



North Yorkshire
County Council

'We Care Because You Matter'

Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2021 - 2024

Contents

Foreword	3
Who are Children in Care and Care Leavers?	4
Our Promise to Young People	5
About the Strategy	8
How we will provide support	9
Children and Social Work Act 2017 – Corporate Parenting Principles	11
Governance Arrangements for Corporate Parenting Principles	13
What have we done, what will we do now?	16
What success will look like?	22
How well are we supporting the children in our care?	23
How well are we doing?	24
Appendix A – ‘Building Back Better’ Children & Families ‘SAFE’ Strategic Priorities	26
Appendix B – Definition of a ‘Looked After Child’	27

1. Foreword

As set out in our multi-agency Children and Young People's Plan (Being Young in North Yorkshire), our vision is that all children and young people are safe, happy, healthy and able to achieve in North Yorkshire. Whilst most children and young people are able to do this, we know that at times families require support to overcome difficulties and challenging circumstances. When this happens, we work closely with families and networks, offering targeted interventions to support them to stay together. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs we do, if it is not safe for a child to stay at home the local authority will step in to give them the care, support and stability that they deserve.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines in law our responsibility as corporate parents to secure nurturing and positive experiences for the children we look after, whilst extending the support we offer to our care leavers. As corporate parents, we take our duties toward Children in Care and Care Leavers very seriously and are committed to providing the best possible support to meet their individual needs. Depending on the needs of the child and taking their views and opinions into account, we offer this through a range of different settings including in family arrangements, foster care and children's homes.

We understand that each child in our care is an individual and our approach reflects this. We track and support a child's progress through school, look

after their health and wellbeing and strive to make sure they have the same opportunities as their friends and peers. To do this, we listen to the voice of the child, and our Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Team, Independent Reviewing Officers and all of our staff work tirelessly to ensure that children and young people are directly involved with decision making. We work to ensure that moves are kept to a minimum and, when they are necessary, decisions about the placement will be made in the best interests of the child. We want children and young people to establish trust based relationships with their social worker, we therefore strive to keep changes in worker to a minimum. We are ambitious for every child in our care and will encourage them to achieve their full potential, from overcoming challenges to progress well in education, learning and training.

This strategy looks to build on the strengths of the initial 'We Care because You Matter', carrying forward the promises we developed with contributions from both Children in Care and Care Leavers. Care leavers can face a wide variety of challenges, they need to know that support is available while they make the transition from being in our care to independent living. This strategy is not just about informing Children in Care and Care Leavers on how we will support them, but also informs our partners on our ambitions for the children and young people. This underpins collaborative working as we continue to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.

With this strategy providing the foundations, we will continue to be aspirational as a corporate parent, encouraging our children and young people to achieve the best they can and their achievements will continue to be celebrated.



Cllr Janet Sanderson

Lead Member for Children's Services



Stuart Carlton

Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service

2. Who are Children in Care & Care leavers?

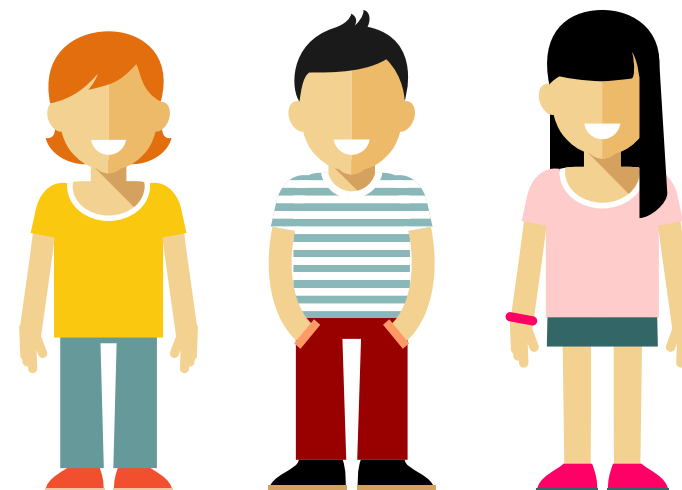
A child (under 18 years old) is legally ‘looked after’ by a local authority if he or she:

‘Gets accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 from the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours; is subject to a care order; or is subject to a placement order. Children in Care (CiC) are placed with foster carers, in residential homes or with parents or other relatives (under certain circumstances)’.

(Full legal definition attached as appendix a)

Definition of a Care Leaver:

‘A care leaver is broadly defined as a person aged between 16 and 25, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, is either currently in care or has left care and has been looked after for a period of time after their 16th birthday.’



3. Promise to Young People

As part of the development of the original 'We Care because You Matter' strategy, we consulted with young people through a series of consultation events to ensure the strategy reflected what children and young people believe are important. We then worked with young people to develop our promise to children and young people.

We are committed and dedicated to ensuring that our Children in Care and Care Leavers can rely on us to provide the same stability, life chances and opportunities that all good parents provide for their children. To do this, it is important they know what they can expect from us and our Promise to Young People makes this clear. As part of our commitment to Children and Young People we will support children in our care to:

- Make sure they have the health appointments they need and supported to attend
- Have access to information needed so they can make decisions about their health
- Share information on foster carers and introduce them before they move in
- Pursue hobbies and interests
- Share quality time with adults
- Be listened to by adults and copies of any notes taken shared with them
- To see people who are important to them

- Help them to achieve their goals
- Have the information needed to make a decision about college, university or work
- Have a safe and secure home
- Explore who is important to them, and the extent of the child's support networks through the use of Family Finding, Lifelong Links and Family Group Conferencing.

The page below sets out clearly our promise to all children & young people in North Yorkshire, or who live outside of North Yorkshire but receive a service from us. This helps inform children, young people and their families of the support they can expect to receive and helps us ensure service delivery meets the standards that we would expect. It is important to remember that these are our promises to Children in Care are in addition to these commitments, and not instead of.



Our promise to you



We will...

- Aim to support you in the same way as if you were our own child
- Be there when you need us
- Work with you to help you achieve your goals and overcome any difficulties
- Work with you to be successful if you choose an apprenticeship role
- Listen to you
- Help you manage your physical and mental well being
- Help you to be safe
- Help you to be involved in activities you are interested in
- Help you to believe in yourself
- Provide adults in your lives who inspire you
- Reduce the possibility of being bullied
- Communicate with you in the best way for you (i.e. text, facebook etc)
- Support you in education, careers and apprenticeships
- Aim to respect your wishes
- Help you enjoy leisure activities
- Try to make sure there is always someone to talk to
- Teach you independent living skills and provide practical support if you need it
- Support you when you live independently and keep in touch when you need us
- Be approachable
- Help you get good accommodation
- Have high aspirations for you
- Push you to be the best you can be.

And...

- We won't use your personal information without your permission
- You can decide who you want to talk to
- We will tell you what is happening
- We will be patient and understanding and cheer you on!
- We will try not to ask too many questions and make you have too many meetings with different people.

3.1 How are we delivering against our Promises to Children and Young People:

To understand how Children and Young People feel about how well we support them, we are constantly gathering feedback. Recent feedback includes:



I am fully involved in everything about my support and I always feel my views are taken into account. Even if she disagrees with me, she will let me finish speaking and tell my story and feelings before saying why she might disagree with what I have said.



My worker is lovely and kind and shows a genuine want to have a chat with me rather than a mannerism that 'it is just her job'



I have had 2 amazing workers who have helped through a lot and even helped me with the stuff I needed to live on my own with my little boy, they have also given me emotional support that has brought me out from a dark place.

4. About the Strategy

This strategy aims to build upon the successes of the previous 'We Care Because You Matter' Strategy. This was developed with help from young people and is for all children and young people in our care and care leavers, setting out how we plan to further improve the support we offer and is underpinned by our vision that:

'All children and young people in our care will have a stable and loving home, with the same life chances as their friends. We will give them the support they need to help them achieve the best they possibly can. When they leave care, they will have the support and skills they need to be able to live happy adult lives'.

Alongside our corporate parenting principles, there are a number of priorities that underpin this strategy and the services that both ourselves and our partners provide and offer to the children and young people in our care. These are core to how we operate as a partnership, providing the level of care and support that we would expect for our own children.

- Children and young people are best cared for wherever possible with their birth or extended family. We know that if a child can be cared for by natural birth or extended family they have a network of support that will last their entire lives, at a level which any authority would struggle to achieve.
- Aim high and have high expectations. We recognise that children who are looked after by a local authority can fall behind their peers in terms of education and future outcomes. We believe that if we can support and encourage children in our care to aim high and have high expectations of themselves then they will be more likely to have the same life chances as their peers.
- Retaining our parenting responsibility extends beyond when a young person leaves care. We recognise that we need to aim high in helping children and young people overcome gaps in their early care and support their transition to adulthood and independence.
- All partner agency planning, service delivery, and evaluation will start with the needs of the children and young people, rather than the services available. We recognise that children enter the care system for different reasons and with different needs. We will therefore ensure that provision is bespoke, builds upon universal and preventative services, challenges traditional assumptions, and is differentiated according to the child's individual needs regardless of organisational structures and boundaries to ensure positive outcomes for all Children in Care.
- The views, opinions, needs and priorities of Children in Care and carers inform everything we do. We will work with Children in Care, along with their parents and carers to assist us in shaping how we manage and organise the assessment, planning, resources and services that support and care for them while ensuring that this would not compromise the safeguarding of children.
- We deliver high quality, innovative services and will work in a transformational way to ensure they become even better. We will identify what we need to do to make a real and lasting change for all children and young people who are in care. We will draw upon national research and best practice whilst responding effectively to changes in national guidelines and statutory duties.
- Children and young people develop positive and stable relationships with those who support them. We do this through our commitment to the recruitment and retention of a knowledgeable, solution focused workforce, using targeted training to grow a multiple disciplinary skill base.

We know all children are unique and have individual needs and circumstances. We work closely with children in our care to understand individual needs and ensure that their 'Voice' is truly heard.

This is a refresh of the first iteration of 'We Care because You Matter', with a full strategic re-write due in 2024. This will result in the new strategy being directly informed by the following:

The Care Review:

An independent review of Social Care is currently being undertaken, expected to be complete during the 2022/23 financial year. The review plans work with 'Experts by Experience', build on research and analysis and work with the 'current system and wider community' to develop a case for change (Summer 2021 The Case for Change - [The Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#) and begin to build a series of suggestions for how the 'system' can be improved.

It is unlikely that the review will affect our promises to young people that underpin this strategy, the review may have a bearing on how support is delivered. Any findings or recommendations of the review will be taken into account to inform how we deliver support to Children and Young People in North Yorkshire.

The Local Government Review

North Yorkshire will be undergoing a period of change over the coming years as we move from a two-tier system of local government (with eight councils delivering public services) to a single 'unitary' authority. Although this is unlikely to have a considerable impact on the support children, young people and their families receive from North Yorkshire, there may be opportunities to improve the offer to children in care and care experienced young people as this new Council comes together.

Once the structures and governance for the new arrangements are in place, this Strategy will be reviewed to reflect these changes to ensure our offer to children and young people continue to deliver against our promise to young people.



Image taken at the Care Leaver Conference

5. How will we provide support?

The diagram below lays out the model of practice we follow in North Yorkshire when providing the support children, young people and their families need to overcome challenging and difficult circumstances. We believe that stable relationships should be established between workers, children, young people and their families and networks, working alongside them and always look for strengths within the work that is done.

This model of practice acts as the foundation upon which we develop individual plans to ensure the children and young people we support achieve the best possible outcomes:

Our Purpose

To support positive change that continues after we no longer need to be involved. We will create conditions that allow relationships to flourish. Our Practice system is built to deliver this outcome.

Systemic Working in Practice

Systemic Practice takes a relationship based approach, understanding difficulties and change as occurring within relationships, communication and context rather than being situated within the child. It approaches change through a relational way of working that aims to bring out, share, and respect the stories and strengths of all involved to enable a constructive way forward.

**ONE
Principle**

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety is a strengths based, solution focused approach to children's social work. It is a questioning model that recognises families' own expertise in their situations and takes them on a safety planning journey to their own solutions.

**ONE
Approach**

Work to:

Identify and build on family strengths. Build on what works, create the right environment

Work as:

An agent for change. Build purposeful and respectful relationships

Work with:

The whole family and networks. Build lasting family and community relationships

**THREE
Intentional
Behaviours**

Restorative
Solutions

Family Finding

Family Group
Conferencing

Life Long Links

Restorative Continuum

**FOUR
Restorative
Interventions**

Build
Long Term
Stability

Improve
Resilience
and Reduce
Dependence

Manage
and Reduce
Risk

Maintain
Purposeful
Relationships

Least Prohibited
Intervention
CA 1989

Reduce time
in Care

**SIX
Objectives**

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Keeping 'Children safe' and 'Families Together'
The **Right interventions** at the **Right Time** in the **Right Place**

5.1 No Wrong Door

In North Yorkshire we look at supporting families to stay together, where safe to do so, allowing children to remain in their communities. To support this ambition, we have developed our innovative No Wrong Door model. The No Wrong Door is an integrated service and approach to supporting adolescents with complex needs. The model combines a defined culture and practice with a range of services, support and accommodation options with a team of specialists working together through a shared practice framework.

At the heart of the model is a residential hub, which provides short-term placements and outreach support. The Model ensures that the needs of complex young people, no matter how diverse, are met within a single of trusted and skilled workers, including Life Coaches (Psychologists), Speech and Language Therapists and dedicated Key Workers.

At the heart of the 'No Wrong Door' model is the 'Signs of Safety' approach to assessment and planning which is fundamental to our wider practice model.

The No Wrong Door model use '10 distinguishers' to improve outcomes for complex adolescents:

- Always progressing to permanence within a family or community
- High stickability of the key worker
- Fewer referrals, less stigma
- Robust training strategy (same/ or similar to restorative practice and therapeutic support)
- No heads on beds culture
- No appointment assessments
- A core offer to all young people,
- Multi-agency, intelligence-led approach to reduce risk
- Close partnership working
- Young people's aspirations drive practice.



5.2 Make a Difference Luggage

We recognised that it's really important that our Children and Young People are able to keep their belongings safe when they move home.

We are, therefore, delighted that Madlug have donated a considerable number of bags to North Yorkshire's Young People. This will mean each office has a ready supply of bags to give to young people when they move home.



5.3 Support for Young People Leaving Care

Always Here

In recent decades the age limit for leaving care services have increased from 18 to 21 and now to 25. Whilst this shows progress, the care experienced community have pointed out that for most people, their parents they don't stop talking to their children at 25. Life has a way of giving us all bumps in the road and at these points most people are able to turn to their parents for advice and guidance. In addition to this, many care leavers worry about

turning 25 purely because it signals an end to their right for statutory support.

In North Yorkshire we're going to stop having an age limit for care leavers to come back to us for help, and instead, we're going to say that if you're a North Yorkshire care leaver you can always come back to us for information, advice and guidance. What this means in practical terms is that our relationship with our care leavers changes over

time, in the same way that most young people's does with their parents. By the time young people are nearing 25 our ambition is that they are living their lives, succeeding and progressing and that they occasionally call to let us know how they're getting on. It might be that they've got married and want to invite their worker or that they've had a baby. Of course, for some life will bring more difficulties and we want our care leavers to know they can pick up the phone,

whatsapp or email us and we'll be there to help them when life gets tough but also celebrate when it goes well.

We've coupled this offer with an offer of second chance learning which means young people can gain key qualifications like English and Maths from our Adult Learning and Skills service and an offer from our Early Help service with support available around parenting skills and promoting emotional wellbeing for care experienced parents.

New Belongings

North Yorkshire has been one of eight authorities involved in the latest New Belongings Programme facilitated by Coram Voice. The programme uses the experiences and feedback from care leavers to support developments in the service. Following a 72% return rate of the Your Life beyond Care Bright Spots survey that ran from February to March 2020, four priority areas were identified.

These were:

- Accommodation.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Opportunities to develop new skills.
- Relationships.

Particular achievements have been:

- The adoption of a guarantor offer for care leavers accessing accommodation in the private sector

- Exploring different ways of making file access for young people more positive:
- Piloting a successful 12 week wellbeing and pre-employment course supported by Anglo American in Scarborough:
- The launch of 'Always Here' The North Yorkshire offer to care leavers who are over 25.



5.4 Support for Carers

In recognition of the crucial role that carers play in providing the children in our care with caring, loving, stable homes, we are committed to providing Foster Carers with the support and training they need to care for children. Foster Carers are provided with a wealth of training resources, ranging from the initial 'Skills to Foster' preparation courses to advanced courses (such as 'Fostering Changes') for our Advanced and Specialist Foster Carers. Along with training, a breadth of support is available for Foster Carers. This can be directly from a Supervising Fostering Social Worker or from other professionals, such as the child's Social Worker and/or Psychologists. Peer-to-Peer support is also available to Foster Carers via:

- Quarterly Support Group Meetings
- Away Days for Advanced and Specialist Foster Carers twice a year
- The five area-based Foster Carer Associations (FCAs)
- The Mockingbird Family Model

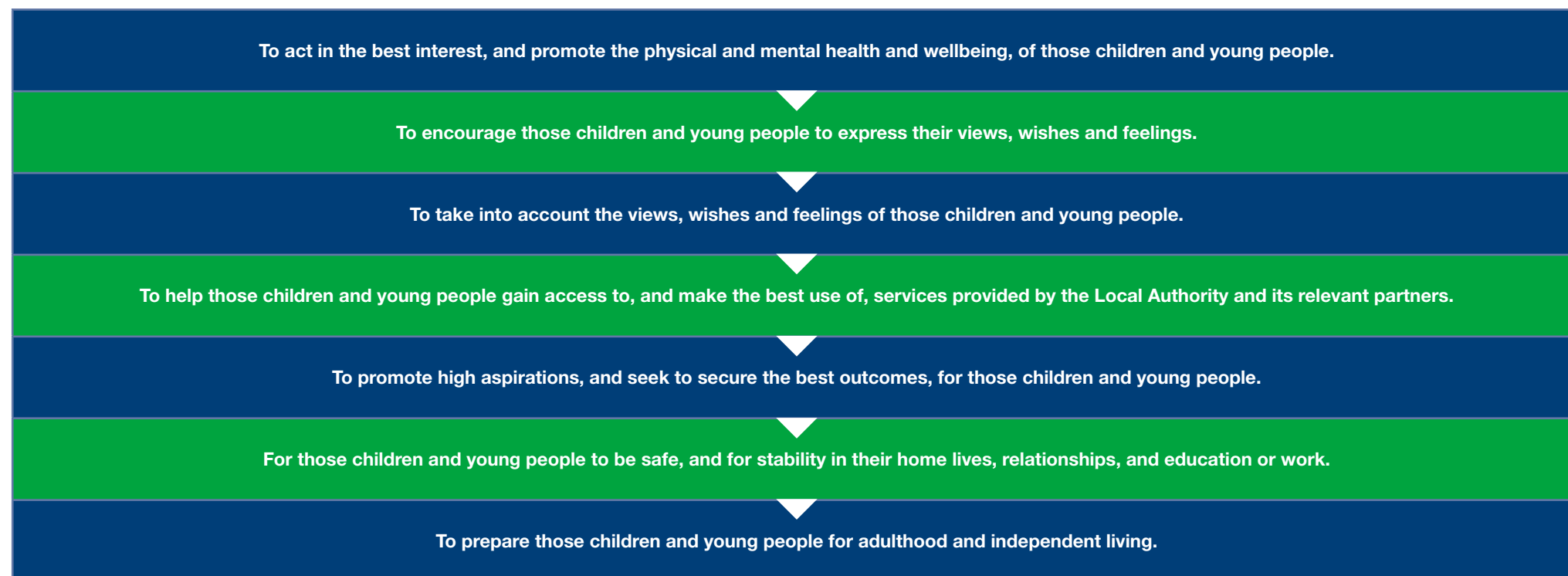
Fostering North Yorkshire is committed to paying the annual Household membership of either The Fostering Network or FosterTalk (by area, as chosen by the FCAs).

Membership offers various forms of independent support including: legal advice; counselling support and financial advice (re National Insurance Contributions and Tax Returns).



6. Children and Social Work Act 2017 - Corporate Parenting Principles

When a child becomes looked after, North Yorkshire County Council becomes the 'Corporate Parent'. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out 7 Corporate Parenting Principles to achieve the best possible outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers. When our children move to adulthood, we follow the principles to ensure we provide our care leavers with the support and stability that any child would expect as they prepare to leave the family home.



As an authority and corporate parent, we realise we cannot secure the best for Children in Care and care leavers alone. In order to secure the best possible outcomes for our young people, and to encourage them to 'aim high', we need the support of other agencies. This includes working in partnership with colleagues from the National Health Service, Police,

voluntary sector and our 7 district councils. The district councils operating within North Yorkshire provide key services that, as a corporate parent, are invaluable to NYCC in supporting our Young People and we will continue to work closely with our District colleagues to ensure that our Children in Care and Care Leavers are able to receive the support and services they need.

Appendix C outlines the offers from each District to our Children in Care and Care Leavers. These services are detailed in the diagram below, and the council will continue to work closely with the districts to ensure children in our care continue to benefit from these local level services.



To ensure that Children in Care and Care Leavers have access to high-quality housing and accommodation, alongside our internally provided placements (such as Foster Care, No Wrong Door etc.), North Yorkshire works closely with the Districts to provide independent and semi-independent living accommodation through the Young People's Pathway. As part of the offer to Children in Care and Care Leavers, the Districts (as part of North Yorkshire Home Choice) automatically offers Care Leavers 'Gold-Band' access to housing.

In North Yorkshire we embrace the Corporate Parenting principles as a culture. We encourage children to express their views and demonstrate that we have heard them when we are developing their plans and individual outcomes to help them reach their goals.

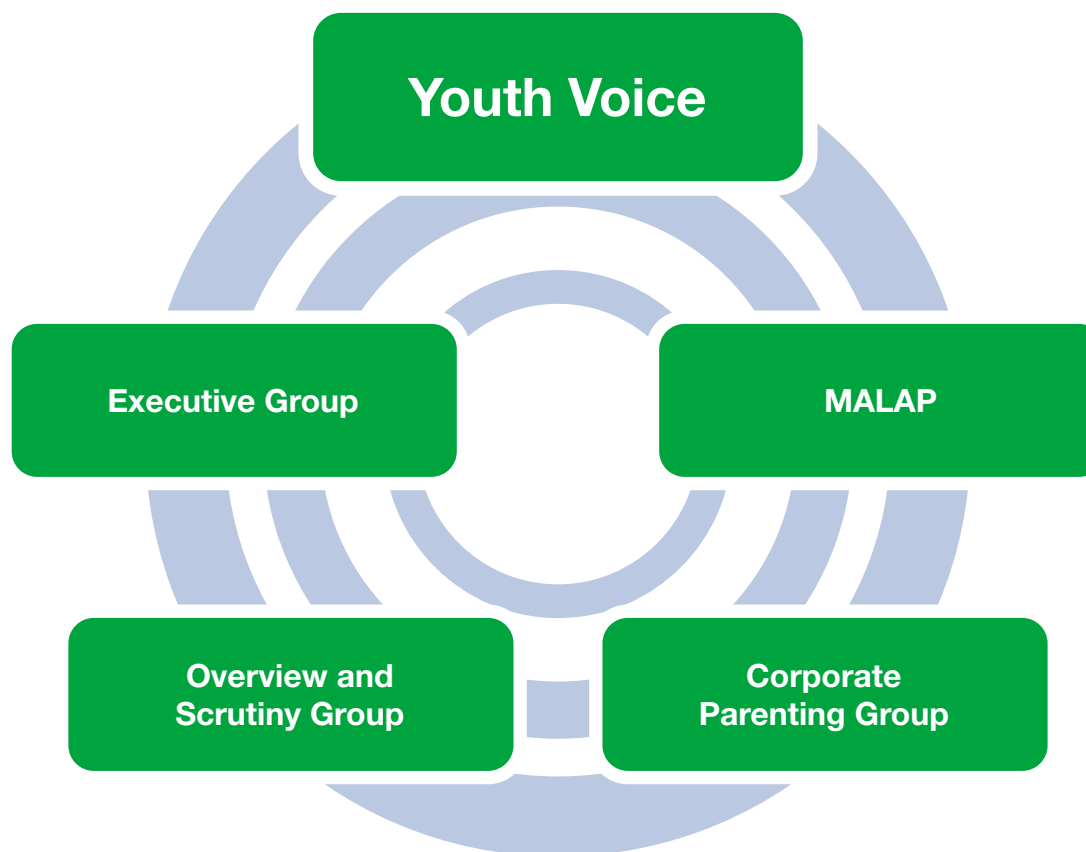
We recognise that all children and young people are very different, this diversity is embraced to help shape them for their future. We have high aspirations for our children and young people to lead, happy healthy and full lives and achieve the best they can.

Putting the child/young person at the centre of everything we do ensures that decision are made in their best interests, with long-term outcomes at the heart, based directly on the unique and individual needs of the child. Our child-centred approach means all agencies involved have high-aspirations for every child and provide the support they would want their own children to receive.



7. Governance Arrangements for Corporate Parenting

When a child becomes looked after, North Yorkshire County Council becomes the 'Corporate Parent'. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out 7 Corporate Parenting Principles to achieve the best possible outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers. When our children move to adulthood, we follow the principles to ensure we provide our care leavers with the support and stability that any child would expect as they prepare to leave the family home.



7.1 Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) & our ‘Corporate Parenting Group’

North Yorkshire has well established governance arrangements in place to ensure our Children in Care and Care Leavers receive the best support for their individual needs. The review of progress in delivering this strategy will be managed through our Multi Agency Looked after Partnership (MALAP) who meet on a quarterly basis as a forum where lead agencies update on progress and issues and keep the strategy live and up to date. If any issues cannot be resolved by the MALAP, they will be escalated to the Children in Care Members Group. This group is our ‘Corporate Parenting Group’ and have clear oversight of all of the work undertaken with our Children in Care and Care Leavers. The group receives quarterly reports and updates on performance and outcomes achieved and will make decisions on action to be taken to improve practice outcomes. Each Quarter the activity against the Corporate Parenting Principles will be updated to ensure we have oversight and continue to meet our responsibilities as a partnership.

Our Corporate Parenting Group will escalate any areas of concern up to the Executive Group or the Overview and Scrutiny Group to allow them to be fully considered and inform action planning to improve performance.

The elected members who make up our Corporate Parenting Group undertake this key role, acting as a critical friend on behalf of the children we care for to ensure that the support provided effectively meets their needs. Having a separate group to challenge us on behalf of our Children in Care ensures that we set high standards, ambitions and goals for them. We know that the children in our care face huge challenges if they are to overcome their disadvantages; therefore services need to go over and above to help and promote them.

Members of the MALAP include a number of colleagues who sit on various groups across the county and region. These include the County Housing Group and County Homelessness Group, North Yorkshire Homes Choice, Young People’s Housing Pathway, North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership, Foster Carers’ Associations etc. to ensure that the needs of Children in Care are represented across the board.

To ensure our ‘Corporate Parenting Principles’ run through our governance arrangements and underpin the decisions that we make, each of our 7 principles have a MALAP lead and a lead member (from our Corporate Parenting Group) who have chief responsibility over ensuring that their portfolio & principle is effectively upheld and continues to improve the support we provide to our children and care leavers.



The role of the Corporate parenting group

'The critical friend is a powerful idea, perhaps because it contains an inherent tension. Friends bring a high degree of unconditional positive regard. Critics are, at first sight at least, conditional, negative and intolerant of failure.'

'Perhaps the critical friend comes closest to what might be regarded as true friendship – a successful marrying of unconditional support and unconditional critique'

(John McBeath, Cambridge University)

'Is it good enough for my child?'

As a corporate parent we take an interest in the wellbeing, safety, and experience of Children in Care, as if they were our own child. This critical question can be asked of all services, all interventions and all decisions made for the children and young people of North Yorkshire.

Children in Care should aspire to have the same life experiences, rewards and ambitions as anyone would want for their own child or own family member. This means that every child in care should be listened to, cared for appropriately, and ensuring that their life chances are maximised to succeed to each child's potential and beyond. Asking this critical question sets the standard for our ambitions and goals for children in care. For many reasons children in care face huge challenges if they are to overcome their disadvantages; therefore services need to go over and above to help and promote them.

If we are able to walk in the shoes of children and families who use our services, we can truly empathise and get a better understanding of their experiences. This enables us to have greater clarity on their needs and on service provision to meet those needs. This is the vital role of the corporate parent.

Cllr Sanderson



7.2 NY Care Champions

As Corporate Parents, we know that we cannot make effective decisions for young people and provide the support they need without their help, thoughts and views. NY Care Champions are a youth voice group for care experienced young people in North Yorkshire. The group meets regularly, both virtually and in person, to share ideas and discuss what improvements need to be made to the support young people received, particularly those currently in care or Care Leavers.

Lead members of the group meet the Assistant Director of Children & Families Services, Senior Managers and County Councillors on a quarterly basis – providing a direct pathway from the young people to our key decision makers, and allowing for mutual challenge and the sharing of recent work outcomes. Working alongside NY Voice, our Youth Voice & Creative Engagement Team, our Care Champions ensure that young people are consulted on matter which affect their lives.

Members of the NY Care Champions group are regularly involved in improvement projects and decision making at various levels. They play a key role in recruitment across CYPS, and hold our leaders to account. During the pandemic, much of this work has taken place virtually, but at the time of writing the first face-to-face meetings since the start of the pandemic are being arranged to be held immediately.

Examples of the NY Care Champions activity in the last 12 months include:

- Work on the Family Time Development Project
- Supporting the design of the 'On Track' higher education initiative.
- Consultation work around improving uptake of Children in Care Health Assessments & developing Health Passports
- Supporting the commissioning of the new Mind of My Own Apps.
- Health & Wellbeing Project work with North Yorkshire Sport
- Focus Group work around how we think about 'consent' within Children and Young People's Services.



7.3 Virtual School

North Yorkshire's Virtual School has high expectations and helps the children in our care and leaving our care to achieve the very best. Although the pupils attend many different schools and settings, we operate as if they all attend one school. We have high aspirations for their education, employment and training and we expect schools and settings to provide a quality learning environment which meets their needs and encourages and develops their ambition. We encourage, support and stick with children through thick and thin and work to provide stability in all areas. Virtual School North Yorkshire monitor, support and challenge academic achievements and attainment in partnership with schools, carers and social workers. We hold schools to account for the impact of the provision on pupil's progress through the education system using Personal Education Plans and monitoring the use of Pupil Premium plus.

The Virtual School is committed to ensure that the Voice of the child will be reflected in our planning to effectively support all pupils and their views are sought at every Personal Education Plan meeting, this forms a core part of our 'electronic Personal Education Plan' (ePEP). Virtual School hold many extra-curricular activities throughout the year and encourage pupils to attend the YPC events.

The Virtual School Resource Panel encourages and supports positive activities and celebrates achievements. Some examples of the positive activities fund include surfing, horse riding, musical instruments and sports equipment. Celebrating achievements includes vouchers for educational and non-educational achievements, including Year 11 awards and the annual Graduation Ceremony for young people completing Year 11, post 16 and degree courses. Educational projects include, Rainbow Readers, Imagination Library and online learning. We provide 1-1 tuition when needed and other bespoke education packages. We have a Governing body called the Management Committee and, like any school, we provide reports on the work of the school and the progress and achievements of the children.

The Virtual School works closely with schools to ensure that children in our care get the support they need at school as well as where they live. In recognition of the impact that adverse childhood experience have on academic engagement and outcomes, particularly Trauma and Attachment, the Virtual School promotes and supports the delivery of holistic, whole school training, including Attachment Aware. North Yorkshire's Virtual school is developing Attachment Aware School policies, encouraging schools to adopt relational-based policies incorporating trauma informed approaches and emotion coaching strategies.

Over the past 18 months we have seen the Virtual School play a central role in supporting the education for children in care throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic the Virtual School play a key role in distributing technology and providing support to children in care to facilitate home working. Emerging from the pandemic, the Virtual School will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that children and young people in our care are encouraged to be ambitious and support schools support our young people.

To support our young people beyond school age, North Yorkshire works closely with a number of local Universities and higher education providers to promote ambition and aspiration amongst Children in Care and Care Leavers. Having successfully piloted the 'On Track' programme, we will build on the success of this to further raise the ambitions and aspirations of our Young People.

There is a wealth of evidence that highlights that learning a musical instrument can have considerable benefits to both cognition and learning as well as emotional/ wellbeing benefits. In recognition of this, we will also work closely with North Yorkshire's School Music Service to give our young people the opportunity to embrace creativity and development through providing the opportunity to take free musical instrument lessons.

7.4 National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

North Yorkshire is committed to working with partners to ensure children and young people are safe, living in stable, caring homes, and are able to achieve. This includes Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. A new regional rota has been introduced to give a greater understanding of the number of UASCs authorities will be asked to support, and when such support might be requested – increasingly the predictability relating to resources and increase in the speed of transfers.

In North Yorkshire, a 'welcome approach' has been developed for groups of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) requiring support under National Transfer Scheme. Developing bespoke arrangements to provide Initial Health assessments and signposting to health services. The NWD Life Coach has provided timely and responsive group work to support emotional wellbeing, positive lifestyle and integration into the local community and education. We have purchased a four apartment house to support young people in supported independent living. Working closely with NWD, Health and other partners to provide impactful, meaningful support packages to achieve positive outcomes.



8. What have we done? What are we going to do now?

To ensure we, as corporate parents, continue to provide the best possible support we can for the children and young people that we care for, it is important that this strategy continues to fully address the needs of our children and young people. In order to ensure we continue to deliver, we have selected a Council

Member who will each take responsibility for delivering 1 of the 7 Corporate Parenting principles. The below outlines what we said we would deliver under the original strategy against each principle, much of this now forms part of our Business as Usual and we will continue to do. Reflective of the distance travelled and

our drive to continue to improve how we meet the needs of our young people, the below highlights key bits of work we have undertaken across each Corporate Parenting Principle along with what we will do next:

Priority	What we said we would do?	What else have we done?	What are our next steps?
Health & Wellbeing	<p>Care Planning will consider physical, social, emotional and mental health needs</p> <p>All children and young people will be registered with a GP</p> <p>We will support children and young people understand the importance of health assessments</p> <p>Initial and Review Health Assessments will be completed in a timely way</p> <p>All Children and Young People will be offered the opportunity to have the recommended immunisations</p> <p>We will ensure all children and young people know how to access mental health services and support</p> <p>We will ensure appropriate and timely psychological and therapeutic support is provided to those children and young people who need it</p> <p>We will use health evidence to inform our commissioned services</p>	<p>We have mainstreamed Psychologically Informed Partnership Approaches (PIPA) to give all Children in Care and Care Leavers to Psychologically informed practice and support from Life Coaches</p> <p>We have engaged with NY Care Champions to encourage young people to attend Health Assessments</p> <p>We participated in the Mental Health Assessment Pilot to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing assessments that children receive when they enter care.</p> <p>Introduced Virtual Health Assessments where appropriate during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure Health Assessments were completed in a timely way.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure Care Planning considers physical and mental health issues</p> <p>Work closely with health providers to recover from the impact of Covid-19.</p> <p>Develop a pilot via the Looked After Nurses to allocate an individual nurse to support a young person through their care journey.</p> <p>Continue to support children and young people understand the importance of health assessments and work with partners to complete these in a timely way.</p> <p>Build and develop our PIPA offer amongst Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Ensure all children and young people are registered with a GP and Dentist</p> <p>All children will be offered the opportunity to have the recommended immunisations.</p> <p>Continue to use health evidence to inform our commissioned services.</p>

Priority	What we said we would do?	What else have we done?	What are our next steps?
Youth Voice	<p>You said (we did); To act as a conduit between the Youth Voice and Corporate Parenting Group /scrutiny committee</p> <p>We will strive to seek the views of hard to reach young people</p> <p>We will ensure that children and young people participate in their Children in Care reviews</p> <p>We will ensure interpreters are available</p> <p>We will ensure we consider the work of the Young People's Council</p> <p>Our Independent Reviewing Officers will meet our children and young people</p> <p>We will enable access to advocacy</p> <p>Children and Young People will have a copy of their care plan through the My Plan.</p>	<p>Reviewed our Young People' Council, establishing NY Care Champions, increasing membership and impact.</p> <p>Commissioned the Mind of My Own App to improve how we gather the views and feeling of Children and Young People.</p> <p>Introduced the Signs of Safety Module to LCS, ensuring that the child's voice plays a central role to planning.</p> <p>Introduced Virtual Youth Voice sessions during the Covid-19 Pandemic.</p>	<p>Our Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Team will work closely Children and Young People to express their views.</p> <p>Continue to ensure that children and young people are able to contribute to their plans.</p> <p>Ensure all staff receive Mind of My Own training</p> <p>Enable access to advocacy</p> <p>Continue to seek the views of hard to reach young people</p> <p>Continue to ensure that children and young people participate in their Children in Care reviews.</p> <p>We will ensure that children and young people have the resources they need (including interpreters) to contribute to their care planning.</p> <p>Children and Young People will have a copy of their care plan through the My Plan.</p>
Youth Participation	<p>We will consider children's views on where they live</p> <p>The homes where children live will be friendly and welcoming</p> <p>We will review evidence that we are acting on the voice of children and young people</p> <p>We will ensure that service user feedback feeds in to the Young People's Council and track how this is used.</p> <p>Children and young people will be engaged in the commissioning of services</p> <p>We will ensure we learn from complaints received from young people.</p> <p>We will meet on a regular basis with children in residential units to ensure we understand their views.</p>	<p>Introduced the 'Young Inspectors' allowing young people to directly feedback to senior managers on services.</p> <p>Established clear routes for the NY Care Champions to liaise with managers and elected members.</p> <p>Introduced Creative Approaches to engage young people in shaping their services.</p> <p>The voice of the child now forms a central part of the 'Learning Spaces'.</p> <p>Strengthened how we gather service user feedback, including direct contact with services users through the Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Team.</p> <p>A Young People's steering group has been developed for the New Belongings project</p>	<p>We will continue to consider children's views on where they live</p> <p>The homes where children live will be friendly and welcoming</p> <p>We will continue to act on what children and young people are telling us about the service they receive.</p> <p>Children and young people will be engaged in the commissioning of services.</p> <p>We will continue to ensure we learn from complains received from young people.</p> <p>Deliver against the North Yorkshire Engagement & Participation Strategy.</p> <p>We will work with the Young Inspectors and NY Care Champions to evidence that we are acting on the voice of children and young people</p> <p>Continue to engage the Young People's Steering Group in shaping the New Belongings Project.</p>

Priority	What we said we would do?	What else have we done?	What are our next steps?
Working Together	<p>Foster carers will be supported and have access to the services they need</p> <p>We will work in collaboration with the 7 District Councils & partners including Police, Health and CAMHS</p> <p>The local offer will include relevant services</p> <p>Transitions across the service will be in the best interests of the child</p> <p>Partner agencies will be involved in the care planning and reviews</p> <p>We will track social work caseloads to ensure they are manageable so they can spend the time needed with the child</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Care Leavers will be provided with services to meet their health, wellbeing and cultural needs.</p>	<p>We have embedded the Mocking Bird Model across all parts of the County to support Foster Carers and children in Foster Care.</p> <p>District Councils have delivered against their commitment as part of our collective promise to young people.</p> <p>Caseloads are regularly monitored by senior managers</p> <p>We have relaunched the 'Health Passport'</p>	<p>We will continue to work collaboratively with the District Councils and partners.</p> <p>We will continue to develop our offer of support to Foster Carers and ensure they have access to the services they need.</p> <p>We will keep our local offer up-to-date and relevant.</p> <p>Transitions across the service will continue to be in the best interest of the child</p> <p>Partner agencies will be involved in the care planning and reviews</p> <p>We will track social work caseloads to ensure they are manageable so they can spend the time needed with the child</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Care Leavers will be provided with services to meet their health, wellbeing and cultural needs.</p>
Ambition for Children	<p>We will ensure that our interventions achieve the best possible outcome for children and young people</p> <p>We will support children to achieve their aspiration</p> <p>We will understand the rate of school exclusions for Children in Care and what alternative provision is provided</p> <p>All children will have a termly, quality Personal Education Plan</p> <p>All children with additional needs will have an Education, Health and Care Plan</p> <p>We will review performance to understand how the educational results of Children in Care compared with Children in Care nationally and all children</p> <p>We will work to keep young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) low.</p> <p>We will celebrate young people's achievements</p>	<p>We have mainstream the Opportunities Team to support our Care Leavers' ambitions.</p> <p>We have developed and piloted the 'On Track' programme with NYCC and York Virtual School and higher education establishments to promote aspiration and make informed choices about their education progression opportunities.</p> <p>Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Virtual School worked closely with schools, carers and children to ensure all Children in Care were equipped and supported whilst home schooling.</p> <p>We have held an annual Virtual School Graduation days and Celebration Events to celebrate achievements of young people.</p> <p>We have developed an annual Care Leaver Conference to celebrate the achievements of Care Leavers ('#CareLeaversCan')</p> <p>Developed and delivered Attachment Aware training to schools</p> <p>We have embedded a new ePEP solution.</p> <p>We have worked with Inclusion and Early Help Services to develop the 'ladder of intervention' to prevent exclusions</p>	<p>We will continue to ensure that our interventions achieve the best possible outcome for children and young people</p> <p>Build on the successes of the pilot 'On Track' programme to raises aspirations of Children in Care</p> <p>All children will have a termly, quality Personal Education Plan, completed using the ePEP solution.</p> <p>All children with additional need will have an Education, Health and Care Plan</p> <p>We will continue to review performance to understand how the educational results of Children in Care compared with Children in Care nationally and all children</p> <p>We will continue to work closely with schools to prevent exclusions for Children in Care.</p> <p>Work with schools attended by Children in Care to deliver Attachment Aware Training.</p> <p>Support Care Experienced Young People to access opportunities through the Kick-start scheme.</p> <p>Drive ambition for young people to achieve their career aspirations through good-quality apprenticeships and higher education.</p> <p>Work with the Schools Music Service to increase uptake of free musical instrument lessons.</p>

Priority	What we said we would do?	What else have we done?	What are our next steps?
Safeguarding & Permanence	<p>Children and young people will be kept safe where they live</p> <p>Family Time arrangements will be made to maintain relationships with family members</p> <p>We will ensure there are sufficient placement numbers</p> <p>We will keep placement moves to a minimum</p> <p>Children on the Edge of Care will be supported to stay at home if it is safe to do so.</p> <p>Sibling Groups will be reviewed as individuals to ensure their needs are met when being placed</p> <p>Permanence Planning will be timely and plans will be in place by the 2nd CIC review</p> <p>Children will move into Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Child Arrangement Order (CAO) and adoptive placements in a timely way.</p>	<p>We have delivered Family Finding training to frontline Social Workers</p> <p>We have fully embedded our Strengths in Relationships Practice Model.</p> <p>We have fully mainstreamed our innovative No Wrong Door service – we are now supporting other authorities deliver this through the SFPC Programme.</p> <p>Performance in relation to placement stability has improved due to reduced placement moves.</p> <p>We have developed a new Special Guardianship Policy</p> <p>We have embedded our 'Stronger Foundations' team to support families remain together through building on the strengths within the family network.</p> <p>Family Time Working Group has been established to encourage & support teams reviewing family time, making it as natural as possible.</p>	<p>Children and young people will be kept safe where they live</p> <p>Where possible we will look to support children within their family network</p> <p>We will continue to ensure contact arrangements will be made to maintain relationships with family members</p> <p>We will continue to ensure there are Sufficient placements numbers</p> <p>We will continue to ensure placements are made in the best interest of the child and moves are kept to a minimum.</p> <p>We will continue to ensure Permanency Plans are timely</p> <p>Adoptions, SGOs and CAOs will be timely.</p>
Transitions	<p>We will have effective accommodation and support packages for young people leaving care including a robust staying put framework.</p> <p>We will support our young people to develop positive relationships with people in their network who they want involved, including family group conferencing</p> <p>Young people will only move to more independence when they are ready and have essential life skills, budgeting, benefits and cooking</p> <p>We will ensure that individual needs are taken into account and that the needs of young parents are supported through transitions</p> <p>We will ensure young people know what to do/ who to contact in an emergency situation</p> <p>Leaving Care Workers will keep in touch with young people when they are no longer in our care</p> <p>We will empower Children in Care and Care Leavers to make positive choices by tackling risky behaviours that may be associated with the transitions to adulthood</p>	<p>We have mainstreamed the Opportunities Team and have developed focused support around raising and achieving young people's aspirations.</p> <p>We have run sessions with the support external partners to help care leavers develop independence/life skills</p> <p>Leaving Care Workers are receiving Family Finding training</p> <p>All Care Leavers have access to the 'Stronger Foundations Team', including Family Group Conferencing</p> <p>We have developed a more young-person focused Pathway Plan</p> <p>We have increased the offer within the wider NYCC to offer apprenticeships and opportunities across the wider authority.</p>	<p>We will deliver the New Belongings programme with a focus on four key areas (Accommodation, Opportunities to develop new skills, emotional Well-being and relationships).</p> <p>Deliver the Nuffield project to improve outcomes for Care Leavers.</p> <p>We will empower Children in Care and Care Leavers to make positive choices, including through delivery of the National Protocol for reducing criminalisation of Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p> <p>We will ensure that individual needs are taken into account and that the needs of young parents are supported through transitions</p> <p>We will ensure young people know what to do/ who to contact in an emergency situation</p> <p>Leaving Care Workers will keep in touch with young people when they are no longer in our care</p> <p>Continue to provide effective accommodation and support packages for young people leaving care</p> <p>Developing our Young People's Team in the Leaving Care Service, including apprentices and 'Kick-start' employees leading on participation.</p> <p>We will deliver against our 'Always Here' offer to support Care Leavers beyond the age of 25.</p>



9. What success will look like

For us to be effective in improving both the support we provide and the outcomes for our young people, it is important to know how what success will look like. Below provides the foundation for how we will measure our success in the delivery of outcomes and outlines the outcomes we want to achieve for our children in care. It is against these outcomes that we will measure how we perform in delivering against our pledges.

Outcome 1 Improved Physical Health More Children will:	Outcome 2 Improved Mental Health Children will:	Outcome 3 Placement stability and safe homes We will:	Outcome 4 Attainment Children will:	Outcome 5 Young People Leaving Care We will:
<p>Have an up to date health assessment</p> <p>Be registered with a GP</p> <p>Be registered with a dentist</p> <p>Will be up to date with all of their immunisations</p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p>	<p>Be supported through evidence based interventions to maximise their social, emotional and mental health</p> <p>Have improved Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire results</p> <p>Where appropriate children and young people will be referred to specialist mental health services and receive treatment in a timely manner</p> <p>Joined up multi agency working will drive relationship based approaches.</p>	<p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within 20 miles of their home address</p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within long term in house provision</p> <p>Ensure children have improved placement stability</p> <p>Our discharge planning will secure improved outcomes for care leavers</p> <p>Make timely decisions regarding permanence and the use of Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and Child Arrangement Order (CAO) to be used where appropriate</p>	<p>Be supported to achieve their full potential</p> <p>Have a Personal Education plan which will be aspirational and ambitious</p> <p>Have their progress at school monitored and every child will receive tailored support from a specialist advisor</p>	<p>Support Young People Leaving Care to find safe, stable and suitable places to live, making sure they are as well prepared as they can be</p> <p>Keep in touch with them until they are 25 and have high aspirations for them</p> <p>Support Young People to remain with their long term foster families after they have left the care of the Local Authority if that is in the best interests of the young person</p> <p>Support Young People to be happy in their adult lives by helping to secure high quality education, training or employment opportunities</p>

Best Possible Outcome for Children and Young People

10. How well are we supporting the children in our care?

As part of our commitment as Corporate Parents, we are committed to working with our partners to improving outcomes for the children we care for. Examples of our success in supporting improved outcomes includes:

- All children in our care have an allocated Social Worker and all our Care Leavers have an allocated Leaving Care Worker. Our Children in Care and Care Leavers are being supported through the innovative 'No Wrong Door' approach that provides systemic and therapeutic support to Care Leavers.
- 61% of children in our care are placed within 20 miles of the family home, allowing them to maintain relationships with friends and relatives, providing stability and a sense of community.
- 80% of children who have been in our care for longer than two and a half years have remained in the same placement for two years or more. This is approximately 10 percentage points better than national and our statistical neighbour's performance.
- Our performance relating to Adoption compares well with the other authorities in our new Regional Adoption Agency, One Adoption North & Humber, and we provide more post-adoption support than any of the other authorities within this group.
- 0 children in our care have received a permanent exclusion since 2011.

- Almost all Care Leavers in North Yorkshire stay in-touch with the local authority and are living in 'suitable' accommodation
- Care Leavers in North Yorkshire are more likely to be in Education, Employment or Training than Care Leavers nationally or in our statistical neighbour authorities.

To further improve outcomes for the children we look after, there are some obstacles we need to overcome:

- We are working hard to ensure all children receive their 25 hours per week and get the support the need within their education provision
- A higher proportion of Children in Care are excluded from schools for fixed periods in North Yorkshire (14.2%) than nationally (11.4%)
- The impact that Covid-19 has had on both the timeliness of some assessments and checks and the disruption to children's education.
- Although virtually every child has a completed Health Assessment, to ensure we understand the health needs of the children in our care, we need to ensure that they are completed in a timely manner.



- We know a high number of adolescents are entering care, and ensuring effective placement and discharge planning will be key to securing improved outcomes for these young people.
- The average Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire score in North Yorkshire is higher than national, indicating challenging, emotional and mental health needs amongst the children in our care.

To ensure we are focused on improving outcomes for our children, our Quality of Practice Framework seeks to join together the voice of young people, carers and families, practice outcomes, 'learning spaces' and audits, and performance to give a rich, triangulated view of how effective we are supporting children and young people across all elements of the Children & Families Services.

Our progress against the Principles and promises outlined within this strategy will be monitored through the MALAP and Corporate Parenting Group, as well as through the Performance and Quality Assurance structures outlined as part of our Quality of Practice Framework.

Appendix A - North Yorkshire Children and Families Building Back Better 'SAFE' Strategic Priorities 2021-2023

The pandemic, as with other major societal events disproportionately affects members of society who are already marginalised, particularly those who experience higher levels of deprivation and poverty. Existing, well established partnerships, tried and tested methods of support and delivering our practice model well will continue to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. Higher levels of complexity will require greater **'professional curiosity'** and even greater resolve to support families. For some we need to **'build back better'** services to afford greater protection against societal change. For this reason we are introducing some additional 'SAFE' strategic priorities which work alongside our existing strategies but bring a microscopic focus, drive and pace to particular important issues. Please use this one page guide to develop your own awareness and focus and work together to assess gaps as a team.

Priority	Explanation	What will the organisation do?	What can you do?
S ystemic Practice	'Working With' families requires a deep understanding of context. How do they experience the world and its challenges in their family context? What are the difference in beliefs, power and lifestyle, visible and invisible, voiced and unvoiced? This complexity of understanding requires a knowledge beyond the family through the effective use of cultural genograms (at the <u>start</u> of our work).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission training for all staff within the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop detailed understanding and use Cultural genograms
A utism	Families and Carers of children with neurodevelopment needs are often more isolated from wider networks of support. Resilience to maintain care can therefore be greatly compromised through life events which further limit the circle adults who can safeguard and support the child. Families require a tailored meaningful offer from a knowledgeable and confident workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop training offer for staff. - Map and develop interventions for families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avvccess Training - CPD research - Identify Team Guru
F amily Networks	Family Finding is an evidenced based model of practice which is central to our practice model and supports our ambition for children to have a strong lifelong network. 'Family Network Meetings' are therefore a non-negotiable method of organisational practice which ensures families have a right to be worked with using this powerful approach. This requires a highly skilled workforce to 'work with'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 day Family Finding training - 2 day training on network meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access Training - Implement Family Network Meeting - Access FF Coach
E ducation	The pandemic has highlighted the important role education plays not just for a child but for the 'whole family'. A full education offer is integral to safeguard and protect children and to keep families together. A 25 hr offer provides the respite for adults to recharge and maintain personal resilience, particularly for those with additional needs. An education provides stability and social mobility for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance skills through training - IRO Challenge - Not in 25hr Education group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge as a good parent - Escalate stuck cases - Expect 25hrs

Let's 'Build Back Better' Together

Appendix B - Children (under 18) may be ‘looked after’ by local authorities under a number of legal arrangements:

- All children who are subject to a care order (Children Act 1989, section 31), interim care order (Children Act 1989, section 38) or emergency protection order (Children Act 1989, section 44);
- Children who are subject to a criminal Youth Rehabilitation Order with a Local Authority Residence Requirement or Intensive Fostering Requirement (S1 Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008);
- Children who have appeared in court and have been bailed to reside where the local authority directs - and are being provided with a local authority funded placement;
- Children who have been Bailed by a criminal court with a Condition to Reside where directed by the local authority, but only where the local authority then directs the child to reside in a funded placement;
- Children who have been refused Bail by a criminal court and remanded to local authority accommodation;
- Children who have been refused Bail by a criminal court and remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation;
- s102 Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012;
- Children who are subject to a secure accommodation order;
- Children who are subject to a secure accommodation order made under s25 Children Act 1989;
- If the child was Looked After at the time of sentence under s20 Children Act 1989 or s92 Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, this CiC episode will usually close upon entry to custody; However if the child was already subject to a Care Order at the time of sentence, then they will remain Looked After through their period of detention;
- Where a child is charged with an offence by the Police but refused bail the police must transfer the child to Local Authority Accommodation until their appearance in court. The local authority must accept the transfer and arrange suitable accommodation and care.



We're proud of each and every one of our young people.

Contact us

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