

# **CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY**

**2016 – 2017**

## 1. Introduction

This strategy sets out the intentions of Haringey Council in relation to improving outcomes for children and young people who are looked after by the Local Authority. In accordance with the principles set out in the Children Act 1989, Haringey Council's services for children are premised upon the belief that in most circumstances children and young people are best looked after within their own families.

However, there will always be some children and young people, for reasons of abuse, neglect or for other reasons, for whom being in the care of Haringey will be in their best interests. These same children and young people deserve the highest quality service that not only does not disadvantage them amongst their peers, but also seeks to redress the disadvantages that they may already have suffered prior to come into care and which will enable them to have the best possible start in life. Haringey Council, as a corporate parent, seeks to remove any and all barriers that may exist in order to enable looked after children and young people to achieve their full potential.

The Haringey Corporate Plan 2015 – 2018, which was formally ratified by full Council in February 2015, sets out the five strategic priorities for the borough:

- **Priority 1:** Enable every child and young person to have the best start in life, with high quality education
- **Priority 2:** Empower all adults to live healthy, long and fulfilling lives
- **Priority 3:** A clean and safe borough where people are proud to live
- **Priority 4:** Drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit
- **Priority 5:** Create homes and communities where people choose to live and are

Priority 1 specifically relates to our children and young people, including those in our care and within this priority area we have established a number of key objectives:

- **All children will have the best start in life**
- **Children and young people across Haringey excel at school, making the most of their potential**
- **All young people will have access to excellent employment or higher education opportunities**
- **Children and young people will be healthier, happier and more resilient and those who need extra help will get support at the right time**
- **Children and families who need more support will be helped earlier before issues escalate**

- **All children and young people will be safeguarded from abuse.**

## **2. National context**

The report '*Care Matters: Time for Change*' (2007) demonstrated a specific focus on children in care. This document sets out a desirable direction for improvements that should be made for children in care. 'Care Matters' sets out a range of intentions to improve both outcomes for children and young people in care and the levels of skill and competence of those staff who act as Corporate Parents, and of staff and carers directly supporting children.

In April 2013 The Care Inquiry published '*Making not Breaking; Building Relationships*' for our most vulnerable children'. This report concluded that 'permanence' for children means 'security, stability, love and a strong sense of identity and belonging' and reinforced that the quality of relationships with people who care for and about children is vital.

## **3. Local Context**

Haringey Children and Young People's Service looks after approximately 450 children and young people at any time. This does not include children who are receiving short breaks but does include unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Since March 2011 the number of looked after children to Haringey Council has reduced by 26% from 610 to 450 children at 75 per 10,000 children. This has again reduced to around 430 children as at December 2015. The England average rate of Children in Care at 31 March 2015 was 60 children per 10,000 under 18 population and 52 in London. In comparison, Haringey's statistical neighbours' average rate is 69 per 10,000 children. These Local Authorities have also experienced a decrease, although smaller than the reduction in Haringey, and this is in contrast to the small increase seen nationally since 2011. Haringey's rate of looked after children has exceeded its statistical neighbour average for some years and continues to remain above the SN average, but as at 31 March 2015 Haringey's rate reduced to close the gap to just six points between us and our statistical neighbour's average.

## **4. Who are 'Looked After' Children and Young People?**

Children and young people who are 'Looked After' are the subject of a care order or interim care order, children accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 for more than 24 hours, emergency protection orders where children are accommodated by the Local Authority, children on remand to Local Authority accommodation, or under supervision with a residence requirement to live in Local Authority accommodation, and children subject of Police Powers of Protection or arrested and at police request accommodated by the Local Authority. Children in care also include children who are seeking Asylum and those who experience a regular series of short breaks.

A child may become looked after for a short period of time, as a result of temporary issues while their parents receive the required support, as a result of abuse or neglect, or significantly challenging or offending behaviours.

## 5. Haringey Corporate Parenting Strategy Aims

Haringey's Corporate Parenting Strategy is the framework which supports Priority 1 objectives specifically for looked after children and details how the Council and its partner agencies will act as responsible parents for children and young people in care as well as young people leaving care who are entitled to support.

The strategy is aimed at ensuring that all corporate parents within Haringey are fully involved in fulfilling their role as corporate parents and in helping children and young people to achieve their full potential as they grow up and into their adult life.

The aim of the strategy is to emphasise, and reinforce the corporate responsibilities of the Council and all partner agencies, through a range of policies and local initiatives which promote good practice and outcomes for Looked after Children.

## 6. The Corporate Parenting Strategy Objectives

The Council's responsibilities and duty towards its Looked After children is highly prescribed and regulated through Government guidance and legislation. However due to their life experiences, when compared with all children and young people, those who are in care do not achieve as highly as their peers.

The Council has a clear commitment to improve outcomes for all children and young people and the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee take a key role in ensuring that outcomes for looked after children are improved and in line with those children not in our care. We will do this through a range of mechanisms, including:

- **Early Help**  
One of the best ways to ensure that we can deliver high quality services to children in care is to ensure that we have the right children in care, those most vulnerable and at risk, whilst ensuring that we support those children who can be supported at home effectively
- **A Strong and Consistent 'Front Door'**  
Establishing a strong and consistent 'front door' (i.e. the part of children's social care services that provide the first contact and assessment for vulnerable children and families) that ensures we look after the right children at the right time is a crucial starting point in the child's journey. The Children's Services Department front door (Single Point of Access and Triage) will ensure those children who meet our threshold of intervention will be offered an assessment and subsequent service and a support package provided by our front line teams.
- **Early Permanency**

When we do need to take a child in to care we need to act quickly and decisively at an early stage in the child's journey through the care system in order to give the child security and consistency of care. Acting within existing legislation, we will adopt the 'golden thread' of permanency throughout our decision making that starts at the front door.

- ***Support and Help***

Being in care itself can be worrying and unsettling for children and young people, that may be exacerbated by being some distance away from home (or sometimes vice versa). We will support all our children in care wherever they are placed and whoever they are placed with.

- ***Participation***

The Children in Care 'Haringey Pledge' is central to our participation strategy and all corporate parents are committed to every pledge set out.

- ***Data Management***

Management information and performance management are key to any informing evidence based decisions making. We ensure that our regular performance reports to CPAC inform any decision making as well as weekly reporting to the Lead Member for Children's Services on specific and pertinent issues for looked after children (i.e. Children missing from care).

- ***Sufficiency***

In order to care for our children well, we need a good supply of high quality placements. Our Sufficiency Strategy clearly sets out how we will achieve this in Haringey.

- ***Placement Stability***

We know that outcomes for children are better when they are able to form long term relationships with carers. We regularly review placement stability and view this as a key proxy indicator.

- ***Education***

Working closely with our virtual school we are ensuring that education attainment for all our children in care receives our highest priority and we aim to narrow the gap between the achievements of children who are not in care and those who are looked after by Haringey Council. We are also committed to ensuring that all children looked after by Haringey Council are able to fulfil their educational potential.

- ***Health***

In partnership with health services we are ensuring that the health needs of the children and young people we have responsibility for are identified in an appropriate and timely manner. Evidence shows that children and young people in care have some of the poorest health outcomes in comparison to their peers. It is our and our partners priority to achieve timely, accessible and high quality service provision to improve health outcomes, support educational attainment and placement stability.

- ***Leaving Care***

Haringey Council recognises that young people who are leaving care require considerable support to transition to independence. We have therefore developed a Care Leavers handbook.

## 7. Haringey Corporate Parenting Governance

The Council's commitment to our looked after children is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee (CPAC) and is the body with responsibility for facilitating the Council's role as corporate parent for children and young people in care. They seek to ensure that the health, education and access to employment of children in care is maximised, monitor the quality of care provided, and also ensure that children leaving care have sustainable arrangements for their future.

These responsibilities are enshrined within the CPAC Terms of Reference:

1. To be responsible for the Council's role as Corporate parent for those children and young people who are in care;
2. To ensure the views of children in care are heard;
3. To seek to ensure that the life chances of children in care are maximized in terms of health, educational attainment and access to training and employment to aid the transition to a secure and fulfilling adulthood;
4. To ensure that the voice and needs of disabled children are identified and provided for;
5. To monitor the quality of care provided by the Council to Children in Care;
6. To ensure that children leaving care have sustainable arrangements for their future wellbeing; and
7. To make recommendations on these matters to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member for Children and Director of Children and Young People's Service.

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Haringey's Children in Care Council, Aspire, also play a key role in ensuring that the views, wishes and feelings of our looked after children are taken into account when making service improvements.

The White Paper *Care Matters: Time for Change* 2007 states that every Local Authority should develop a pledge for Looked after Children, setting out statutory entitlements, specific opportunities and support available. Looked After Children should be involved in developing the pledge and this should be regularly reviewed.

Haringey Council and Aspire and have developed the Haringey Pledge so that all our looked after children are clear about what they can expect from the Council and its wider partners as corporate parents.

## HARINGEY CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN

1.0 STRONG AND EFFECTIVE CORPORATE PARENTING		
LEAD OFFICER: Neelam Bhardwaja		
Provision	Responsibility	Timescale
1.1	Further develop the operation of the Children in Care Council (Aspire) including ensuring that children and young people in care have the facility to speak directly to the Director of Children service and the Lead Member.	
1.2	Ensure the Children’s Pledge is effectively communicated throughout the Council and partner agencies.	
1.3	Refresh and embed the Haringey Pledge to Looked After Children	
1.4	A data set of the required management information relating to the corporate parenting of children and young people in care, the quality of their care and the outcomes being achieved by them should be agreed and reported on a regular basis.	
1.5	Develop multi-agency commissioning arrangements for services for children and young people in care to be developed. All commissioned services should prioritise Looked After Children in contracting arrangements.	
1.6	Consultation with children and young people in care over service provision and policy and service development should increasingly be undertaken through the Children in Care Council.	
1.7	The Director of Children’s Services, Lead Member and Assistant Directors should meet with the Children In Care Council regularly.	
1.8	Revise and roll out Corporate Parenting Induction training	

<b>2.0 IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL BEING</b>		
<b>Lead officer: Dominic Porter-Moore</b>		
<b>Corporate Parenting Provision</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
2.1	Ensure that children and young people are in good health and that their health needs are being identified and met. Improvements to be made in the completion of health assessments for children and young people in care in line with procedural guidance to increase the percentage of children and young people in care receiving timely and effective health assessments.	
2.2	Ensure that children in care have six monthly dental checks.	
2.3	Ensure all new children in care over four years of age have a holistic assessment of emotional health and mental well-being to ensure early identification of difficulties and early provision of targeted support including training for foster and residential carers in managing presenting emotional well-being and mental health needs	
2.4	Promote alternative means of completing health assessments for children over 11 years refusing an annual assessment so that the health of all children and young people in care is promoted.	
2.5	Further develop services for children in care who misuse substances and alcohol in partnership with specialist agencies including providing training for staff and carers in recognising and dealing with substance misuse so that any problems being experienced by children and young people in care receive a response at an early stage	
2.6	Ensure carers provide children in care with healthy food and guidance and information about healthy eating.	
2.7	Improve the availability and accessibility of leisure activities for children in care.	
2.8	With young people in care, develop Haringey's promises about children and young people's health and wellbeing	

<b>3.0 KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE</b>			
<b>LEAD OFFICER: Neelam Bhardwaja</b>			
<b>Corporate Parenting Provision</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
3.1	Address all activity set out in the Haringey Sufficiency Strategy		
3.2	Develop and commission a range of accommodation appropriate to the needs of Care Leavers		
3.3	Improve the matching of children to placements through careful scrutiny of assessments of need and care plans by line managers and Conference and Review Managers.		
3.4	Further improve the stability of placements by improved matching of children to placements and provision of dedicated support to placements.		
3.5	Increase the number of Foster Carers and prospective Adopters through the		
3.6	Increase the skill levels of foster carers through training.		
3.7	Raise carer's awareness about the rights of children in care to access universal services e.g. children's centres.		
3.8	Conference and Reviewing Managers to provide an annual report on the quality of children's participation in care planning and reviews and the quality of the planning that the review is addressing.		
3.9	Develop disruption policy which demonstrates the current support services in place to assist placement stability when difficulties arise. The policy will include actions to be taken if placements disrupt to assist learning for carers, support to children and improvement service delivery.		
3.10	Ensure that looked after children (up to 21) are not moved out of an existing placement before they are ready. This will be undertaken by listening to children/young people views over moves to independent living and ensuring they retain support and guidance as long as they need it. Ensure that the 'staying put' guidance is followed within the Care Planning regulations.		
3.11	The Safeguarding and Quality Practice Service should collate information on and monitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of child protection investigations undertaken on</li> </ul>		

	<p>children and young people in care and the placements of those children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number/type of allegations against carers made by children and young people in care and the placements of those children.</li> </ul> <p>And to identify and evidence if there are concerns about any particular carers or establishment. This includes the outcomes for children and learning from such allegations which inform service delivery.</p>		
3.12	Monitor and report on Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and attached action plans with commissioned services, such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), children missing, staffing issues, and physical incidents of concern, regarding any notifiable incidents.		
3.13	Maintain oversight of the use of physical intervention on children and young people in care in all resources where Haringey's children and young people in care are placed to identify patterns and issues with any providers or carers.		
3.14	Increase range of support services for children and young people in care, and develop and embed the Targeted Support Service		
3.15	Establish robust commissioning and contract monitoring to ensure high standards of care within external placements.		
3.16	Ensure high practice standards when children and young people come into care or change placements so the experience for children and young people is as positive as possible, and meets the Care Planning regulations requirements. Establish access to a multi-agency access to resource panel, and placement request panel to ensure consistent practice standards.		
3.17	All children and young people are given information on what it means to be in care and how to make complaints on becoming looked after. The complaints system for children and young people in care is continually promoted through statutory visits and reviews.		
3.18	Information on complaints made by children and young people in care is collated by the Complaints Officer and reported to Departmental Management Group (DMG) and Departmental Management Team (DMTs) meetings on a regular basis. Learning from complaints is analysed and disseminated to frontline staff and managers and informs the shaping of service delivery.		

3.19	For Looked After children monitor the effectiveness and impact of the work of the allocated social worker completing the Return Home Interviews, and ensure tracking and safeguarding of all children going missing.		
3.20	Ensure all Looked After Children and Young People in Haringey have an up to date Life Story books which is completed with and guided by the child/young person. (Children's Pledge see 1.15)		
3.21	Analysis of Children/young person's complaints should be reported to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and the Children In Care Council on a regular basis.		

## 4.0 IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

**LEAD OFFICER: Fiona Smith**

Corporate Parenting Provision		Responsibility	Timescale
4.1	Strengthen and prioritise roles and responsibilities in schools through training, whole school support, development of policy and practice and improved communication.		
4.2	Ensure good quality (Personal Education Plans) PEPs, showing clear use or pupil premium funding, are completed for all Looked After Children through review of the process, regular scrutiny, clarification of roles and responsibilities and training for all relevant parties. Provide accurate and timely assessments of the educational needs of our looked after children to help them to make good progress in their learning and development;		
4.3	Ensure early years PEP is completed for all relevant Children in Care		
4.8	Raise awareness of the initiatives available to support learning and ensure all children and young people in care access Pupil Premium to effectively support their educational achievements.		
4.4	Ensure all Looked After Children have access to pre-school provision so they have the best start in life and good standards of communication, social and emotional development.		

4.5	<p>Improve the attainment of children in care at all key stages and narrow the gaps the between the attainment of children in care and those not in care by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the Virtual School Action plan.</li> <li>• Ensuring, as far as possible, that children and young people do not move schools, unless 'reasonably practicable and consistent with their welfare', or during GCSE years, or in 'exceptional circumstances'.</li> </ul>		
4.6	<p>Minimise the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions of children in care.</p>		
4.7	<p>Establish the number of children and young people in care with access to a computer and take action to ensure that all secondary school age children and young people in care have such access.</p>		
4.8	<p>Raise aspirations for post 16 education and provide bursaries for children in care accessing higher education.</p>		
4.9	<p>Ensure PEPs are in place for all young people post 16 who wish to have them</p>		
4.10	<p>Monitor, challenge and reduce the number of Looked after Children receiving reduced timetables or not in full time education in order to ensure that all children in care are following a full time timetable, (unless there are specific personal circumstances which mean that this is not in their best interest). Where a young person is on a part time timetable plans should be in place to help them make the transition back to full time education.</p>		
4.11	<p>Ensure regular gathering of academic data supports the monitoring of progress, identifies need and targets resources</p>		

4.12	Improve overall levels of attendance of Looked After children through actions identified from close monitoring and identification and prioritisation of individual children whose attendance levels fall below the National Average for all children. This will require joint working between the foster carer, whose role it is to ensure the child attends school, and schools.		
4.13	Reducing disruption of education for Looked After children and plan for their education to provide any extra help needed to address the gaps and learning that has been missed		
4.14	Raise awareness of the role of foster carers in promoting educational achievement		
4.15	Increase participation of Looked After children in a wide range of learning activities and opportunities in the wider community including establishing a corporate approach to accessing free leisure activities.		
4.16	Support should be provided by the Virtual School until young people are aged 18.		

## 5.0 ACHIEVING PERMANENCE

**LEAD OFFICER: Dominic Porter-Moore**

Corporate Parenting Provision		Responsibility	Timescale
5.1	To improve permanence planning for children by developing the permanence policy and raising awareness and training of all staff. Establish a regular training programme for all Social Workers regarding improving permanence and aspirational care planning.		
5.2	Develop and embed tracking of all children in care, and ensure timely permanence planning.		
5.3	Cascade learning from analysis of audits of permanency planning to identify good practice and areas for improvement		
5.4	Increase the proportion of children being adopted and reduce timescales for adoption of children.		

<b>6.0 VOICE OF THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON</b>			
<b>LEAD OFFICER: Dominic Porter-Moore</b>			
<b>Corporate Parenting Provision</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
6.1	Ensure that children and young people's feedback is used at all levels to consistently improve practice through informing care plans, priorities and evidencing that the 'Voice of the Child' impacts on individual planning and recording.		
6.2	The participation of children and young people with complex needs in individual care planning and service planning to be supported to promote their inclusion as for all children.		
6.3	IROs to have an increased role in listening to the views of children and young people at all key stages of care planning and consultation with children and young people in care about their individual care planning.		
6.4	Ensure that the experiences of the child are identified and considered in all help, protection and decision-making concerning vulnerable children and young people including young carers and feedback from parents and carers		
6.5	Develop qualitative service user involvement through increasing opportunities for children and young people to engage and influence decision making, service delivery and development.		
6.6	Improve the information provided to children about being a child in care and their rights.		
6.7	Ensure access to independent visitors and advocacy for children in care.		
6.8	Celebrate the achievements of children in care through an annual awards ceremony.		
6.9	Develop a protocol with the Youth Offending Team for responding to children and young people in care who offend or are at risk of offending, and ensure this is regularly updated to meet legislative requirements.		

6.10	Train care leavers to provide peer mentoring support for other children and young people in care.		
6.11	Develop Targeted Response Service support and protocol for the most vulnerable children and young people on the edge of care		
6.12	Continue using Signs of Safety approach in Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Children Reviews. IROs to continue to be trained regarding how it works and how the child/young person's voice is heard in Child Protected Conferences and Looked After Children's Reviews.		
6.13	The Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan should be shared with all relevant staff and managers and a young person friendly version should be produced and shared with all looked after children.		
6.14	Coming into Care Guide to be developed for aged 3-10 years and 10-16 years and Leaving Care Guide aged 16-25 with specific versions for Asylum Seekers and children/young people with disabilities.		

## 7.0 SUPPORTING CARE LEAVERS

**LEAD OFFICER: Emma Cummergen**

Corporate Parenting Provision		Responsibility	Timescale
7.1	Develop opportunities for apprenticeships within the Council and the private, third and voluntary sector. Ensure that care leavers have access to appropriate education and employment opportunities, including work experience and apprenticeships.		
7.2	Finalise and implement a Transitions Protocol for young people moving from children's to adult services.		
7.3	Increase the number of young people leaving care involved in education, employment and training through development of the Leaving Care Strategy and provision of the necessary guidance and support.		
7.4	Review and implement a Staying Put Policy so that young people are able to have choice about the timing of their move to independent living.		

7.5	Develop protocol with housing to ensure sufficiency and suitability of accommodation and support for care leavers when moving to independence. Ensure that care leavers are assisted to find housing solutions that best meet their needs.		
7.6	Ensure support arrangements are in place for children in care in higher/residential further education including vacation accommodation.		
7.7	Further re-align services for care leavers to provide a worker with responsibility for matching and supporting the accommodation needs of care leavers.		
7.8	To improve capacity and social worker contribution to ensure timely and high quality Pathway Plans are completed with Care Leavers.		
7.9	Performance indicators in relation to care leavers are monitored by the Children's Social Care service and Lead Member/Elected Members on a regular basis		
7.10	Review the leaving care grant every two years in consultation with the Children In Care Council.		
7.11	Personal Advisors should meet young people leaving care every 6 months to formally identify, record and action any issues that a young person has.		
7.12	The council and partners should ensure that if a young person is defined as vulnerable, safeguards should be put in place to ensure safe accommodation is provided and for their wellbeing until they are 25.		