

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

5th July 2022

Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 'We Care Because You Matter '

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To request that The Executive recommend to County Council that the updated Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy be approved.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The Strategy was first published and agreed by County Council in 2018. This is an updated and refreshed Strategy in line with changes made since this time.

3.0 ISSUES

3.1 As corporate parents, we are responsible for ensuring that children in care and care leavers have the best possible opportunities in life.

3.2 Statutory Guidance requires Local Authorities to outline how we support our children in care and care leavers. This strategy will assist newly appointed members as part of the 'new council' of our duties as corporate parents.

3.3 'We care because you matter' is our strategy that sets out our ambitions for children and young people who are cared for by us, the local authority, as their corporate parents. The strategy included the views of young people in care, their carers, key stakeholders and professionals.

3.4 The strategy covers:

- our promise to young people in care
- our corporate parenting responsibilities and how we will work with partners to deliver the seven corporate parenting principles
- the outcomes we want to achieve for all children and young people in care
- progress and performance

3.5 The corporate parenting principles

- To act in the best interest, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, 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
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

3.6 This strategy provides the foundation for our aspirations for the young people in our care and those leaving care. We encourage our children and young people to achieve the best they can and continually celebrate their achievements.

4.0 KEY UPDATES

4.1 We asked our children and young people how we are delivering against our promises. They told us that they feel involved with the support they receive. That their views are taken into account. That workers are kind, genuine and that they care about them to help make their lives better.

4.2 The strategy outlines the commitment to working with families and ensuring that children are connected. Keeping children safe and families together. The right interventions at the right time and right place. We are committed to improving educational outcomes and having high ambition and support for children and those leaving care to achieve in life. North Yorkshire have implemented 'Safe' Strategic Priorities:

- **Systemic practice** – working **with** families to ensure practitioners have a deeper understanding of children and their families experiences and how we can bring about positive change
- **Autism** – families to have a tailored offer by a well-trained and confident workforce
- **Family Networks** – family-finding training has been embedded throughout all of children services. Bringing families together through Network meetings is key to ensuring safety and connectivity for children and young people
- **Education** – the impact of the pandemic has been far reaching for both children and their families/carers. We are committed to ensuring children are supported back into education and receiving a minimum of 25hrs per week

4.3 We have included support for our carers. North Yorkshire foster carers are first class who without doubt ensure we have children thriving, ensuring safety and achieving in life. North Yorkshire have rolled out Mockingbird in the West of the County, which provides a network of foster carers to build support to one another through activities and respite arrangements by the Mockingbird hub carer.

4.4 North Yorkshire are part of the National Transfer Scheme for those vulnerable children seeking asylum. Practitioners support these children to become settled and feel part of the community with our 'welcome approach'. We now have dedicated provision in the East of the county.

4.5 Leaving Care Services launched 'Always Here'. Rather than ending services for our care leavers at the age of 25yrs, we now say we will always be here as corporate parents to connect with and offer support and advice. North Yorkshire is the first Local Authority to do this and more are following.

4.6 North Yorkshire have many care leavers on the On Track/Kickstart programme and a number coming through North Yorkshire's apprenticeship/graduation route. It is really pleasing to see that some of these young people have gone on to be successfully appointed in various roles within the council.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 North Yorkshire have introduced Always Here for our care leavers. An offer to be there for care leavers who want to stay in touch regardless of age. Demonstrating that relationships are valued and ongoing regardless of how old they are. This offer has not required additional resource to the service.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All Local Authorities must provide and outline a Strategy for Children who are in Care (Looked After) and Care Leavers as part of the Statutory Guidance, Children Act 1989, 2004.

7.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Strategy is a detailed and comprehensive document that clearly outlined the commitments and work undertaken with services. It was therefore agreed to update the strategy with the work that has progressed since the Strategy was approved in 2018. This Strategy will remain in place until October 2024 when it will be reviewed in line with the changes to North Yorkshire One Council.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Executive is asked to recommend to County Council that the refreshed “Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy - We care because you matter’ be formally approved.

Stuart Carlton
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COUNTY HALL, NORTHALLERTON

5 July 2022

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy – ‘We Care Because You Matter’