

# Looked After Children Strategy 2014-2017

Improving the Outcomes for our Looked After Children  
and Care Leavers



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Introduction

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Looked After Children and Care Leavers are key priorities for Stockport Children's Trust. We need to ensure these children and young people are able to realise their full potential. We will put in place full support for every stage of their journey and support their transition into adulthood.

This Looked After Children Strategy provides an overarching framework for delivering our key priorities for looked after children and care leavers.

Find out more about the Children's Trust Strategic Plan at [www.stockport.gov.uk/childrenstrust](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/childrenstrust)

Executive Member

Corporate Director

Cllr Wendy Meikle

Andrew Webb

## What have we achieved?

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- We have improved placement stability for our looked after children
- Our looked after children population has remained stable over the last 10 years
- We have improved health assessments for our looked after children that are completed in timescale
- We proactively identify substance misuse issues amongst our looked after children and provide targeted interventions
- The percentage of our looked after children who are adopted is higher than the national average
- Development of the Care Leaver Forum
- Pilot Local Authority for the New Belongings Project to create gold standard services for Care Leavers

## Our Partners

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Services working together are:

- The Children in Care Council (CICC)
- Corporate Parent Working Group
- Education
- Police
- Housing
- 3rd Sector/Voluntary Services
- Early Help and Prevention Service
- Care Leaver Forum (CLF)
- Health
- Youth Offending
- Schools and further education colleges
- Adult Services
- Independent advocacy service

## Our priorities for 2014-17

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### Looked after Children

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- Improve placement stability and permanence for looked after children ensuring they are cared for and safeguarded
- Improve choice and sufficiency of good quality placements for all children and young people
- Ensure looked after children are involved in decision making about their lives and have clearly planned journeys through care maintaining their relationships with friends and family where possible and safe to do so
- Looked after children receive a good education and support to improve their educational attainment and reduce the risk of exclusion thereby enabling children to reach their potential
- Improve physical health outcomes for looked after children ensuring they receive timely access to health services including dental, health assessments, leisure opportunities and specialist services for children with additional needs
- Improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of looked after children with access to psychological therapies programmes giving children the best start in life.
- Promote safeguarding and reduce risk factors for looked after children - reduce the risk of and involvement in; offending, drug and alcohol use, self harm, Child Sexual Exploitation, running away and missing from care
- Support looked after children to make a positive contribution to the community and prepare for the transition to adulthood
- Ensure that looked after children under the age of five and their carers are benefitting from Sure Start Children's Centre services to support parenting and the child's early development
- Develop engagement, participation and information for looked after children

### Care Leavers

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- To deliver statutory duties and responsibilities for care leavers 16-25 years and embed the care leaver charter principles throughout service delivery
- Improve employability of care leavers by widening, encouraging and supporting young people to education, employment and training opportunities with career plans
- Ensure care leavers are living in safe and suitable accommodation that meets their needs and reduce homelessness
- Improve preparation for and transition for care leavers to independent living and on-going support
- Promote and improve the physical, emotional wellbeing and mental health of care leavers
- Support care leavers to receive financial advice and guidance so they can maximise and manage their income and reduce risk of falling into debt
- Promote safeguarding and reduce risk factors for care leavers offending, drug and alcohol use, self harm, and those at risk of or involved in child sexual exploitation
- Develop care leaver engagement, participation and information for care leavers

Find out more at [www.stockport.gov.uk/leavingcare](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/leavingcare)

## Our role as Corporate Parents

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The Corporate Parent Working Party (CPWP) plays an important role to ensure that looked after children and care leavers get the best care and start in life. The CPWP has wide representation of Councillors, senior managers from the Council and partner agencies.

The CPWP is committed to its role as Corporate Parent. The term 'Corporate Parent' is used to refer to the collective responsibility of the Council and partners to provide the best possible care and protection for children who are looked after and care leavers. The role of the Corporate Parent is to deliver the outcomes that every good parent would want for their own children.

The CPWP has a Corporate Parenting Strategy to ensure that the Council and its partners act together as a 'good parent'. A 'good parent' is one who puts their child first, keeps them safe, listens to them, meets their physical, social, cultural, psychological, health, educational and emotional needs; fights on their behalf; develops their full potential and supports them through to independence.

Find out more [www.stockport.gov.uk/childrenstrust](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/childrenstrust)

## The Children in Care Council (CICC)

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The Children In Care Council is a group where young people in care can have their say on the issues that matter to them. The CICC is made up of children and young people, councillors and senior managers from the Council. The CICC have advised on policy development and service improvements.

Over the last 12 months the CICC have:

- Helped recruit staff to the Council
- Developed a new health folder
- Devised a child friendly format for looked after children statutory review minutes
- Made recommendations to consider the number of adults that attend the looked after children statutory review meetings
- Advised on strategies to promote the use of the free leisure memberships for young people
- Developed loyalty cards as part of the CICC recruitment and retention strategy
- Supported and contributed to the development of the annual event to celebrate the achievements of our looked after children



Find out more about the Children in Care Council and their work programme at [www.stockport.gov.uk/cicc](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/cicc)

## The Care Leaver Forum (CLF)

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The Care Leaver Forum (CLF) is a group where care leavers can have their say on issues that matter to them. The CLF is made up of care leavers, Councillors and senior managers from the Council

Over the last 12 months the CLF have:

- Developed an agreement between the CLF and the Local Authority about support and sustainability of the group.
- Established a work programme
- Contributed to National Care Leaver Week activities in Stockport
- Helped recruit staff to the Council
- Worked with other organisations and agencies to widen representation and voice of care leavers
- Supported and contributed to the development of the annual event to celebrate the achievements of our care leavers
- Contributed to the delivery of the New Belongings Pilot Action Plan to improve services



Find out more about the Care Leaver Forum and their work programme at [www.stockport.gov.uk/clf](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/clf)

The CICC and CLF work closely together to ensure children and young people have a voice in shaping services in Stockport

## Pledge for looked after children

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The Pledge is a set of promises that Stockport Council makes to all children and young people in care in Stockport, and was written and designed with the help of the Children in Care Council members.

The Pledge says how the Council and partners will work with young people who are in care and will be monitored regularly by the Children in Care Council and Corporate Parents.

The Pledge 4 Stockport is:

- We will never give up on young people no matter how difficult the challenge will be
- Where we have expectations on young people we will make sure they clearly understand what they are
- We will make sure that children and young people are treated as individuals, and each young person will have a care plan that reflects this.
- We will help children and young people enjoy their lives
- We will help young people maintain important relationships with friends and family wherever it is possible and safe to do so.
- We will inform all children and young people of their rights and entitlements as set out in legislation, guidance and the UN Convention on the Rights of the child.
- We will ensure that all children and young people have regularly and frequent contact with their social worker.

#### ANNEXE A ITEM 3.01

- We will involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives, and maximise the opportunity to make choices.
- We want children and young people to be healthy, safe and receive a good standard of education.
- We want to make a positive contribution to the community and be prepared for a stable and secure adult life.

Find out more about the pledge and measures at [www.stockport.gov.uk/cicc](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/cicc)

## Charter for Care Leavers

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The Charter for Care Leavers is a set of principles and promises to young people leaving care and moving into adulthood.

The Charter for Care Leavers is:

- To respect and honour your identity
- To believe in you.
- To listen to you
- To inform you.
- To support you.
- To find you a home.
- To be a lifelong champion

Find out more about the Charter and leaving care services at [www.stockport.gov.uk/leavingcare](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/leavingcare)

## Find out more

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You can find out more about services for looked after children and care leavers by visiting the Council website at [www.stockport.gov.uk/childrensocialcare](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/childrensocialcare) or by calling our Contact Centre on 0161 217 6028

If you would like this information in another language or format e.g. Large print, on audio tape, in Braille or on disk, please contact 0161 474 3893

