

Herefordshire Council

# Corporate Parenting Strategy

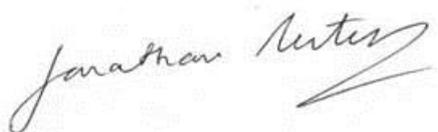
2017-20

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## Foreword

Every child deserves the best start in life. They should grow up to be happy, healthy and thrive in an environment that will enable them to reach their full potential. If a child needs to be taken into our care this should not mean that they do not have the same opportunities as anyone else. This strategy is our way of ensuring that looked after children have happy and fulfilling lives. Our society cannot always foresee the challenges that a child may face. However, how a society meets those challenges is a key measure of how well it is functioning. One of the most important roles a Council can play is to provide the best of outcomes for children who are disadvantaged. There can be no greater reward than to achieve the very best for children who need our help. This strategy sets out how we as Corporate Parents will provide every opportunity for our looked after children and care leavers. We, as elected members, will strive to put their wellbeing at the centre of all we do and together we can achieve great things for those who need our full support.



Councillor Jonathan Lester  
Cabinet member for Young People and  
Children's Well-being



Councillor Jenny Hyde  
Chair of Corporate Parenting panel

## Introduction

This strategy sets out how we as Herefordshire Council and its partners will carry out our corporate parenting responsibilities for looked after children and young people and care leavers.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that all officers, partners and elected members understand our responsibilities as corporate parents and are working together to improve outcomes for this group of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable and for whom we all have a special responsibility.

## What is Corporate Parenting?

Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the council. A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act for a looked after child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.

Every good parent wants the best for their child - to see their child flourish, to enjoy good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, to enjoy good relationships with their peers, to make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests, and to grow towards adulthood equipped to lead independent lives and to make their way as happy, healthy, successful and financially secure adults.

That's why Herefordshire Council has the same goals for the children it looks after as those of every good parent and takes seriously the moral and legal responsibility for enabling the children in its care to experience happy and fulfilled lives. This does not mean that everyone with the responsibility of being a corporate parent should meet and get to know every looked after child on an individual basis. However, being a good corporate parent means we should:

- accept responsibility for children in the council's care
- make their needs a priority
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of looked after children.

Key responsibilities of all Officers are:

- To promote the life chances of looked after children and care leavers in their area of responsibility.
- To consider the impact of decision making on looked after children and care leavers.

## How the strategy will be delivered, monitored and evaluated

This strategy includes an action plan to support implementation of its aims and objectives with measurable outcomes. Effectiveness of the strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Panel will present an annual report to the Council on progress.

The Children in Care Council will monitor progress and hold us to account.

## The National Picture

There were 70,440 looked after children on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2015 and an increase of 5% compared to 2012. The rise during 2015/16 reflects a rise of 1,470 in unaccompanied asylum seeking children, compared to a rise of 970 in all looked after children. In 2012, 59 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after; in 2016 the rate was 60 children per 10,000 of the population.

In 2016 the number of children in foster care continued to rise; of the 70,440 looked after children at 31 March 2016, 74% were cared for in foster placements – the same proportion as the previous year.

In 2016 the number of looked after unaccompanied asylum seeking children increased by 54% compared to 2015. At 31 March 2016, unaccompanied asylum seeking children represented 6% of the looked after children population.

The outcomes for children and young people in care are poor in comparison with the general population and other vulnerable groups. However, despite the complex needs these children and young people have, many can and do make a great success of their lives, with the right support and care.

## The Local Picture

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 there were 287 looked after children in Herefordshire which equates to a rate of 80 children per 10,000 significantly higher than the national average, statistical neighbours and even higher than would be expected when taking into account relatively low deprivation levels within the County.

A needs analysis (*insert hyperlink*) has been completed using data available locally, regionally and nationally to help us understand relative strengths and areas for improvement. This needs analysis has been used to inform the priorities for this Strategy.

## Priority 1 – All elected members and senior leaders across all key partners understand and act on their responsibilities as corporate parents

### What we are doing well

- A committed group of cross-party Councillors are members of the Corporate Parenting panel and act as effective corporate parents in their other roles
- All Councillors are provided with a copy of “If this were my child... A councillor’s guide to being a good corporate parent”
- Council demonstrate interest and support when reports relevant to Corporate Parenting are presented to them
- Performance information is shared quarterly with cross-party Councillors and at Corporate Parenting panel

### Current opportunities

- Councillors and many Officers live within Herefordshire and have the opportunity to influence their wider networks to promote opportunities for looked after children and care leavers
- A Children’s scrutiny committee has been established during 2017/18 to focus scrutiny on the well-being of children specifically
- The Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group are jointly responsible for contracting and commissioning a wide range of services that could be required to provide opportunities to improve the life chances of looked after children and care leavers including employment and training opportunities
- The Council has a volunteering scheme that allows employees to have up to 2 days paid leave to do charitable work which could be extended to offer support for looked after children and care leavers

### Current challenges

- Engaging Councillors, Officers and partner agencies to ensure that corporate parenting responsibilities are owned “corporately” rather than being seen as a Children’s Wellbeing Directorate responsibility.

### What we will improve

- Regular sharing of information to elected members and officers to enable them to understand the quality of care being provided for looked after children and care leavers and therefore to effectively scrutinise and challenge
- Awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst Councillors, Officers and partner agencies

- Explicit consideration of the impact of decision making across the Council on looked after children and care leavers and using every opportunity to promote their life chances

## Priority 2 – Families are supported to care for their own children

### What we are doing well

- The threshold for support and intervention by Children’s Social care is being more effectively managed resulting in a significant reduction in children on a Child Protection plan that has been sustained
- Threshold of Care panel and Legal Gateway panel ensure that decisions for children to become looked after and/or to initiate care proceedings have appropriate oversight and scrutiny by Heads of Service
- The number of children admitted to care has started to reduce during 2016/17
- Where children are looked after they are placed with family and friends as a first option

### Current opportunities

- An Early Help strategy has been approved which will drive the focus for preventative services to increase the resilience of families and communities and therefore reduce demands on Children’s Social Care
- There are interventions that have been nationally evaluated that are successful at reducing the risk of parents having children repeatedly removed from their care

### Current challenges

- Reduced resources are available for preventative services, including the budget pressures experienced by partners such as schools
- Family support services within Children’s Wellbeing Directorate are limited

### What we will improve

- We will reduce the number of looked after children to a rate that is below the national average given our relatively low rates of deprivation
- We will increase the numbers of children rehabilitated home to their family’s where it is safe to do so
- We will implement the Early Help strategy and develop a joined up preventative approach to prevent children coming into care
- We will explore opportunities to develop services that work with parents who are at risk of having multiple children removed from their care

## Priority 3 – All looked after children have a safe and stable home

### What we are doing well

- Case file audits indicate that children are safe in care
- The fostering service has been successful at recruiting, training and supporting carers and so is increasingly meeting the needs of children and young people with complex needs and/or challenging behaviour
- The number of children who have experienced 3 or more placement moves has reduced and is well below the national average
- HIPSS and TISS are supporting foster carers and staff to better understand and meet the needs of children with complex needs
- The Adoption team has successfully found adopters for older children, sibling groups and those with complex needs
- Approximately £94,000 of funding has been awarded since April 2015 to enable adopters and special guardians to access specialist therapeutic support through the Adoption Support Fund
- A protocol has recently been agreed to “Reduce Offending and Criminalisation of Children in Care”
- Herefordshire has good quality, enthusiastic foster carers with an increasingly professional approach

### Current opportunities

- To develop innovative projects to support adopters as part of a Regional Adoption Agency alongside the third sector
- To re-direct funding spent on independent foster placements and residential units to support the growth and improvement of the in-house fostering service
- To use the expertise of foster carers to contribute to training the children’s social care workforce
- Barnardo’s BASE project provides tailored intervention programmes to children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation and training to staff and foster carers
- To develop a restorative justice approach to incidents within foster and residential placements to reduce the risk of placement breakdown and reduce criminalisation of looked after children
- The HSCB have agreed to include thematic audits for looked after children and care leavers within their audit programme

### Current challenges

- Maintaining the quality of the adoption service during the planning and early implementation of a Regional Adoption Agency
- Children’s social care workforce includes a lot of newly qualified Social Workers who lack experience in Court work and early permanency planning

- Continued growth and improvement of the fostering service if spend on independent placements does not reduce and other funding is not identified
- Contract for HIPSS and TISS is due to end in 2017/18
- Matching children with foster carers is difficult when there is limited placement choice
- Many foster carers are reluctant to apply for Special Guardianship Orders when it would be in the best interests of children they care for
- Difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced Social Workers

#### What we will improve

- The number of children who are in a stable long term placements
- Ensuring that foster carers are valued as professionals
- Achieving permanency for children through adoption where this is in the child's best interests
- Reducing the time children spend in care before they achieve permanency
- Reducing the number of placements that disrupt and end in an unplanned way
- Increase the number of foster carers (particularly kinship carers) who are matched long term with children who apply for Special Guardianship orders
- Greater consistency in practice in relation to children who go missing and child sexual exploitation risk assessments to enable understanding of themes and effective intervention
- Multi-agency case file audits for looked after children and care leavers through the HSCB

## Priority 4 – All looked after children are supported to reach their potential in education

### What we are doing well

- The gap in achievement for children in Early years education has narrowed
- The Virtual school monitors attendance levels closely and ensures a joined up approach if attendance reduces below 90%
- The Virtual school has a plan focussed upon narrowing the gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population
- The recording of exclusion data is more accurately recorded which enables more effective challenge of schools
- Children and young people have a Personal Education Plan which is reviewed every term

### Current opportunities

- The Virtual school is planning training for foster carers, social workers and virtual school staff on raising aspirations
- E-PEP has been purchased which will enable real time tracking of data for looked after children and release capacity within the Virtual school to focus on interventions
- Development of a University in Hereford provides opportunities to raise aspirations for children in care

### Current challenges

- The emotional impact of harm that children in care have experienced can prevent them from engaging fully in education and learning opportunities
- Children admitted to care aged over 12 experience the most placement and school disruption
- A small number of looked after children have very complex health needs which affect attendance
- Having access to accurate current information on children's attainment and progress
- Methods of teaching students today are often not well understood by carers making it difficult for them to support children with their homework
- Meeting educational needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children particularly those aged 16+

### What we will improve

- Reduction of the gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population
- Reduction in the number of young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training
- Our ambition for children to achieve their potential
- Consistency of practice regarding exclusions between schools
- Reducing the number of children in care who experience multiple school moves
- Inclusion opportunities for children with Special Educational Needs

- Oversight and challenge to the Virtual School

## Priority 5 – All looked after children enjoy the best possible health

### What we are doing well

- LAC health team complete LAC health assessments for children placed in neighbouring authorities wherever possible to provide continuity
- The percentage of Health assessments completed for young people aged 16+ has improved significantly
- The LAC health team have been stable enabling them to develop trusting relationships with children over time that are effective at identifying concerns
- The completion rate for Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires has improved
- CAMHS have introduced a telephone advice line that is available to Social Workers

### Current opportunities

- To re-design work flows within IT systems to simplify notification processes
- Reducing the numbers of children placed out of County through reduction in numbers of children looked after and continued growth of in-house fostering service
- To use SDQ data to target resources and prevent escalation of emotional and mental health difficulties for children and young people and prevent placement breakdown

### Current challenges

- The high numbers of looked after children stretch resources and capacity of the LAC health team
- No mental health services are commissioned for children under the age of 10 beyond what is available from universal services
- Risk taking is a normal aspect of adolescence but looked after children and care leavers have fewer protective factors to balance risks
- Many care leavers have poor emotional and mental health but don't meet the criteria for adult mental health services

### What we will improve

- Completion of statutory health assessments within timescales which requires Children's Social Care to notify the LAC health team promptly when a child is admitted to care
- Accuracy of data produced by the LAC health team
- Using the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires to target support for children, young people and their carers
- Closer monitoring of health needs of children placed out of County to ensure health needs are met

- Understanding the health needs of our care leavers
- Engaging older young people and care leavers in taking responsibility for their own health and ensuring they have accurate information about their own health history
- Understanding the profile of looked after children with a disability
- The integration of EHC plans with LAC health assessments

## Priority 6 – All looked after children enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities

### What we are doing well

- The Council supports looked after children to access sport and leisure activities by providing HALO vouchers
- The Council holds an annual event to celebrate the achievements of looked after children and care leavers across a wide range of categories
- Foster carers support children to take part in a wide range of activities

### Current opportunities

- The Children in Care Council is planning a trip to Spain which they have fundraised for
- The Children in Care Council have priorities that include fundraising and being more involved in their local communities

### Current challenges

- Guidance and laws can make it difficult for corporate parents to allow children to do activities that have a recommended or statutory age rating
- As corporate parents we are naturally risk averse
- Some children are placed a long way from their home when they come into foster care and so it can be difficult to continue attending clubs and activities that they are part of
- Herefordshire is a very rural County and so it can be difficult for young people to travel independently and difficult for carers to transport children to clubs and activities

### What we will improve

- The information on our looked after children's access to play, sport, leisure and cultural activities as a population
- Ensuring that when children do have to move that we minimise the impact by supporting continuity of friendships, clubs and activities wherever possible
- Children tell us that too often they are made to feel "different" because we don't always allow them to take part in activities that their peers enjoy

## Priority 7 – All looked after children are listened to and treated with respect

### What we are doing well

- Looked after children are encouraged to Chair their own LAC reviews if they want to
- Independent Reviewing Officers send an age appropriate letter, including a photo and contact details, explaining their role, purpose of a LAC review and right to advocacy when allocated to a child or young person
- Children in care are involved in almost all recruitment for new staff within Children's Social Care and the Virtual School
- A Participation Worker is employed who supports the Children in Care Council which is well established and meets every month
- The Children in Care Council is represented at the Corporate Parenting Panel
- The 16+ team has a closed group Facebook page which has been successful in engaging with some difficult to reach young people and enable young people to ask for support where they might otherwise have found it difficult to ask
- Evaluation from NYAS (advocacy service) shows that children and young people understand their rights and entitlements better after receiving support from the service
- On Take-over day 2016 representatives from the Children in Care Council took over Corporate Parenting Panel and the Council's Management Board

### Current opportunities

- A survey of all looked after children is planned for Spring 2017
- To embed more robust arrangements for assessing, planning and reviewing children's contact arrangements that keeps the child at the centre
- Training to improve the competence of children's social care staff in working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds is planned
- New apps provide opportunities for children and young people to communicate their wishes and feelings in a way that is accessible for them and that enables analysis of this information by the service

### Current challenges

- Children's Social Care are struggling to recruit permanent Social Workers in some teams meaning that we still have to employ some agency staff
- The numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children within our looked after and care leaver population is expected to rise in the next two years but the workforce and local services are inexperienced in working with this client group

## What we will improve

- The influence that children and young people's views have on policy and practice
- The proportion of looked after children and care leavers who regularly attend or engage with the Children in Care Council
- Accurate recording of children's ethnicity and therefore improvement in meeting children's cultural needs
- The skill and experience of our workforce in working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds
- The range of racial, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds of our foster carers and their ability to meet diverse need
- Children's confidence to tell us if they want something to change in their foster placement
- Choices for children and young people about how they tell us about their wishes and feelings
- Reducing the number of changes of Social Worker that children and young people experience
- Ensuring that contact arrangements for children and young people with their families are in their best interests
- Understanding the experience and views of all our looked after children as a collective group
- Children and young people's understanding of their rights and entitlements

## Priority 8 – All looked after children are supported and enabled to live happy, healthy and financially secure lives when they leave care

### What we are doing well

- Young people really value the support they receive from the 16+ team and the drop in at No. 4 is used a lot and valued by young people
- Young people have a Pathway Plan that is co-produced with them and is regularly reviewed
- The fostering team has been successful in increasing the number of approved supported lodgings providers

### Current opportunities

- The Council, its partners and those it commissions are large employers who could offer a wide range of employment opportunities to young people in care and leaving care
- The Apprenticeship levy and development of traineeships and supported internships creates employment opportunities
- Shared housing is more available, affordable and reduces the risk of isolation than single accommodation
- The draft Young People's Accommodation strategy includes as a key principle that there will be no homelessness assessment of care leavers required in order to identify housing suitable for them
- "Keep on caring" strategy establishes Government commitment that leaving care services will be extended to all care leavers up until the age of 25 and offer to care leavers will need to be published

### Current challenges

- There is a shortage of affordable housing especially for single people
- Government approaches to reducing the welfare bill are impacting upon care leavers – particularly those with mental health difficulties and leave young people vulnerable to debt
- Some young people are very difficult to engage and are involved in some very risky behaviours
- Extending leaving care services will require additional resource and it's not yet clear what funding will be made available from central Government

## What we will improve

- The range of supported accommodation available to meet the needs of care leavers within Herefordshire
- Some care leavers are found to be “intentionally homeless” and this makes it difficult for them to move on from mistakes
- Reducing the number of young people in care or who have left care who are not in education, employment or training
- The engagement of some young people in taking responsibility for their own physical and mental health
- A consistent approach to assessing and managing risk in adolescents which is understood by all agencies operating in Herefordshire
- Having a safe place for 16+ team to be based and to offer a drop in service for older looked after children and care leavers
- Formalising relationships with partner agencies through formal protocols to support effective joint working
- Reduce the numbers of children and young people in care and care leavers are at risk of offending
- The quality and consistency of support to young people to develop their independent living skills

# Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2017-20

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
1	Increase awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst elected members.	Include Corporate parenting workshops within mandatory induction programme for Councillors	Governance services, Head of service for looked after children and Children in Care Council	% of Councillors completing mandatory induction programme  Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Increase awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst senior Council officers and partners.	Offer Corporate parenting workshops to senior officers within the Council and partner organisations	Management board, Head of service for looked after children and Children in Care Council and Children's scrutiny	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Councillors will have looked after children and care leavers at the forefront of their work and offer of support	Ask the question "how does this support Herefordshire's looked after children and care leavers?" in relation to all Council and community business  Commit to a minimum percentage of all work experience placements and apprenticeships being made available to LAC and care leavers	Elected members  Cabinet	Progress within action plan and against key performance indicators  % of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is lower than national average and improves each year to be in the bottom quartile

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		Develop a directory of interests and skills of members so that they can offer to support/mentor individual children and young people who wish to explore that field	Elected members including children's scrutiny	% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is lower than national average and improves each year to be in the bottom quartile
1	Ensure that the Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group considers the impact upon corporate parenting responsibilities prior to any decision.	Provide guidance within report templates	Council, WVT and CCG	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Ensure that Councillors, WVT and CCG are held to account for progress of the Corporate Parenting strategy	Present an annual report on Corporate Parenting to full Council and CCG Governing body and thematic information to children's scrutiny committee	Head of service for looked after children, WVT and CCG	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Enable children and young people in care and care leavers to hold their Corporate Parents to account	Provide information to explain what a Corporate Parent is and the role and function of the Corporate parenting panel for children and young people  Strengthen accountability of the Corporate parenting panel to the Children in Care Council	Children's Social Care and Participation Team  Corporate parenting panel and Children in Care Council	
2	The rate of looked after children will gradually reduce	Ensure families receive multi-agency support to enable them to meet their children's needs  Ensure children are only admitted	HSCB  Children's Social Care	Rate of looked after children will reduce and be at or below national average

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>to care when there is no safe alternative</p> <p>Focus upon permanency planning to ensure children do not remain in care longer than is in their best interests</p> <p>Provide clear information on support available to Special Guardianship carers to enable prospective SGO carers to make informed decisions</p> <p>Ensure that foster to adopt placements are considered in all cases</p> <p>Ensure service demands are shared to inform the development of early help services</p> <p>Early help strategy fully and effectively implemented</p> <p>Ensure clear joint protocols are effective in preventing homelessness for young people aged 16+</p>	<p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children's Social Care and Legal Services</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children and young people's partnership</p> <p>Children's Well-being and Strategic housing team</p>	

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
3	Continue to grow the fostering service to meet placement needs of looked after children and care leavers and improve placement stability	<p>Review and revise recruitment strategy every year to focus on gaps in placement provision</p> <p>Specifically target recruitment of foster carers to meet needs of BME children</p> <p>Further develop and improve training for foster carers to increase skill level and resilience of foster carers particularly for those caring for teenagers</p> <p>Promote foster carers as professionals by holding joint training and where appropriate co-producing training with foster carers for Children's Social care workforce and celebrating achievements of foster carers</p> <p>Ensure effective support is in place to enable children to step-down from residential care</p> <p>Ensure consistent practice in</p>	<p>Fostering service</p> <p>Fostering service</p> <p>Fostering service</p> <p>Children's Social care and Foster carers</p> <p>HIPSS &amp; TISS</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	<p>Number of children placed and spend on children placed in independent fostering agencies and residential care</p> <p>Profile of foster carers in comparison with looked after children</p> <p>Placement stability in comparison with national average and previous local performance</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>relation to minimising risk of placement disruption and learning lessons when disruptions do occur.</p> <p>Ensure effective placement provision to reduce numbers of children placed in residential and provide effective step-down to foster placements</p> <p>Train Foster Carers and Social Workers to understand and apply restorative justice solutions to incidents in placement</p>	<p>Children's Social Care and Commissioning</p> <p>Youth Justice service, foster carers and children's social care</p>	
3	<p>Develop effective adoption support services</p> <p>Continue focus upon recruitment of adopters for sibling groups, older children and those with complex needs</p>	<p>Working with Regional Adoption agency and third sector</p> <p>Working with Regional Adoption agency</p>	<p>Adoption service</p> <p>Adoption service</p>	<p>Number of adoption disruptions</p> <p>The average time between receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family in comparison with national data and previous local performance</p>
3	Understand numbers affected and levels of risk to looked after children who go missing and/or are at risk of child sexual exploitation	Develop consistent recording methods to enable accurate monitoring and analysis of	Children's Social care and performance team	Data is accurate

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
	Train Children's Social Care staff and foster carers to manage and reduce risk of CSE	<p>themes</p> <p>Complete multi-agency thematic audits</p> <p>Working with Barnardo's BASE project</p>	<p>HSCB</p> <p>Barnardo's BASE project and Social Work Academy</p>	<p>Outcomes from audits</p> <p>Levels of risk to individual children reduces over time</p>
4	Reduce the gap in educational achievement between looked after children and their peers	<p>Closer analysis of exclusion data and joint approach with schools to address inconsistencies in practice between schools</p> <p>Continue to implement virtual school plan</p> <p>Implementation of E-PEP and challenging schools on use of Pupil Premium</p> <p>Consider whether to introduce a Board of Governors for Virtual School to improve oversight and challenge</p> <p>Training for foster carers, social workers, school governors and virtual school staff to raise</p>	<p>Virtual school</p> <p>Virtual school</p> <p>Virtual school</p> <p>Children's Well-Being directorate and Cabinet member</p> <p>Virtual school, children's social care and foster carers</p>	<p>Reduction in gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population as compared with national average and previous local performance</p> <p>Numbers of young people choosing to go to University and successfully completing their course</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>aspirations amongst looked after children and enable effective support for children's learning</p> <p>Explore opportunity to make refurbished IT equipment that the Council no longer requires available for looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Work with local FE colleges and Universities to develop opportunities for taster days for looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Develop a clear offer of the practical, emotional and financial support available to care leavers who go to University</p>	<p>Virtual school and Hoople</p> <p>Virtual school</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	
5	Ensure the health needs of our looked after children are met	<p>Completion of health assessments within statutory timescales</p> <p>Effective and timely liaison with colleagues to ensure needs of children placed out of County are met and smooth transition of services if children move</p>	<p>LAC health team</p> <p>LAC health team</p>	Compliance with timescales for completion of health assessments

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>placements</p> <p>CAMHS will offer training to Social Workers, inductions for ASYE and attend team meetings in children's social care to develop skills and understanding of mental health issues within Children's Social care workforce.</p> <p>Ensuring accurate recording of disability on MOSAIC</p>	<p>CAMHS and Children's Social care</p> <p>Children's Social care and performance team</p>	
5	Use data to target support and resources effectively to ensure children's needs are met and risk of placement breakdown is reduced	Continue to increase the number of SDQ assessments completed and use data to review whether this indicates the need for changes to a child's care plan and/or support for their carer	LAC health team, fostering team and children's Social Workers	Placement stability
5	Enable care leavers to understand their health needs and how to access additional support when they need it	<p>Ensure all care leavers receive their health passport and a copy is kept on their file</p> <p>Offer a regular drop-in advice service for children in care aged 16+ and care leavers</p> <p>Train 16+ team in C-card scheme</p>	<p>LAC health team</p> <p>LAC health team</p> <p>Sexual health team and 16+</p>	<p>Care leavers who are EET and in suitable accommodation</p> <p>Care leavers who are parents</p>

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		Explore opportunities for CAMHS to be expanded to provide support for young people up to the age of 25	CCG	
6	Commit to enabling children and young people being able to take part in the activities that are “normal” and socially acceptable for their peers	Develop guidance for practitioners and managers to support delegated authority for carers and a pragmatic approach to risk assessments	Children’s social care and Corporate Parenting panel	
7	Develop the Children in Care Council (CICC) so that it is able to represent the voice of all children in care and is able to hold the Corporate Parenting panel to account	Increase numbers of children and young people engaged in or with the CICC  CICC to develop its priorities for change  Ensure CICC is enabled to engage fully with the work of the Corporate Parenting panel	Participation team, Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Panel	% of looked after children who engage with CICC
7	Support our workforce to develop confidence and competence in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	Deliver training on “culturally competent” practice	Social Work academy	% of workforce trained
7	Ensure that contact arrangements for children and young people are in their best interests	Embed the use of contact assessment tool  Regularly review contact arrangements including whether contact needs to be supervised	Children’s social care  Children’s social care	Placement stability data

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7	Improve understanding of children's wishes and feelings	<p>Analyse results of looked after children's survey</p> <p>Offer "U chair" training on a regular basis and encourage children and young people to chair their own LAC reviews</p> <p>Purchase licenses for "mind of my own" (MOMO) app</p> <p>Analyse information provided through MOMO and other sources of information to inform service improvements</p>	<p>Participation team</p> <p>Participation team and IRO service</p> <p>Children's social care</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	
7	Decrease the number of children and young people who have a change in social worker and/or IRO	<p>Recruit permanent staff to vacancies</p> <p>Improve retention by addressing issues highlighted within the annual Social Work health check survey and developing a clear CPD offer</p>	<p>Hoople and Children's social care</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	Workforce stability data
8	Ensure that there is a range of accommodation available to care leavers that meets need and allows for a gradual move to independence that is financially sustainable	<p>Re-commission housing support to deliver accommodation with support that meets the needs of care leavers</p> <p>Work with housing providers (including private rented sector)</p>	<p>Housing strategy and Children's Social care</p> <p>Housing strategy and Children's social care</p>	<p>100% of care leavers in suitable accommodation</p> <p>% of care leavers successfully sustaining a</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>to develop move on accommodation and shared housing options suitable for care leavers</p> <p>Implement Young Person's accommodation strategy</p> <p>Develop clear policy on financial support for care leavers</p>	<p>Adults well-being and relevant partners</p> <p>Children's Social care and Chief finance officer</p>	<p>tenancy</p> <p>Number of care leavers who present as homeless</p>
8	Increase the number of care leavers who are safe	Implement a joint approach to assessing and managing risk for adolescents	HSCB	Number of care leavers subject of regular risk management meetings
8	Reduce the number of looked after children and care leavers who are not in education, employment or training	<p>Offer a minimum of 1 week's work experience to every looked after child within the Council, WVT or CCG</p> <p>Establish a baseline of how many looked after children and care leavers undertake an apprenticeship and increase this each year</p> <p>Ensure care leavers are supported to access supported internships and traineeships as opportunities develop as appropriate</p>	<p>Council, WVT and CCG</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Hoople and Council</p>	% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is better than national average and improves each year

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>Offer a guaranteed interview to every looked after child or care leaver who meets the person specification for a job within the Council (including apprenticeships)</p> <p>Require services contracted or commissioned by the Council or CCG to offer work experience and apprenticeships to looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Have a business advisor linked to the Virtual School to help develop employment opportunities</p>	<p>Hoople and Council</p> <p>Council and CCG</p> <p>Virtual school and Careers Enterprise co-ordinator</p>	
8	Provide a venue for a drop in service for young people in care aged 16+ and care leavers that enables them to feel safe and valued	Identify a long term venue for 16+ service within the City centre	Council	
8	Ensure joined up services are provided for care leavers that meet need	Develop joint protocols with relevant partners including Housing Solutions team and Probation service.	16+ team and head of service for looked after children with relevant partner agencies	
8	Improve the quality and consistency of support provided to looked after children and care leavers to develop their independent living skills	Clear expectations for carers in placement plans and pathway plans about what they will do to support development of independent living skills	Children's social care, foster carers and SLP providers	Number and % of care leavers sustaining a tenancy

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		<p>Consider establishing a support group for carers of older young people</p> <p>Develop a clear policy for foster carers on saving for looked after children</p> <p>Expand the Council Volunteer scheme to enable employees to provide support to looked after children and care leavers</p>	<p>Foster carers and Fostering Team</p> <p>Fostering Team</p> <p>Council</p>	
8	Develop a clear care leavers “offer”	In consultation with looked after children and care leavers once legislation is in place and clear guidance produced	16+ team, young people, Participation team and Head of Service for LAC	