an early help worker and emotional wellbeing worker for all those in supported accommodation. • Create more private tenancy opportunities close to Residential Homes so Care Leavers can stay close to their community and continue to be supported by people they know. 	