



**Children and Young People in Care  
& Care Leavers Strategy  
2018 - 2023**

## Foreword

Welcome to Gateshead's Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers strategy which covers the period 2018 to 2023.

We know that many children and young people who become looked after have experienced significant challenges in their young lives. Children and young people who are in the care of the local authority are among the most vulnerable in our community. They are entitled to the best services that can be provided and achieving this for them requires understanding, commitment and passion from all agencies and individuals who hold a responsibility to provide services for them. We therefore take our responsibilities as Corporate Parents very seriously and work with our partners and others to ensure these children are provided with good quality care and nurturing, to give them the best possible start in life, education. and independence.

We pledge to put children and families at the heart of everything we do. Our role as Corporate Parents is embedded within the Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2018-2023, and as such, this document also serves as the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy. It will be used to guide our decisions and ensure that we are doing the right things at the right time with the right level of resources.

This strategy sets out our new approach to providing services and support for Looked after Children and Young People and Care Leavers in Gateshead. It is based on supporting children in the community where it is safe and appropriate to do so, using a whole family strengths based practice; a recognition that we need to reduce the demand on our services through the transformation of edge of care and early help services; and improve the offer from ourselves and our partners, in supporting these children and young people to reach their full potential.

Signed by:



Councillor Gary Haley,  
Cabinet Member for  
Children and Young  
People



Signed by:



Caroline O'Neill  
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## **1. Introduction**

All children, regardless of circumstance, need to know someone is there for them, fighting their corner, listening to their needs and doing what they can to provide support. It is our belief that all children should be provided with the best start in life, and this should be no different for the children and young people in our care and for those young people who embark on a new journey as Care Leavers.

Elected members, the Leadership Team and employees all have a special responsibility to ensure that the Council acts as a corporate parent for children in our care. This means, as a Council, we need to ensure each individual child has their own needs addressed and is truly being listened to, and looked after, in order to reach their full potential.

By understanding and addressing the needs of our looked after children, we can turn around their experiences from challenging backgrounds by asking: "What would I want for my own child?"

## **2. Vision and Principles**

We want every child and young person in the care of Gateshead Council to reach their full potential. They have a right to be healthy, happy, safe and secure and to feel loved, valued and respected.

We want our children and young people to have everything that a responsible and conscientious parent would want for their children.

We want our children in care and care leavers to work with us, along with their parents and carers, in shaping how we manage and organise the planning, resources and services that support and care for them.

We want our children and young people to be happy and healthy, physically, socially and emotionally, to be safe and protected from harm and exploitation, and to be supported each step of the way to adult life.

We want them to achieve their potential, including at school, to make the most of the learning opportunities they are offered and to participate in the decisions affecting their care and their lives. This includes making the transition to adulthood with continuity of support, access to the right jobs and higher education, while living in good housing and being financially secure.

## **3. What Children and Young People In our Care Say**

- Find moving into a new home a difficult experience;
- Need to understand why they came into care;
- Need to be able to build relationships with adults they can trust;
- Rely on the adults caring for them to help keep them safe;

- Support to maintain relationships once they leave care, on an informal basis;
- Want professionals who provide support to have high aspirations for them;
- Reported that leaving care still felt like a 'cliff-edge';
- Felt that the process of leaving care itself was often rushed and that planning for leaving care should start earlier;
- Wanted more choice about where they lived and who supported them;
- Know what they were entitled to from universal services.

Our strategy invites us to work together with a common purpose, putting the welfare of our children in care at the heart of everything we do.

#### **Our principles are to:**

- Safeguard the welfare, health and happiness of all children in care;
- Listen and respond to children and young people's views and wishes;
- Provide a stable and supportive home with caring consistent relationships;
- Have high aspirations for each child and young person;
- Respect and value diversity;
- Place children and young people within families whenever possible and as close to the local community as possible;
- Promote contact with family and friends;
- Respect and promote children and young people's rights;
- Make decisions based on assessments of need;
- Celebrate children and young people's achievements.

## **4. Our Priorities**

Informed by what our Looked after Children and Young People say is important to them, we have identified seven key priorities which are at the heart of this strategy:

- Our Children and Young People are **respected** and **involved**;
- Our placements are **safe** and meet the **needs** of our Children and Young People;
- **Positive** relationships and **identity**;
- Our Children and Young People will be **supported** to **improve** their physical and emotional health and wellbeing;
- Our Children and Young People are **encouraged** to **reach** their educational, employment and training potential;
- Our Young People moving into adulthood will be **supported** to **achieve** their full potential in life;
- **Improve** our role as the Corporate Parent;

## 5. The Gateshead Picture

The services that support the children and young people in our care are currently rated Good by Ofsted. In our role as Corporate Parents we strive to continually improve outcomes for children and young people, but this does not come without its challenges. Our services will support a child in the community with their family where it is appropriate and safe to do so and managing the reduction of demand is central to best outcomes for young people. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people are at the centre of all service delivery.

Gateshead has a population of around 201,600 people. Gateshead's population is projected to increase by 11,000 (5.5%) between 2014 and 2039 to 211,500.

The population is ageing: it is projected that by 2039 there will be an additional 14,400 people aged 65 or older, an increase of 38%. There will also be a slight decrease in the number of children and young people aged 0-15 of around 500 or 1.5%.

1 in 4 children in Gateshead live in poverty. Children who live in poverty are significantly more likely to experience poor mental as well as physical health.

Entering care is strongly associated with poverty and deprivation, and with emotional and mental health problems. Research suggests that around 45-60% of looked after young people have emotional and mental health problems, increasing to 72% for those in residential care.

At the end of reception, just under 6 in 10 Gateshead pupils achieve a Good Level of Development at Foundation Stage. This is similar to the North East and just below the England averages. Nationally there is a gap of around 10% achieving a good level of development between the richest and poorest areas (based on IMD 2015 deprivation).

Nationally, the number of Looked After Children has continued to rise; it has increased steadily over the last six years. There were 72,670 looked after children at 31 March 2017, an increase of 3% compared to 31 March 2016 and an increase of almost 5% compared to 2015. The rise this year reflects a rise of 260 in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, compared to a rise of 2,220 in all looked after children.

As at 31 March 2018, there were 392 children and young people classed as being Looked After. This figure includes 7 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. There were also 138 Care Leavers.

57% of Looked After Children are male, and 43% female and these proportions have varied little over recent years. We have seen an 18% reduction in the number of looked after children aged 0-2, whilst those aged 3-5 have increased by 38%. The 6-8 age group, the 12-14 age group and the 12-14 age group have remained the same with only a slight increase in those aged 9-11.

Whilst we have seen an increase in older children over the last few years, there has been an 8% reduction of those aged 15-17 over the last few months.

Below is a breakdown of current placements.

Current Placement Type	Num of Children	% of children
Placed with in house foster carers	317	80%
Children's Homes	24	6%
Placement with Agency Foster Carer	18	5%
Placed for adoption	15	4%
Placed with parents / person with parental resp.	13	3%
Residential School	7	2%
Independent living	3	1%
NHS / Health Trust / medical or nursing care estab	1	0%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 6. Role of Corporate Parent

Gateshead Council has always been very clear about their role as Corporate Parents for Looked After Children and Care Leavers and has always had high aspirations for a child in care or care leaver as any good parent would have for their own child, in accordance with the national care leavers charter (Appendix 1). It means providing them with the stability and support they need to make progress, and helping them to access new opportunities and experiences that inspire them to set ambitious goals for themselves. It means celebrating their successes, but also recognising that they will sometimes make mistakes and need help to get back on track. It also means supporting them to gain the skills and confidence to live independent lives, while letting them know that they have someone to call on for help if the going gets tough.

The Government has introduced a set of Corporate Parenting principles that require all departments within a local authority to recognise their role as corporate parents, and encourage them to look at the support and services they provide. The principles require corporate parents:

- 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.

## **7. How Corporate Parenting Works in Gateshead**

We have a well-established model of Corporate Parenting. It includes well-defined decision making processes in the Council with clear links to the Children in Care Council (One Voice). The Council regularly reviews how we deliver these functions and that there are tangible outcomes through active and regular feedback from the children and young people.

This strategy and its delivery plan will be monitored through the Corporate Parenting Sub Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The role and remit of this Sub Committee is to receive and consider monitoring reports on children in the Council's care, and to keep under review the Council's arrangements for ensuring that the Council fulfils its role as corporate parent.

The Corporate Parenting Partnership is an officer group chaired by the Service Director, Children and Families. This group oversees all aspects of our work in relation to our statutory and aspirational work with children in care and care leavers. There are several sub groups with responsibility for leading on particular areas of the delivery plan:

- Arts, Leisure & Activities; - subgroup lead by children's participation officer
- Education, training and employment; - subgroup lead by REALAC
- Health; - subgroup lead by designated nurse LAC
- One Voice Children In Care Council; sub group lead by Children's rights officer
- Placements and accommodation; subgroup lead by commissioning
- Care Leavers – themed Sub Group lead by LAC and leaving care team

The corporate parenting partnership meets every three months, with the sub groups meeting monthly. This ensures priorities are monitored and reviewed and progress is evidenced within the work plan.

All councillors have a responsibility to ensure that services for our children and young people continue to be at least good and to ensure there are sufficient resources and accommodation choices available. The councillors undertake training to ensure they have the knowledge to fulfil their safeguarding and corporate parenting responsibilities.



## **8. The Focus on Achieving our Priorities (see delivery plan, Appendix 2)**

### **Priority 1: Our Children and Young People are Respected and Involved**

We will ensure children and young people in our care are aware of their entitlements and know where to access information, how to seek advice and support and understand how to make a complaint.

We will ensure there are strong and active children in care council (One Voice) which is able to help influence and shape the delivery of services through direct access to councillors and officers of the Council.

#### **We will ensure:**

- Staff have the knowledge, skills and commitment to engage and listen to looked after children and care leavers in effective ways, appropriate to their age, ability and interest;
- We maximise the involvement of looked after children and care leavers in decisions made that affect them and provide feedback on any actions that are/are not taken as a result;
- Looked after children and care leavers are aware of their entitlements and know where to access information, how to seek advice and support, and understand how to make a complaint;
- The Council and its partners support One Voice (and our wider Children in Care Council activities) and deliver against the commitments made in 'Our Care Pledge' and the 'Care Leavers' Charter';
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers' engagement and participation is embedded within each priority of this Strategy;
- We celebrate the achievements of our looked after children and care leavers;
- The number of looked after children and care leavers who are involved in our Children in Care Council activities increases.

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

- Looked after children are visited at least every 6 weeks (unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanence plan) and are seen alone;
- Contact with care leavers is made at least every 8 weeks, unless otherwise agreed;
- Looked after children and care leavers are active participants in their review and meet their Independent Reviewing Officer regularly, and before each upcoming review;

- We provide a variety of ways for children and young people to express their views including independent advocacy and MOMO (Mind of My Own). Have a strong and active Children in Care Council (One Voice) which is able to help influence and shape the delivery of services through direct access to senior officers of Children's Services;
- An annual event is held to recognise the achievements of our looked after children and care leavers;
- Looked after children and care Leavers are regularly involved in the recruitment and interview process for Children's Social Care staff.

### **Our key areas for continuous improvement**

- We need to ensure One Voice has a prominent position within the governance arrangements for looked after children and care leavers – with One Voice included as a sub group of the Corporate Parenting Partnership;
- We need to develop our approach to Gateshead's Children in Care Council, building on the existing One Voice group and establishing a structured approach to engaging care leavers and younger looked after children;
- We need to ensure that the views of young people are at the heart of the LAC review process and are sought in a timely and facilitative way;
- We need to improve on evidencing how we have responded to a young person's views and the difference this has made, outlining reasons for our response;
- We have more to do to ensure looked after children and care leavers maximise their take-up of rights and entitlements through more accessible information available in a range of formats, including e-materials;
- Looked after children and care leavers engage in structured interviews at key points and responses demonstrate a high level of positive feedback on the services they've received. However, in order to make the most of this process, findings need to be systematically collected, collated and reported, to ensure this information presents an accurate picture and is useful in informing service development;
- We need to continue to develop our approach to participation and engagement, building capability across the service so that we can hear and respond to the voices and views of children, young people and their families;
- We need to ensure young people placed at a distance are regularly offered opportunities to engage with Children in Care Council activity, and are consulted on key issues relating to service development;
- We need to develop our approach to involving looked after children and care leavers in our recruitment processes, ensuring we create a sustainable and flexible approach that values young people's involvement.

## **Priority 2: Our Placements are Safe and Meet the Needs of Our Children and Young People**

We will ensure that we have a range of placements available for our children and young people and that there will be minimum placement moves for any looked after child.

### **We will ensure:**

- We implement our Sufficiency Strategy to help deliver improved options for looked after children and care leavers;
- We have a range of placements available for our children and young people;
- Visits to all placements are undertaken at a minimum of every 6 weeks;
- Looked after children and young people have a variety of ways to express any concerns they have and act promptly on these;
- Placements changes are kept to a minimum;
- Our Edge of Care offer will support children and families to live safely together through bespoke packages of intervention and planned respite care.

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

- Maximise permanency for children in care so as to ensure that where possible and appropriate, children in care are provided with stable placements via adoption, special guardianship or long term/ permanent fostering;
- There are very few unplanned placement changes;
- Independent reviewing officers (IROs) meet with children and young people alone prior to their looked after review;
- A clear escalation process is in place to ensure that IROs can bring concerns to the attention of managers in a timely manner;
- Action for Children is available for independent advocacy;
- Concerns and complaints are responded to promptly and the local authority designated officer (LADO) is involved if required;
- A range of accommodation opportunities available for our young people and care leavers as they move towards adulthood;
- Social workers or managers visit placements, including residential, before moving children and young people to ensure the quality of the service they offer;
- Follow procedures and take a multi-agency approach when children and young people go missing ensuring that young people are listened to and action is taken to keep them safe.

## **Our key areas for continuous improvement**

- We have to do more to secure sufficiency in our fostering options, particularly when placing siblings, adolescents and children with complex needs;
- Increase the number of the in-house foster carers who are local to the Gateshead area through an improvement in recruitment and retention processes;
- We have more to do in driving solutions for children and young people to enjoy choice of placement, including with their siblings where appropriate;
- Sufficiency is a significant challenge and we have recognised the need to develop our placement offer, ensuring fostering, residential, edge of care, leaving care and commissioned services drive the sufficiency agenda to improve choice and the range of placements. Our aim for all placements is to:
  - Support young people to successfully stay at home through our edge of care offer
  - Improve placement choice and placement stability
  - Increase the number of placements available including for sibling groups and adolescents.
  - Increase the provision of supported accommodation
  - Reduce the number of emergency placements
  - Continue to make decisions about permanence in a timely manner to avoid drift and delay

### **Priority 3: Positive Relationships and Identity**

Children and young people are supported to maintain, build and sustain positive relationships with others, including their birth families, siblings in care, carers and their peers. Children and young people know who they are, why they are in care and understand their heritage. They feel valued by others, and their individual needs arising from race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability are understood and met.

We want to encourage our looked after children and young people to feel part of their local community and support them to be involved in a range of activities, including volunteer schemes and leisure activities.

#### **We will ensure:**

- Children and young people are encouraged, and have opportunities, to develop strong peer relationships;

- Children and young people are enabled to sustain family relationships with parents, siblings and extended family in a safe and positive way;
- Children and young people have access to more specialist support if required to ensure needs are met;
- A coordinated strategy is developed with partners to increase looked after children and care leavers participation in extracurricular activities such as arts and cultural events and organised sports activities, to contribute to better enjoying and achieving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers;
- Children and young people know who they are, why they are looked after and understand their background and heritage;
- They feel valued by others, and their individual needs arising from race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability are understood and met.

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

- Where possible, placements are local and priority is given to children and young people to help them continue in the same school or education establishment where this is in their best interests;
- A permanency planning process ensures that early decisions are made and any drift is avoided;
- Extended families are always considered as part of the planning process and children are placed with extended family where it is safe to do so;
- Contact with family and siblings is always considered as part of planning including Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Plans;
- A variety of activities are provided through the year for looked after children and care leavers;
- MAX cards and Leisure cards are available to support leisure opportunities for looked after children and care leavers. This provides free access to gym and swimming in the borough's facilities as well as reduced costs to specific cultural venues;
- A genogram is undertaken for all young people to aid understanding of their family and identity;
- Life story work is considered with all looked after children where there is a decision of permanency;
- At the point of placement, a robust matching process is in place to consider issues of identity and belonging;
- Where there is not the same cultural identity for the child/young person within their placement, opportunities to ensure close cultural links are considered and sought accordingly.

## **Our key areas for continuous improvement**

- Increase numbers of local, available placements to maintain local links and retain relationships;
- Facilitate Family Group Conferences to retain, and where appropriate, strengthen family and friend relationships;
- Undertaking Family Group Conferences to help young people be part of a strength based approach and to help understand the dynamics of their birth family;
- Ensure children and young people placed at a distance have equivalent access to leisure and cultural activities as their peers;
- Ensuring as much information as possible is sought from parents, family and friends at the early stage of Children's Services involvement;
- Continue to invest in our life story work to reflect the story of the child and help them understand their experiences and background.

## **Priority 4: Our Children and Young People will be Supported to Improve their Physical and Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

Our children and young people will be encouraged and supported to choose healthy and active lifestyles. They will have access to specialist health services as required, including those associated with additional needs or disability.

### **We will ensure:**

- The health needs of children and young people are assessed and reviewed in a timely way;
- All children coming into care have a Child looked After Health Assessment with a medical practitioner. The health plan and health needs are reviewed annually for 5 - 18 year olds and 6 monthly for under 5 year olds by an appropriate health professional;
- Children and young people looked after have access to specialist health services as required including those related to additional needs or disability;
- Our children and young people are encouraged to choose healthy and active lifestyles;
- Children living outside the local authority area will not be disadvantaged in having their health needs met.
- Our children and young people have access to information on the risks of alcohol, and substance misuse and the risks of sexual exploitation. Those identified as at risk are offered support through specialist services;
- Health outcome targets are met for Looked After Children;

- Children and young people have their need for additional emotional support recognised and addressed, interventions will improve their knowledge and skills to achieve emotional stability, resilience and self-confidence;
- Looked After Children are consulted on evaluation and improvement plans for health services they are engaged with.

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

- There is evidence of health plans being reviewed and informing care plans of the health needs and support required that needs to be in place to ensure physical and emotional health needs are met, promoting a sense of security and belonging;
- Positive attachments are promoted with key adults in a child/young person's life. Important attachments are retained, and where possible strengthened, to improve sense of self and wellbeing;
- Young people have their current and enduring health needs assessed when 15 years old to inform their pathway plan.

### **Our key areas for continuous improvement**

- Health services work with public health to complete a Health Needs Assessment of Gateshead LAC population;
- Timeframes for health assessments will be performance managed to achieve the national standard;
- Actions on health plans are monitored within the care plan review process to ensure health outcomes are achieved;
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is utilised for KPI measurements and as a tool for assessing and evaluating changes in the emotional health needs of individual LAC. This assessment informs case reviews and care planning. Statistical information is used to assist in service development;
- Local CAMHS services have a pathway for looked after children to ensure they have their emotional health needs assessed and met, outcomes are measured and reported;
- Health information is available for every child/young person to ensure continuous engagement with the health services they require, particularly in times when there is a change of placement or changing circumstances;
- Ensure that we are building the skills and experience within our professional networks to support children/young people's emotional stability and wellbeing, identifying the times and challenges when more support is needed i.e. anniversaries;

- Identify additional support which may help a child/young person's emotional wellbeing and promote resilience, and give opportunities to facilitate this, e.g. sport, hobby, musical instrument, guides, cadets etc;
- Promote understanding of the link between positive physical health and emotional wellbeing with stability in school, placement and family;
- Report on the views of young people relating to their health needs and views of the services they receive.

### **Priority 5: Our Children and Young People are Encouraged to Reach their Educational, Employment and Training Potential**

- We will support all Looked after children to attend an appropriate education resource that helps them achieve their potential;
- We will support and encourage all care leavers to attend education, employment or training;
- We will have high aspirations for all of our looked after children and care leavers.

#### **We will ensure:**

- Children and young people are supported to attend school;
- All children have an effective, high quality personal education plan;
- Children's attainment and progress from Reception to 16 years is monitored and responded to according to individual need. From 16 to 18 years identify those students who are at risk of disengaging as seen in PEP information;
- School moves happen only in exceptional circumstances;
- Partners are aware and receive training on the unique needs of individual and groups of looked after children;
- We have a multi-agency Education, Employment and Training panel which bring together expertise to support young people's aspirations;
- Young people leaving care are encouraged and supported to enter further education, employment and training.

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

- 100% of our looked after children and young people have a personal education plan;
- Additional needs are identified and where required a Special Educational Needs (SEN) intervention initiated;
- Placement changes are kept to a minimum;
- The Head teacher of the Virtual School has effective monitoring to evaluate attainment and progress. Actions, including interventions are identified to



address emerging themes. At post 16 students at risk of disengaging are identified and actions identified to support re-engagement;

- Looked after children access their statutory entitlement to full time education and attendance is in the good or better range;
- School moves are kept to a minimum and where necessary transitions are carefully planned and the most appropriate education provision is secured;
- Training including statutory support to Designated Teachers is delivered to a range of partners including foster carers and social workers on what works to support children's education;
- Looked after children and care leavers have access to work experience opportunities and prioritised for careers advice, training, apprenticeships and career opportunities;
- The EET Panel monitors the progress and creates opportunities for young people entering further education, employment and training.

### **Our key areas for continuous improvement**

- Promoting a good understanding by social workers on pupil progress through school reports and educational achievements and then rewarding looked after children and young people accordingly;
- Embed Staying Put Policy to avoid disruption for care leavers moving into further and higher education;
- Improve the offer to looked after children and care leavers aged 16 – 25;
- Ensure looked after children and care leavers are aware of their entitlements to financial support to promote their education, training and employment aspirations;
- Supporting the development of appropriate work experience and apprenticeships and enable young people to access them.

### **Priority 6: Our Young People Moving into Adulthood Will Be Supported to Achieve Their Full Potential in Life**

We know that transition into adulthood is not always easy and for care leavers the transition can be more complex. We know how important it is that our young people are supported into adulthood in a seamless manner and provided with progressive and ongoing interventions. We want our care leavers to be confident and be able to access support and ensure that young people are engaged in education, employment and training and have the opportunity to live successful adult lives.

### **We will ensure:**

- Children and young people enter adulthood in a planned way, with a home to live in, the skills to look after themselves and the ability to earn a living or continue in education or training;
- Ensuring entitlements are made clear to all care leavers;
- Utilise the Transitions team/panel to support the planning for young people from the age of 16, who may be eligible for support from Adult Services.

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

- Allocating a personal advisor to all eligible young people at the age of 16 who will work alongside the allocated social worker until the young person is 18. The personal advisor remains involved until the young person reaches the age of at least 21 and continues to offer support up to the age of 25;
- Allocate a worker from the Transitions Team at the age of 16 for young people who may have eligible needs at 18 under the Care Act 2014
- Clear expectations are in place to help young people prepare for adulthood and have the life skills to achieve this;
- Opportunities are given for young people to build confidence over a prolonged period for more independence and self-responsibility;
- A range of accommodation options are considered to facilitate plans for young people leaving care;
- Ensure all necessary information has been obtained for the young people in a timely way that is needed when moving towards adulthood, e.g. birth certificate, National Insurance number, bank account, etc;
- Increasing the number of young people in Staying Put arrangements;
- Young people receive a health passport when they leave care. This is a comprehensive summary of their health history and identifies support and services for adulthood; it includes current registration i.e. with GP and additional health service details. Care leavers also continue to have access to the Platform substance misuse service, with a planned transition to adult substance misuse services at an appropriate point if required.

### **Our key areas for continuous improvement**

- Preparation for independence at an earlier stage for this to be built upon well before plans for moving are finalised;
- Accessibility and take up of health care and ensure young people are aware of the importance of dental appointments, staying healthy, etc;
- Improve range and quality of placement provision for young people leaving care aged 18 and over including options of supported and semi-supported accommodation;

- Further develop the multi-agency care leavers accommodation panel to monitor the progress of care leavers accommodation plans, and identify themes and gaps with the intention of improving service delivery and strengthening multi agency working;
- Improve the quality of our pathway planning through having a quality assurance auditing process with a view to evidencing an increase in the contribution from our young people into their planning;
- Increase the numbers of care leavers aged 21 and over who return the service to access support.

### **Priority 7: Ensuring all partners support work as ambitious Corporate Parents**

Continue to improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers via the further implementation of a corporate parenting and partnership approach to the development and delivery of services.

#### **We will ensure:**

- At the core of everything we do is our understanding of our responsibility as a Corporate Parent;
- All partners focus service delivery on corporate parenting priorities;
- Elected members and senior officers take a lead role in raising awareness of the needs of children in care and care leavers with all council services and partner agencies;
- Promotion of the role of elected members as corporate parents and appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in this area.

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

- The Corporate Parenting Sub Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets on a quarterly basis to monitor reports on children in the Council's care, and review the arrangements for ensuring the Council is fulfilling its role as corporate parent;
- Corporate Parenting training continues to be provided to elected members;
- Listening to the voice of children and young people in our care, and those leaving care, either directly or indirectly, through national and local inspection reports, service user surveys, independent reviewing officer's reports, reports from advocates, and other professionals, and use what we learn to improve services and outcomes.

## **Our key areas of continuous improvement**

- An increase in the sense of corporate responsibility across all the statutory agencies in the support for our looked after children and care leavers, improving the impact of multi-agency support;
- Ensure good mechanisms are in place for challenge and counter challenge, between social workers, carers, young people, to realise the ambition we have for looked after children in Gateshead;
- Continue to develop the multi-agency approach to corporate parenting to become more effective in the delivery of the Corporate Parenting plan;
- One Voice (Children in Care Council) are active participants in the partnership and able to contribute and offer challenge;
- Raise awareness with all new staff employed by Gateshead Council with regard to their corporate parenting responsibilities.

## **9. Measuring Success**

How we will know our strategy is achieving the desired outcomes for Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers?

To find out how well our strategy is working we will:

- Listen and act on the views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers;
- Listen and act on the views of the parents and carers of Looked After Children and Care Leavers;
- Monitor and challenge our own progress through the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board and Corporate Parenting Sub Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Monitor the trends in our Looked After Children and Care Leaver population in order to ensure we have the right support and accommodation for our young people
- Monitor the outcomes of our Care Leavers to the age of 25 to ensure they are achieving positive outcomes.

Success will directly be measured against the following outcomes:

- Young people make successful transitions to adult life and achieve their aspirations through having the care, support and help they need from Gateshead Council acting as corporate parents;
- Care Leavers receive the help they need through having well developed Pathway Plans in place.
- Employment

We believe that if we get this right we will have achieved success and this is how it will look:

- Looked after Children and Care Leavers needs are championed across Gateshead;
- Recognition that we work with our Looked after Children and Care Leavers effectively;
- A robust offer in place that is understood by all and interpreted in the same way;
- Our Looked after Children and Care Leavers achieve good outcomes that exceed the national average;
- Our Looked after Children and Care Leavers have higher aspirations and are on their way to achieving their aspirations;
- Our Looked after Children and Care Leavers tell us that they have been supported to reach their aspirations whether this is in education, employment or training;
- Numbers of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training are above the national average and rising;
- Young people are telling us that they are recognising their suggestions translating into service development and are happy with what they see;
- Increased Education, Training and Employment opportunities across Gateshead for Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

Our local key performance indicators will be measured through data:

- The number of Care Leavers remaining engaged in education, taking up training opportunities and undertaking activities aimed at improving employability;
- Improved support for Care Leavers while they are at a further education college or university;
- An ongoing reduction in the number of Care Leavers who are NEET, through improved support by mainstream and specialist services;
- Access to mainstream and specialist health services, which meet their physical, mental and sexual health needs;
- Programmes in place that reduce homelessness and address the specific needs of Care Leavers;
- Programmes in place that reduce crime and the risk of young people being exploited specifically addressing the needs of Care Leavers;

And through surveys of Care Leavers through our Children in Care Council (One Voice)

- Improved support for Care Leavers while they are at a further education college or university;
- Improved financial support and guidance on offer so that Care Leavers are able to manage their income and reduce the risks of falling into debt;
- Care Leavers reporting that they feel safe and that they live in suitable accommodation that meets their individual needs;
- Care Leavers receiving high quality ongoing support from their local authorities so that they do not feel lonely and isolated;
- Care Leavers leaving care at a time when they are ready;

- Care Leavers are knowledgeable about their entitlements through our website, Care Leavers Charter and our comprehensive guides to leaving care;
- Improvements in the quality of assessments, plans and reviews.

## Our Care Pledge

### 1. Looking After You

- You will get your own social worker who is properly qualified to work with you
- We will make sure your Social Worker doesn't change unless there is a good reason for it, unless you want to change who your Social Worker is
- Your social worker will stay in touch regularly to check you are OK
- You will have a care plan which is all about you and your needs, and which is looked at regularly

### 2. Finding the Right Place for you

- If it is part of your care plan for you to go back home we will make sure this happen as quickly and as safely as possible. We will check to make sure you are safe after you go home
- If you can't go home we will find the right place for you and make sure you live with people who care about you
- We will try to give you a choice about where you live and who you live with
- If we can we will find someone else in your family who can care for you.
- If we can, we will keep you with your brothers and sisters.
- We will help you keep in touch with your birth family wherever possible. If it's not possible we'll tell you why.

### 3. Involving you

- We will take your feelings into account in decisions that affect you
- We will make sure you are fully involved in your reviews
- We will help you to have your say and listen to your views
- If you want to make a complaint we will provide you with access to an advocate to help you get your views across

### 4. Treating you right

- We won't talk about you to other people where its none of their business – unless we need to, to keep you or others safe
- We will always listen to you and treat you with respect
- We will explain what is going on in words you understand

### 5. Getting a good education

- We will make sure you get a place at a good nursery or school
- We will make sure that you don't have to change schools wherever possible, especially in years 10 and 11
- There will be a designated teacher at your school to make sure you're doing OK – but they won't treat you differently to others
- We will let you know who your designated teacher is so you know where to go if you need help in school
- We will make sure you don't miss any school and help you get back on track with extra support if you fall behind

## **6. Keeping you healthy and happy**

- We'll make sure you get regular health-checks and if you need any treatment or support that you get it quickly
- We will work together with your school, carers and the health team to make sure all your health needs are met
- We'll make sure you have opportunities to do fun things, including free access to our leisure facilities, and give you opportunities to get to know other Looked After Children
- We'll help you find out about activities that are on, so that you can get involved.
- We will make sure you can keep going to activities you are involved in if you move placement

## **7. Helping you get on in life**

- We will give you the help you need when it's the right time for you to move on from care to find a place to live and learn to live on your own
- If you can't live on your own we'll make sure that choices are there for you after you are 18
- We will make sure you have enough money and help you to manage it well
- We will help you if you want to do an apprenticeship, go to college or university
- We'll help you get ready for the world of work, find a job or training placement and give you the chance to get work experience

Complementing the Pledge, the Council and its partners support the principles, values and commitments as detailed in the Charter for Care Leavers produced by the Department for Education and the Care Leavers Foundation.

### **The Care Leavers Charter**

The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good Corporate Parents. Gateshead Council have adopted the charter and are committed to improving outcomes for Care Leavers as reflected in the charter.

### **We Promise:**

To respect and honour your identity

- We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.



#### To believe in you

- We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

#### To listen to you

- We will take time to listen to you, respect, and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you, and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why. We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it.

#### To inform you

- We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

#### To support you

- We will provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and we will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support.

#### To find you a home

- We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to

ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before. We will work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home.

To be a lifelong champion

- We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered when dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.

## Appendix 2: Children in Care and Care Leavers Delivery Plan 2018-19

Objective 1: Our Children and young people are respected and involved				
Strategy	What we will do	How we will achieve this	What else we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
<p>Ensure Looked After Children and care leavers are aware of their entitlements and know where to access information, how to seek advice and support and understand how to make a complaint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure staff have the knowledge, skills and commitment to engage and listen to looked after children and care leavers in effective ways appropriate to their age, ability and interests</li> <li>• Ensure we maximise the involvement of looked after children and care leavers in decisions made that affect them and provide feedback on any actions that are/are not taken as a result</li> <li>• Ensure We celebrate the achievements of all of our looked after children and care leavers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked after children are visited at least every 6 weeks (unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanence plan) and seen alone</li> <li>• Contact with care leavers is made at least every 8 weeks unless otherwise agreed</li> <li>• Looked after children and care leavers are active participants in their reviews and meet their Independent Reviewing Officer regularly and before each upcoming review</li> <li>• Providing a variety of ways for children and young people to express their views including independent advocacy and MOMO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked after children and care leavers engage in structured interviews at key points to evidence how they feel about the services they receive. Findings need to be systematically collected, collated and reported back to the Corporate Parenting Partnership to inform service development</li> <li>• We need to do more to ensure looked after children and care leavers maximise their take up of rights and entitlements through more accessible information available in a range of formats, including e-materials</li> <li>• Improve on evidencing how we have responded to a young person's views and the difference this has made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children say they feel safe</li> <li>• Care Leavers say they feel supported in their own accommodation</li> <li>• There will be an increase in the of young people who use MOMO</li> <li>• All statutory visits are completed in timescale</li> </ul>

<p>Ensure that young people who lack capacity or have communication barriers are supported as far as practicable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake Mental Capacity Assessments on decision specific issues</li> <li>• Utilise necessary communication tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Mental Capacity assessments are completed at the age of 16 where there is doubt about capacity and if necessary make an application to the Court Of Protection should they lack capacity to consent to their accommodation and care</li> <li>• Ensure key staff are trained to use PECS, Makaton and any other communication tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to ensure that the views of the young people are at the heart of the LAC review process and sought in a timely and facilitative way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will be confident that we have made every effort to ensure supported decision making and young people are involved as much as possible in decisions and make best interest decisions around their care</li> <li>• Applications will have been made to the Court of Protection to authorize any</li> </ul>
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				Deprivation of Liberty
Have a strong and active children in care council (one voice) which is able to help influence and shape the delivery of services through direct access to Senior Officers of Children's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the Council and its partners support One Voice and our wider children in care council activities and deliver against the commitments made in our care pledge and the care leavers charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings of One Voice</li> <li>Attendance at One Voice by Senior officers</li> <li>Attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Committee by One Voice Members</li> <li>Looked after children and care leavers are regularly involved in the recruitment and interview process for children's social care staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the membership of One Voice by ensuring all Looked after young people and carers are aware of the purpose and function of the group</li> <li>Continue to develop our approach to participation and engagement, raising awareness and building capacity across services so that we can hear and respond to the voices and views of children, young people and their</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More young people and care leavers will attend One voice on a regular basis</li> <li>Feedback from One Voice via regular meetings with Leadership Team.</li> <li>Twice yearly visits to Corporate Parenting OSC</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 2: Our placements are safe and meet the needs of our Children and Young People</b>				
Strategy	What we will do	How will we achieve this	What else do we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
We will ensure that we have a range of placements available for our children and young people and that there will be minimum placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a sufficiency strategy to help deliver improved options for looked after children and care leavers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and retention of foster carers</li> <li>Maximise permanency for children in care so as to ensure that where</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficiency is a significant challenge for us and we have recognized the need to develop our placement offer, ensuring fostering,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be better placement choice for children and young people</li> </ul>

<p>moves for any looked after child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement changes are kept to a minimum</li> <li>• Ensure children's plans are robust, with a focus on permanence</li> <li>• Ensure looked after children and care leavers have a variety of ways to express any concerns they have about their placement and that these are acted on promptly</li> </ul>	<p>possible and appropriate, children in care are provided with stable placements via adoption or long term/permanent fostering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drift is avoided by having a robust permanency planning process</li> <li>• Work with commissioning to source any external placement requests</li> <li>• Social workers or managers visit placements, including residential before moving children to ensure the quality of the service they offer</li> <li>• Visit placements every 6 weeks (unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanence plan)</li> <li>• A clear escalation process is in place to ensure the IRO's can bring concerns about a placement to the attention of a manager in a timely manner</li> </ul>	<p>residential, edge of care, leaving care and commissioned services drive the sufficiency agenda to improve the choice and range of placements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of staying Put arrangements will increase</li> <li>• New supported accommodation model will be implemented in July and reviewed every 6 months</li> <li>• Monthly multi disciplinary supported accommodation panel will monitor placements and outcomes of young people</li> <li>• Placement moves and length of time in placement will be reported monthly to the management team and annually to the Dfe</li> <li>• Monitor and report on the permanence plans for children</li> </ul>
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<p>For those who are eligible for Adult care and support under the Care Act 2014 their foster placement will become a Shared Lives placement, in line with best practice guidance (if this is the wish of the young person)</p>	<p>Determine eligibility around the age of 17 to ensure young people and carers are clear about the pathway for support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent advocacy is available to all young people</li> <li>• Concerns and complaints are responded to promptly</li> <li>• Performance reports will demonstrate placement stability, permanence planning and highlight areas for improvement</li> <li>• Referring LAC young people with disabilities to the Transitions Team at the age of 16 to undertake assessment process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that every young person who is eligible for adult care and support completes a My Home Form to inform future housing needs to the Accommodation and Support Group (Adult social care)</li> </ul>	<p>and young people to ensure there is no drift and delay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
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<b>Objective 3: Positive Relationships and Identify</b>				
Strategy	What we will do	How will we achieve this	What else do we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
<p>Children and young people are supported to maintain, build and sustain positive relationships with others including their birth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people (where appropriate) will be enabled to sustain family relationships with parents, siblings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where possible placements are local and friendships are encouraged</li> <li>• Extended family are always considered as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase numbers of local, available placements in order for young people to maintain links and retain relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All age appropriate LAC are involved in their reviews and feel able to contribute if they want to</li> </ul>

<p>families, siblings, carers and their peers.</p> <p>Children and young people know who they are, why they are in care and understand their heritage. They feel valued by others and their individual needs are understood and met.</p>	<p>and extended family in a safe and positive way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children will understand why they are in care and life story work will be undertaken to support them and help them make sense of their need to be looked after</li> <li>• We will value all young people and their individual needs arising from race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability will be understood</li> <li>• Children and care leavers will have opportunities to participate in a range of activities, including arts and cultural events, sporting activities and drop in events to support with independence</li> <li>• Children and young people will have access to specialist support if required to ensure needs are met</li> <li>• Children and young people will be encouraged and have</li> </ul>	<p>part of the planning process and children are placed with extended family when it is safe to do so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wherever possible children and young people will remain in the same school or education provision</li> <li>• A permanency planning process ensures that early decisions are made and any drift is avoided</li> <li>• At the point of placement, a matching process is in place to try and minimise placement moves. Where there is not the same cultural match, support is given to ensure close cultural links are maintained</li> <li>• A variety of activities are provided throughout the year for looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>• MAX and leisure cards are provided to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure young people placed at a distance have equivalent access to leisure and cultural activities as their peers</li> <li>• Continue to invest in life story work to reflect the story of the child and help them understand their experiences and background</li> <li>• Obtain as much information as possible from parents, birth family and friends at the earliest stage of Children's services involvement</li> <li>• Improve the offer from our partners in leisure, arts and culture to enable care leavers to access facilities in the same way as looked after children can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All LAC and Care Leavers feel listened to</li> </ul>
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	opportunities to develop strong peer relationships	young people and foster carers to support visits to a range of cultural venues and leisure facilities		
<b>Objective 4: Our Children and Young People will be supported to improve their physical, emotional health and wellbeing</b>				
Strategy	What we will do	How will we achieve this	What else do we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
<p>Our children and young people will be encouraged and supported to choose healthy and active lifestyles. They will have access to health services/interventions as identified within their health plan including those associated with additional needs or disability</p> <p>LAC, birth parents, foster parents and birth siblings have access to free leisure facilities</p> <p>Young people who have Learning Disabilities will be referred to the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The health needs of children and young people will be assessed and reviewed in a timely way</li> <li>• Children and young people looked after will have access to health services/interventions as identified within their health plan those related to additional needs or disability.</li> <li>• Children and young people will be supported in all areas to choose healthy and active lifestyles.</li> <li>• Children and young people will have access to information on the risks of alcohol, substance misuse,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All young people coming into care will have a health assessment with a medical practitioner within 20 days. 100% of health plans and health needs, will be reviewed 6 monthly for children under 5 and annually for children age 5 – 18</li> <li>• Children and young people in need of additional emotional support will have their needs assessed and will be directed to the appropriate service to achieve emotional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health services (CCG &amp; specialist commissioned health services) to work with public health to complete a Health Needs Assessment of the Gateshead LAC population.</li> <li>• Improve the health offer to care leavers</li> <li>• Health information is available for every child and young person to ensure continuous engagement with the health services they require, particularly in times when there is a change in placement or changing circumstances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health needs assessment completed by April 2019 and any gaps in service provision and priorities identified</li> <li>• Timely access to mainstream and health services which meet their needs.</li> <li>• Timeframes for health assessments will be performance managed to achieve the national standard.</li> <li>• Actions on health plans are monitored within the care plan review process to ensure health outcomes are achieved.</li> </ul>

<p>Community Learning Disability Adult health team for assessment, with their consent, via the Health/Transitions panel</p>	<p>smoking, sexual health and sexual exploitation. Those identified at risk will be offered support through specialist services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health outcome targets will be met for Looked After Children</li> <li>• Looked After Children are consulted on evaluation and improvement plans for health services they are engaged with.</li> </ul>	<p>stability, resilience and self confidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify additional support/interventions which help a child/young person's emotional wellbeing and promote resilience and give opportunities to facilitate this e.g. emotional health and wellbeing apps sport, hobby, musical instrument, guides, cadets etc</li> <li>• Promote understanding of the link between positive physical health and emotional wellbeing with stability in school, placement and family.</li> <li>• Ensure that we are building the skills and experiences within our own professional networks to support children/young people's emotional stability and identify the times and challenges when more support is needed i.e. anniversaries.</li> <li>• Responsive access to a range of counselling and therapies, if necessary, according to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on the views of young people relating to how their health needs are being met and their view of the services and the interventions they receive.</li> <li>• Score card to be developed to capture the key elements relating to the health of Looked After Children to allow identification of areas requiring strengthening and to track improvements.</li> </ul>
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			<p>needs to ensure proactive support as opposed to 'reactive treatment'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local CAMHS services have a pathway for looked after children to ensure they have their emotional health needs assessed and met with outcomes measured and reported.</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective 5: Our children and young people are encouraged to reach their educational, employment and training potential</b>				
Strategy	What we will do	How we will achieve this	What else we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
<p>We will support all Looked after children to attend an appropriate education resource that helps them achieve their potential</p> <p>We will support and encourage all care leavers to attend education, employment or training</p> <p>We will have high aspirations for all of our looked after children and care leavers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all children have an effective, high quality personal education plan (PEP)</li> <li>Monitor children's attainment and progress and respond according to individual or group need.</li> <li>REALAC support Year 9 and Year 11 transitions to ensure pupils have the ambition to access college places.</li> <li>Post 16-18 REALAC prioritise student reviews in college to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Virtual Head has effective monitoring and tracking systems to evaluate progress and achievement and plans interventions to address emerging themes</li> <li>Children and young people's academic progress and attainment is analysed and monitored via their looked after reviews and PEP meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the focus on improving the offer to looked after children and care leavers aged 16-25</li> <li>Support the development of work experience and shadowing opportunities within the council</li> <li>Offer work experience placements specific to the young person's interests through Pathways to Work (is this right) REALAC and Voiceworks Project for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be an increase in the number of Apprenticeships offered to LAC and Care Leavers</li> <li>There will be a reduction in the number of NEET</li> <li>Pathway plans will demonstrate the ambitions we have for our care leavers</li> </ul>

	<p>ensure they are on track on their courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness and train partners on the unique needs of looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>• Ensure the multi agency education, employment and training panel (EET) brings together expertise and resources to support looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>• Keep school moves to a minimum and where moves are necessary they are carefully planned and the most appropriate education provision is secured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training including statutory support to designated teachers is delivered to a range of partners including foster carers and social workers on what works to support children's education</li> <li>• Looked after children and care leavers will have access to work experience opportunities and shadowing days both within the council and with partner agencies</li> <li>• Looked after children will be prioritised for careers advice, training and apprenticeships and career opportunities</li> <li>• The EET panel will monitor the progress and create opportunities for young people entering further education,</li> </ul>	<p>those with additional needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with all directorates within the council to improve the apprenticeship offer for looked after young people and care leavers</li> <li>• Ensure 100% of our looked after young people have a high quality PEP</li> <li>• Ensure looked after children and care leavers are aware of their entitlements to financial support to promote their education, training and employment aspirations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education, Employment and Training panel will monitor progress of young people</li> <li>• All Lac and care leavers will be able to articulate what financial support they will receive in relation to further and higher education</li> </ul>
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<p>Support LAC young people with additional needs to acquire paid employment and secure enterprise and volunteering opportunities</p>	<p>Identify those young people who are capable and wish to achieve paid employment and ensure they develop their employability skills</p>	<p>employment and training</p> <p>Young people will be given the opportunity to participate in social enterprises, work placements and conduct vocational profiling</p> <p>Gateshead Access to Employment Service (GATES) provides a supported employment programme to people with learning, physical disabilities, mental health or autism who have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014</p>		<p>ASCOF 1E indicator in Adult social care achieves employment target of 12% of service users in paid employment</p> <p>A strengthened pathway from education to work, with reduced reliance on social care services for young people with disabilities</p>
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**Objective 6: Our young people moving into adulthood will be supported to achieve their full potential in life**

Strategy	What we will do	How we will achieve this	What else do we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
<p>Our young people are supported into adulthood in a seamless manner and provided with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people enter adulthood in a planned way, with a home to live in, the skills to look after themselves and the ability to earn a living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A personal advisor will be allocated to eligible young people at the age of 16 who will work with the allocated social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin preparation for independence at an earlier stage and for this to be built upon well before plans for moving are finalised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care leavers will all be provided with information booklet on support and entitlements prior to leaving care</li> </ul>

<p>progressive and ongoing interventions</p> <p>We want our care leavers to be confident and be able to access support and ensure that young people are engaged in education, employment and training and have the opportunity to live successful adult lives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure entitlements are made clear to care leavers</li> </ul>	<p>worker until the young person is 18. The personal advisor will remain involved until the young person reaches the age of 21 and continue to offer support until the age of 25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pathway plan will give clear expectations and identify people responsible to help young people prepare for adulthood and have the life skills to achieve a smooth transition into independence</li> <li>• Ensure all necessary information has been obtained for young people in a timely way e.g. birth certificate, NI number, bank account and health passport</li> <li>• Increase the accommodation offer and options for young people leaving care</li> <li>• Young people receive a health passport when they leave care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the quality of our pathway planning through having a quality assurance auditing process</li> <li>• Increase the contribution from our young people into their planning</li> <li>• Develop the multi-agency care leavers panel to monitor the progress of care leavers accommodation plans and identify any themes and gaps with the intention of improving service delivery and strengthening multi agency working</li> <li>• Improve the range and quality of placement provision for young people leaving care, including options for supported and semi-supported accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care leavers will participate in developing their pathway plans and pathway plan reviews</li> <li>• Supported accommodation model will be implemented and reviewed to ensure adequate and appropriate accommodation and support is available for all care leavers</li> </ul>
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<p>Provide opportunities for a seamless transition for young children who have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014 to transfer to adult services and either remain with foster carers under a Shared Lives arrangement or have a clear pathway to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise the Transitions team to support the planning for young people from the age of 16, who may be eligible for support from adult services</li> <li>• Transitions team to determine eligibility by the age of 17 to establish lead roles and responsibility</li> <li>• Transitions team assessment to</li> </ul>	<p>This is a comprehensive summary of their health history and identifies support and services for adulthood; it includes current registration i.e. with GP and additional health service details. Care leavers also continue to have access to the Platform substance misuse service with a planned transition to adult substance misuse services at an appropriate point if required.</p> <p>Complete an Assessment under the Care Act 2014 Share findings and work together with LAC and carers to agree a post 18 pathway</p>		
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alternative accommodation	determine accommodation pathway and ensure smooth transition from children to adult services			
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**Objective 7: Improve the role of the Corporate Parent**

Strategy	What we will do	How will we achieve this	What else do we need to do	How will we measure progress and achievement
Continue to improve outcomes for Looked After Children and care leavers via the further implementation of a corporate parenting and partnership approach to the development and delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that at the core of everything we do is our understanding of our responsibility as a Corporate Parent</li> <li>• Elected members and council officers will take a lead role in raising awareness of the needs of children in care and care leavers with all council departments and partner agencies</li> <li>• Promote the role of elected members as corporate parents and ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place by the Council to enable all members to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in this area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By attendance at the Quarterly meetings of the Overview and scrutiny committee</li> <li>• Training to be provided for elected members</li> <li>• Listen to what our young people are saying and use what we learn to improve services and outcomes</li> <li>• Regular updates to Senior officers within the council</li> <li>• Ensure senior officers act on their pledges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There needs to be an increase in the sense of corporate responsibility across all statutory agencies in the support for our looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>• Continue to develop the multi-agency approach to corporate parenting to become more effective in the delivery of the Corporate parenting plan</li> <li>• Raise awareness of all new staff employed by Gateshead with regard to their corporate parenting responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation from corporate parenting training events.</li> <li>• Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>• Feedback from children in care and care leavers</li> </ul>



