



# Children looked After and Care Leaver Strategy 2017 - 2022

*“To ensure the service and support we deliver to our children looked after and care leavers, would be good enough for our child, our young person and our family”.*

Version Control	Version 1
Document Owner / Authorising officer	Head of Children’s Social Care
Target Audience	Children Social Care and Early Intervention Staff
Publication Date	July 2017
Review Date(update)	July 2018 (yearly)
Next Full Review Date	July 2022

Contents.....	1
1. Foreword and Introduction.....	2
1.1 Foreword.....	2
1.2 Introduction .....	3
1.3 Associated Plans Procedures and Policies .....	4
1.4 Strategic overview.....	5
1.5 Multi-Agency Working .....	6
2. Children Looked After and Care Leavers have good health and wellbeing .....	7
3. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are safe and have access to stable accommodation (including staying put) .....	9
4. Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential, through good access to education, training and employment .....	11
5. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society .....	13
5.1 Children in Care Council .....	14
6. Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships .....	16
7. Young people are prepared to become independent and successful adults .....	18
8. Delivery of the Strategy .....	20

### 1. Foreword and Introduction

#### 1.1 Foreword

Coming into care is usually a difficult experience for children and young people. Many children who become looked after do so because of family difficulties, neglect or abuse.

This strategy and our pledges are for every child who is looked after and our care leavers to enable them to have the best possible experience both in our care and leaving our care.

The priorities in this strategy are drawn from what our children looked after and care leavers have told us is important to them. The strategy reflects what children and young people in Rutland have asked for in The Pledge. The Children in Care Council will frequently review the pledges, and ensure we as corporate parents are challenged when needed.

We want this strategy to be a partnership strategy. We will develop it alongside our children and young people to ensure it consistently meets their needs; we uphold the pledges and fulfil our responsibilities as a corporate parent.

We will work closely with our Children in Care Council (SUSO – Speak up Speak Out) and our Care Leavers to continue to ensure our priorities for children and young people are upheld and ensure they change as the needs of our children and young people change. We want to do all we can to support our children and young people to achieve their potential, and we feel strongly that this strategy will further develop and influence the work we do.

By working together we are confident that we can deliver this strategy and give children and young people who are looked after and our care leavers the opportunity to thrive in their families, their schools and their communities.

We continue to be ambitious for our Children Looked After and Care Leavers and we want this strategy to be aspirational. We remain committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and young people for whom we are corporate parents.

Our corporate parenting responsibility does not stop when young people leave care. We want our young people to leave us; we will not leave them. As a corporate parent in Rutland we want:

**To ensure the service and support we deliver to our children looked after and care leavers, would be good enough for our child, our young person and our family.**

We would like to thank all the children looked after, our young people and care leavers in Rutland for their contribution the Pledges which has supported this strategy being developed and their continued feedback on what matters to them and how well we are delivering our service.

Many thanks



***Councillor Richard Foster***

Children's Services Portfolio Holder and Chair of Corporate Parenting Board

## 1. Foreword and Introduction

---

### 1.2 Introduction

The Rutland's **Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-2020** has been developed by the County Council and its partners to set out our ambitions for the children and young people in our care. This strategy is exclusively focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for the children looked after and care leavers for whom we are Corporate Parent, and is underpinned by our vision:

**To ensure the service and support we deliver to our children looked after and care leavers, would be good enough for our child, our young person and our family.**

We have endeavoured to make sure this strategy reflects the promises we have made in The Pledge: Our Promise to Children and Young People in our Care and our Care Leavers.

This strategy is reliant on good partnership working, and we know that the best outcomes for children looked after and care leavers can only be achieved through this. The success of this strategy relies on the commitment of the whole County Council; foster carers and; commissioners and providers of healthcare; schools and colleges and all public and voluntary sector organisations in Rutland which contribute to improving the lives of children and young people in our care and ensuring our care leavers have all they need in their transition into adulthood.

The strategy is built around our Pledges which our children in care council developed. Our pledges are for children looked after and care leavers. This document looks at each outcome in turn providing national and local information, as well as the view of children and young people from Rutland.

Each outcome is then described with a list of outcome statements which give more detail about what we aspire to achieve for children and young people.

#### **We aspire to ensure all:**

---

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are happy and have good Health and Well Being

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are safe and in safe and stable placements (including staying put offer)

Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their full potential and have access to good education, training and/or employment.

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society

Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are prepared for adulthood

The strategy is accompanied by our Pledge Scorecard which will be reviewed and updated prior to each Corporate Parenting Board and will include feedback from children looked after, care leavers and professionals.

All of the outcome statements and measures identified in the strategy are important and agencies will continue to seek improvements in all aspects of work with children looked after, the Annual Action Plan provides a vehicle for the multi-agency Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy Group to drive improvement in the selected focus areas.

## 1. Foreword and Introduction

---

### 1.3 Associated Plans Procedures and Policies

This strategy has been developed using multiple sources of information to ensure it reflects what is most important to children looked after and care leavers in Rutland:

#### **The Pledge: Our Promise to Children and Young People in Our Care**

The Pledge was developed in consultation with our children looked after; it sets out the issues important to children and young people and the promises we have made in response to them.

#### **Children and Social Work Act 2017**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 is an Act to make provision about children looked after, to make other provision in relation to the welfare of children, and to make provision about the regulation of social workers. The Act outlines a number of duties and responsibilities which the local authority must uphold in relation to Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

#### **Rutland Corporate Parenting Board Strategy 2017**

The strategy outlines the council's responsibility as a corporate parent

#### **Children Looked After Sufficiency Plan 2017-2020:**

In 2017, Children Looked after Sufficiency Plan which outlines our statutory duties and the plans set out the level of need at the time and provision of placement for Children Looked After in Rutland to support sufficient accommodation in the future

#### **State of the Nation Report 1: Children in Care and Care Leavers Survey 2015**

This report is first in a series of detailed briefings on the findings of the survey which will cover safety, education, leaving care and other critical issues.

The State of the Nation Report is the 2015 version of the 'Care Monitor' survey of children in care and care leavers which was originally run annually by the Children's Rights Director.

#### **Rutland Children, Young People & Families Plan 2016 – 2019**

The Rutland Children's Trust through collaborative partnership approach, supports the development and improvement of service for all Rutland's children and young people.

#### **Ofsted & CQC Inspection Frameworks**

The frameworks under which our services for children looked after and care leavers are inspected have been used as a guide to inform the development of this strategy.

### 1.4 Strategic overview

# Our Vision

Rutland gives every child and young person who is looked after or a care leaver the opportunity to thrive.

- In their families
- In their education, training and/or employment
- In their communities

Our Pledge	Outcomes	Delivery	Measures
Children Looked After (CLA) & Care Leavers (CL) have good health and wellbeing.	Children and young people are emotionally and physically healthy	Health and wellbeing board, Corporate Parenting board	Health Assessments Strengths and difficulties questionnaires
CLA and Care Leavers (CL) are safe and have stable accommodation (including staying put options)	Children and young people are safe from harm and exploitation and report feeling safe	CSE Strategy CLA reviews IRO Advocacy	Feedback from CLA surveys SUSO
CLA & CL achieve their full potential, <i>through accessing education, training and employment</i>	Children/young people have the best learning opportunities and access to activities	Virtual school Personal education plans One page profiles	Improvement in CLA attainment. Increased number of care leavers in EET
Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and participate in society.	Children and young people feel listened to, explained to and fully involved.	SUSO Corporate parenting board Pledges feedback.	Greater placement stability. Greater number of children attending reviews
Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships	Children /young people have a good relationship with their families, social worker, other professionals and carers	Staying Put Policy Foster carer recruitment strategy Pledge feedback	Greater number of staying put placements Reduced number of placement changes
Young people are prepared to become independent and successful adults	Young people have the skills and tools to move into adulthood	Young person feedback Assessment of need	Successful transition to leaving care and adulthood

### 1.5 Multi-Agency Working

Rutland Social Care will continue to work with Partner agencies and continue to support them in their role to ensure that children, young people who are looked after and care leavers achieve their full potential.



## 2. Children Looked After and Care Leavers have good health and wellbeing

### 2. Children Looked After and Care Leavers have good health and wellbeing

As Corporate Parents, we have a responsibility to ensure that the children and young people in our care are in **good health** or are being **helped to improve their health and wellbeing**, and that their health **needs are identified**. To do this, we need to consider a child or young person's health needs holistically, and address both physical and mental wellbeing.

We have a responsibility to ensure access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and therapeutic help and services for learning or physically disabled children and young people. These services must be available for as long as they are required. We also want to make sure that as young people grow up and they leave our care they have the information and support they need to maintain good health into adulthood.

#### NATIONAL PICTURE

##### Children's Care Monitor 2013/14

- 77% of those aged over 14 listed drugs amongst their top 5 dangers to children (compared with 49% of those aged under 14)
- 69% of over 14s listed alcohol (compared with 41% of under 14s)
- 85% of the children thought they were healthy or very healthy. Ten percent thought they were unhealthy or very unhealthy.
- Care leavers were much less likely than others to rate themselves as healthy or very healthy; 71% of care leavers rated themselves healthy or very healthy.
- Only 65% of care leavers reported getting enough help to stay healthy, much lower than the 85% reported by children and young people generally.
- 50% of children in children's homes, 45% of foster children and 54% of care leavers said they had **mental health or emotional problems**.
- The rates of emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties are 4 to 5 times higher amongst children looked after than the wider population.

#### LOCAL PICTURE

- Rutland's performance in relation to immunisations and dental checks for children looked after are improving.
- The Children and Young People's Plan specifically includes children looked after and is reviewed within our Children's Trust Board.
- In 2016 completion of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) results were below average in Rutland and we are seeing an increase in these being completed but timing is crucial as it makes it difficult for a clear picture to be formed of emotional wellbeing across children looked after in the county.
- Our Care Leavers in Nov 2016 were judged as 'Good' by Ofsted, we are above the national average with regards to having good outcomes for our care leaver
- Our Care Leavers are all offered exit health assessments.
- Initial Health Assessments (IHA's) and Review Health Assessments (RHA's) have improved significantly and we continue to improve this area and ensure timely assessments.

#### Views of Children and Young People

##### YOUR HEALTH

The average mark out of 5 for **your health** is:

**3.6**

Some figures from our survey with children and young people were:

- 80% of children and young people reported that they made some to all of the decisions about their health.
- No children felt decisions were made on their behalf

## 2. Children Looked After and Care Leavers have good health and wellbeing

OUTCOME STATEMENTS Children and young people...	OUTCOME MEASURES
See themselves as healthy and happy	Direct feedback questionnaire
Have good emotional wellbeing	SDQ scores SDQ's being available for all RHA's
Have support with their mental health needs when they need it	Access to CAMHS
Have their health needs assessed when they enter care	Completion of initial health assessments
Have their health needs regularly assessed	Completion of annual (or 6 monthly) health assessment
Have ongoing access to health services (including when they have left care)	GP registration Completion of "Important Health Information" for care leavers – 'Clayton File'
Do not misuse drugs and alcohol	Children identified as having a substance misuse problem have access to support
Have good sexual health and access to contraception	C-card registration, low Teenage pregnancy rates
Have good oral health	Regular dental checks completed
Have received immunisations as per routine immunisation schedule	Immunisation rate
Have the opportunity to enjoy physical activities and exercise	Children in healthy weight and height range

YEAR

### 1 FOCUS

- In the first year we have chosen to focus on five important areas that we feel we need a better understanding of in Rutland: SDQ's, and ensuring these fit in with their health assessments, mental health and emotional wellbeing, initial and review health assessments Dental checks and Advocacy services
- Because SDQ information is only collected for around half of our children looked after, we do not have a very good overall picture of the emotional wellbeing of the children and young people in our care.
- All children will have completed SDQ's and they will be completed prior to their review health assessment so that the assessment is fully informed by their SDQ
- We want our children and young people to have access to mental health service (CAMHS) as well as other specialist therapy as needed and without delay, we will ensure plans are progressed and specialist services accessed as needed.
- In addition, we know that remains very important to ensure we get the basics right for all children looked after, starting with ensuring we complete Initial Health Assessments within timescale for children when they enter care.
- We want to ensure our young people have and are aware of our advocacy service so their voice is heard and we ensure they are listened too.

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers based on what they have told is *'to Keep them in the best possible health both now and in the future'*

## 2. Children Looked After and Care Leavers have good health and wellbeing

### 3. Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers are safe and have access to stable accommodation (including Staying Put)

As Corporate Parents, we have a responsibility to ensure that the children and young people in our care live in **safe, stable and appropriate homes or families** and that they live in homes which meet their needs and do not move frequently or unnecessarily.

From the age of eighteen young people are no longer legally 'in care' or 'looked after' and therefore fostering arrangements and legislation relating to children placed with foster carers no longer applies. In circumstances where a young person remains with their former foster carer/s after their eighteenth birthday, the arrangement is deemed a "Staying Put" arrangement.

We need to ensure CLA are protected or helped to keep themselves safe from **bullying** and discrimination. We need to be aware of any risks associated with **offending, going missing or being sexually exploited** and do all we can to reduce those risks. As young people grow up and leave our care, we need to make sure that they are properly equipped to keep themselves safe and have access help to maintain their safety if needed.

#### NATIONAL PICTURE

##### Children's Care Monitor 2013/14

- The top three dangers listed by over 14s in 2013 were, in order with the most frequently listed first, **drugs, alcohol and bullying**. The top three dangers listed by those under 14 were bullying, strangers and drugs.
- 92% of the children and young people surveyed in 2013 said they felt very safe or fairly safe in the **buildings in which they lived**.
- Those aged 14 and over felt much safer at **School or College** than those under 14.
- 29% of children told us in 2013 that they were getting **bullied** sometimes, often or always.
- Compared with foster children, those in children's homes reported much more bullying by being threatened, and through cyber bullying.
- Over the last 4 years, there has been a steady reduction in how many children say they **worry** a lot or a little about their safety.
- In 2009, 43% said they worried a little or a lot about their safety, in this 2013 survey it went down to 32%.

#### LOCAL PICTURE

- Placement stability in Rutland is very good.
- A new commissioning plan has been put in place to ensure that we can maintain good quality and good value external placements.
- We have a Foster Care Recruitment Strategy to enable us to recruit more in house cares allowing children entering our care to live closer to their family, friends and schools.
- Work has also been undertaken to consider the needs of children placed out of county to ensure we are equipped to keep children who live further afield safe.
- Part of the focus on "Identity" work with carers is being developed around bullying, including cyber bullying.
- There is guidance and policy in place around children going missing.

#### Views of children and young people

##### FEELING SAFE & SUPPORTED

The average mark out of 5 for **Feeling safe & supported by your carers** is

Some comments made by children and young people were:

- *"They taught me a lot of things."*
- *"3 of my carers did but the agency foster carers did not."*

## 3.9

OUTCOME STATEMENTS Children and young people...	OUTCOME MEASURES
Have a safe place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations against carers</li> <li>• Suitable accommodation for care leavers</li> <li>• Quality of external placements</li> </ul>
Feel safe where they live	Direct feedback questionnaire
Are safe from sexual exploitation	Referrals/CSE Strategy Meetings
Don't go missing from care	Missing episodes
Go to school every day	School attendance
Are safe from bullying	Training Delivered to carers to include Cyber Bullying
Aren't involved in offending behaviour	Offending rates
Are safe from avoidable injuries	A&E admissions
Are safe from self-harm	Hospital admissions for self-harm

## YEAR 1 FOCUS

- Our first focus, which underpins many of the other outcome statements, is to ensure that children and young people in our care, and those who have left care, have a safe place to live.
- Our responsibility includes ensuring our internal foster carers are safe and in addition ensuring that any placement we commission externally keeps our children safe.
- This also includes ensuring that children and young people themselves have appropriate opportunities to speak out if they feel unsafe where they live.
- Because we know that children in care have particular vulnerabilities in relation to CSE and going missing, we are making these issues a focus for our first year.
- With the support of the LSCB, we will continue to strengthen our response to these issues and ensure that all those caring for our children looked after are as well-equipped as possible to address the risks associated with going missing and CSE.
- Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers based on what they have told is *'they want the most supportive carers who will help them feel happy, safe and well cared for'*
- We want to improve our understanding of the issue of bullying, and think about the best way for agencies to work together to identify and prevent bullying.

## 4. Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential, through good access to education, training and employment

### 4. Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential, through good access to education, training and employment

As Corporate Parents, we have a responsibility to ensure that every child and young person in our care **attend school or other educational provision** and that they **learn**. We need to provide accurate and timely assessments of their needs, as well as specialist support where it is needed to help them to make good progress in their learning and development wherever they live.

Our children Looked after should receive the same **support from their carers** as they would from a good parent in relation to their schooling. It is important that we support children and young people to explore their talents in other areas and provide opportunities to take part in **activities outside of school and participate in society**.

As young people grow up and leave our care we need to support them to engage in **further education or training, or move into work**.

#### NATIONAL PICTURE

##### Children's Care Monitor 2013/14

- 88% of the children rated their **education as good or very good**, and 2% rated it as bad or very bad.
- 81% of the children and young people in education said they were **doing well or very well** in their education; 4% said they were doing badly or very badly.
- The percentage of children who have **changed schools** because of a change in placement has fallen from 67% in 2010, to 52% in 2013.
- 69% of the children who had changed schools reported that the **change was in their best interests**. Only 15% thought the change of school had definitely not been in their best interests.
- 76% of the children in the 2013 monitor told us their carers or staff at home gave them some or a lot of **help with their school or college work**.

#### LOCAL PICTURE

- At Key Stages 1 and 2, children looked after in Rutland perform above national average in reading and maths, but below in writing.
- Children Looked After are also progressing very well between KS1 and KS2, and the gap between CLA and their peers is rapidly closing.
- Just under a third of Children Looked After make expected progress in English and Maths between KS2 and KS4, and GCSE results are improving.
- We need to improve the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) which is a clear focus.
- High percentage of our care leavers are in education, training and/or employment.
- We are above the national average with regards to educational attainment for our CLA and Care Leavers

#### Views of children and young people

##### YOUR EDUCATION

The average mark out of 5 for **your education** is:

**3.9**

This is the second highest score.

Some comments made by children and young people were:

- "College is really good...very supportive and they helped me out straight away."
- "I would feel I could do better at a school closer to home."

## 4. Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential, through good access to education, training and employment

OUTCOME STATEMENTS Children and young people...	OUTCOME MEASURES
Go to school every day	School attendance
Are supported to remain in the same school	Exclusion rates / School moves
Achieve the best results they can in primary school	Age Related Expectations in reading, writing and maths
Make good progress each year in school	Expected progress in reading, writing and maths/English and Maths
Leave school with good GCSE results	Age Related Expectations in English and Maths (at GCSE)
Are supported to attend school in Rutland where possible	Out of county placements
Remain in education or training or move into employment after leaving school	EET figures for care leavers
Have the opportunity to access a university education	University attendance amongst care leavers
Enjoy learning and school life	Direct feedback questionnaire
Have the opportunity to join in out of school activities	Through C&YP feedback through PEP form
Are supported to succeed in their chosen out of school activities	Case study examples

### FOCUS FOR YEAR 1

- We know that education is important through all stages of childhood and adolescence, and every child looked after has a Personal Education Plan which reflects this.
- Across the county as a whole, the proportion of children looked after securing 5 GCSEs at A\*-C (including English and Maths) requires improvement as does the proportion making expected progress in reading, writing and maths by the end of primary school.
- With that in mind, in the first year of this strategy we will concentrate on supporting young people to achieve the best progress they can and the best results they can at GCSE level.
- This strategy also includes care leavers, and in Year 1, we will also focus on supporting young people to remain in education or training, or move into employment after they have left school.
- We are ambitious for all of our children looked after and we want to support them to meet their potential in whatever area their talents lie.
- For some young people, we hope that this will result in the opportunity to attend university and we want to promote that possibility and support them through that process.

## 5. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society

### 5. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society

As Corporate Parents, we have a responsibility to ensure that we listen to the **wishes and feelings** of all children and young people in our care and take them into account when making decisions. This responsibility extends from frontline social workers, to the most senior decision-makers.

Children Looked after and young people should be seen by their social worker alone and understand what is happening to them, they should be involved in developing plans relating to their care, education and future. Children Looked After and Care Leavers should be helped to understand their **rights and responsibilities** and have **access to an advocate and independent visitor**.

Children and young people's views should be represented by our Children in Care Council which is regularly consulted about services that affect them.

#### NATIONAL PICTURE

##### Children's Care Monitor 2013/14

- Nearly two thirds of the children (64%) said their **opinions** were usually or always asked on things that mattered to them. 10% said their opinions were not usually, or never, asked.
- Overall, over half the children (55%) said their opinions usually or always **made a difference to decisions** about their lives, while 14% said their decisions didn't usually or ever make a difference.
- Just over two thirds (67%) of the children in our survey told us they knew what a **care plan** is, and knew that they had one.
- Younger children were much more likely to be **told what was going to happen** than older young people were.
- 78% of children aged under 14 said they were usually or always told when major changes were going to happen in their lives, compared with 67% of those aged over 14.
- 55% of the children and young people both knew what an **advocate** is, and how to get hold of one. But 29% didn't know what an advocate is.

#### LOCAL PICTURE

- We have improved the way we include children and young people in CLA Reviews.
- We want to develop new materials to help children prepare and take part even further.
- We have focussed on ensuring that children and young people out of county have the same opportunities to take part in decision making and receive the same information as those living in Rutland.
- Children looked after contributed fully to our Pledges which set out our promises to them. This document has played an important part in developing this strategy.
- We have an active and dynamic Child in Care Council as well as sub-groups for children and young people of different ages, and regular consultation events throughout the year, lead and supported by our Early Help.
- We are also getting better at making sure we routinely include the voice of the child in every element of our work, from case auditing to commissioning.

#### Views of children and young people

##### LISTENING TO YOU

The average mark out of 5 for **Listening to you** is:

**2.3**

Some figures from our survey with children and young people

- 87% felt their carer or social worker listened to them some of the time.
- 93% felt they could share their wishes and feelings about the support they receive with their social worker

## 5. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society

### 5.1 Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council – Speak Up, Speak Out (SUSO) is run by and for children and young people in care. It is to help improve being in care. SUSO organises regular events and activities where young people can share their views and meet others who understand what it is like to be in care. SUSO meet regularly with senior managers including the lead member for children's services to put young people's views forward and agree what needs to change.



Some of the changes SUSO has made so far:

#### **SUSO Members said:**

*We want foster carers to be given a 'welcome to the family' booklet to complete in order to help support young people placed in emergency foster care placements.*

#### **We did**

*The booklet has been developed with SUSO members and is given to all foster carers from December 2016 – this is a practice standard.*

#### **Care leavers & older young people living in care said:**

*We would like our own events that are aimed specifically at our age group and did not include younger children placements.*

#### **We did**

*Developed a residential activity weekend (June 17) for all CLA aged 15+ and care leavers.*

#### **SUSO Members said:**

*We want a commitment to life story work being completed within one year of a child coming into care in Rutland.*

#### **We did**

*The Corporate Parenting Board approved this and made this one of our pledge promises.*

## 5. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society

OUTCOME STATEMENTS Children and young people...	OUTCOME MEASURES
Are involved in making plans and giving feedback about their care	Participation in CLA Reviews and Foster Carer Reviews
Are involved in making plans about their future	Pathway Plans completed
Are involved in making plans about their education	Personal Education Plans (PEPs) /EHC Plans completed
Have chance to talk to their social workers alone	Case recording
Have chance to give feedback about the support they've received	Through case audits
Know how to make complaints if they want to	Number of complaints made Direct feedback
Can access support from an advocate if they want to	Number of children with an advocate
Have chance to tell us if we have kept to The Pledge	Pledge evaluation
Feel listened to	Direct feedback questionnaire Direct consultation

### FOCUS FOR YEAR 1

- During 2017/18 we are going to focus on making sure that children and young people have opportunity to be actively involved in making plans and giving feedback about their care, their education and their future.
- This includes Personal Education Plans, Education Health and Care Plans, Pathway Plans and taking part in LAC Reviews.
- We want to make sure we continue to use and develop creative and inclusive methods to ascertain the wishes and feelings of children in our care and ensure that they are reflected in plans made about their lives.
- We will also focus on making sure that children and young people feel listened to. We will keep looking for improvements in the ways we communicate with and feedback to children and young people, so that even at times when we aren't able to make the choices they want us to, we keep doing our best to explain why.

### 6. Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships

As Corporate Parents, we have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people in our care have appropriate, carefully assessed and supported **contact with family and friends** and other people who are important to them. We should also seek to place children and young people with their brothers and sisters when this is in their best interests.

At the same time, we need to support children and young people to build **positive relationships with the adults caring for them**. We know that this underpins positive outcomes in many of the other areas discussed in this strategy.

It is also important to help children looked after understand their lives and their identities through life story work that is effective and provided when they need it.

#### NATIONAL PICTURE

##### Children's Care Monitor 2013/14

- By far the main reason for children saying they should not have come into care was that they had **wanted to stay with their family**. Almost one in six disagreed with the view that they weren't being looked after properly at home.
- Even though the law now says that visiting **social workers should speak to children in care in private**, only 40% of children in this year's monitor told us this happens on every visit.
- Almost a third of children (31%) had already had more than three **different placements** in care so far. 10% had already lived in eight or more different placements. 55% said there had been **no choice** of placement the last time they moved.
- 70% of children in care told us that they do not feel they are made to 'stand out' from others at school or college because they are in care. 15% told us they did feel made to 'stand out'.
- 71% of the children in care who had one or more siblings also in care were **separated from brothers or sisters** by being placed to live in different placements.

#### LOCAL PICTURE

- A review of the structure is underway which will incorporate the Council's Contact Service and will strengthen the support to children in care.
- We are implementing a new methodology to support Signs of Safety which will result in more child-centred process and more consistency for children.
- Contact remains an important issue within the revised Pledge, with children and young people saying "We would like contact with our brothers, sisters and families to be arranged with a diary in advance" and "We would like to know if people are not meeting us and why to help us understand"
- Our ARC/CLA Panel has been refreshed that makes sure support is in place to ensure that the child's relationship with their carers and within their placement can be sustained long-term.
- We know that we need to improve the consistency and quality of life story work with children, to ensure they understand their lives and identities.

#### Views of children and young people

##### YOUR EXPERIENCE

The average mark out of 5 for **Your experience of being in care** is:

**3.7**

Some comments made by children and young people were:

- *86% felt supported in having contact with their family.*
- *"I had a positive experience and still get support even now."*
- *"Most people were generally very nice."*
- *"Being in care wasn't the best experience but it could have been worse."*
- *"I had a difficult few years but things are getting better."*

## 6. Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships

OUTCOME STATEMENTS Children and young people...	OUTCOME MEASURES
Are supported to maintain meaningful contact with their birth families (where appropriate)	CLA reviews/pathway plan reviews
Are supported to become part of the community where they live	Out of county placements "From a distance" audit
Have an understanding of safe and positive relationships	CLA reviews/pathway plan reviews
Are supported to maintain positive relationships with the people they live with	Placement Breakdowns
Are supported to manage the ending of relationships positively	Placement Breakdowns
Have as few changes in social worker as possible	Changes in social worker
Feel positive about their relationships with friends and family	Direct feedback

### FOCUS FOR YEAR 1

- We know from The Pledge, and consultation as part of developing this strategy, that contact with parents, siblings and other family members remains an important issue for children and young people in our care.
- In the first year of this strategy we will focus on continuing to improve the way contact is supported, including the way we support young people to maintain positive contact with birth families after they have left care.
- Whilst we have good levels of placement stability, we have seen an increase in placement moves in the last year.
- We will focus on supporting children and young people to develop and maintain positive relationships with their carers, enabling greater stability and a happier experience of the place where they are living.
- As part of the action plan in the first year, we also want to focus on the best way to support children and young people to manage the ending of significant relationships in their lives in the most positive way possible.

## 7. Young people are prepared to become independent and successful adults

---

### 7. Young people are prepared to become independent and successful adults

Our responsibilities as Corporate Parents don't end when a young person turns 18. We continue to have a responsibility to ensure that young people who have been in our care have a suitable place to live and the opportunity to access education, training or employment. Some young people, for example those with disabilities or mental health needs, will need to access support from adult services after they turn 18. We have a responsibility to support their transition into those services.

As we would expect from all good parents, we need to begin preparing young people in our care to move into adulthood before they turn 18. We have a legal responsibility to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to participate in developing that plan.

#### NATIONAL PICTURE

##### Children's Care Monitor 2013/14

- 11% of those about to leave care told us that they were **not getting any help** they needed in preparing for their future life after care.
- The percentage of those about to leave care saying they are getting help **to prepare for getting a job** has fallen steadily over recent years, from 60% in 2010, down to 50% in 2013.
- 74% of care leavers in the 2013 care monitor rated the **support** they were getting as good or very good. 9% as bad or very bad.
- 69% of care leavers said that they were living in the **right accommodation** for them, and 24% that they were not.
- 62% of care leavers said they had a **pathway plan**; 18% didn't know what a pathway plan was. 6% knew what a pathway plan was but said they definitely didn't have one.
- 82% of care leavers who knew about their pathway plans said they **had a say** in what was in their plans.

#### LOCAL PICTURE

- Young people tell us they feel ready for independence
- The majority of our care leavers are in education, training and/or employment
- All our care leavers live in a safe and stable environment
- All our young people/care leavers have a pathway plan

#### Views of children and Young People

##### Your Future

The average mark out of 5 for **Your future** is:

**4.5**

This is the highest score.

Some figures from our survey with children and young people:

- 67% of children and young people said they were encouraged to develop their independent living skills such as cooking and cleaning.
- 73% of young people over 15 felt they had been given sufficient support in developing the life skills to be independent
- 80% of child had felt involved in their pathway plan

## 7. Young people are prepared to become independent and successful adults

OUTCOME STATEMENTS Children and young people...	OUTCOME MEASURES
Have a Needs Led Assessment to ensure all needs are identified and met	CLA Review and monthly data
Have an understanding of their own needs and the support that is available to them	CLA reviews and pathway plans
Have a robust pathway plan to support independence	IRO reporting
Have access to their files as requested and supported to understand their journey	Governance
Have access to adult services as required to ensure their needs continue to be met	Referrals to adults services and the timeliness to be measured
Have a Independence Passport	Data, CLA reviews

### FOCUS FOR YEAR 1

- In the first year of this strategy we will focus on continuing to improve the access young people have to Staying Put to ensure young people have the right support
- We want to ensure young people who are ready for and wanting to move into the way contact is supported, including the way we support young people to maintain positive contact with birth families after they have left care.
- We will focus on supporting young people to develop and maintain positive relationships with their families and carers, enabling greater stability and a happier experience and support into adulthood.
- All young people will have an independent passport and needs led assessment which will fully identify and address their needs to ensure they have all the support require enabling them to move in independent living.

### 8. Delivery of the Strategy

The Strategy is accompanied by our **Ofsted Next Steps Plan** which will drive forward improvement outcomes for children and young people. The Action Plan has a number of recommendations which will be addressed through 2017/18.

We have our Pledges which will further support and monitor this strategy and ensure it is effective as well as holding us to account for areas which do not progress.

This Strategy will be reviewed along with the Pledges prior to each Corporate Parenting Board to ensure we progress in delivering the best possible service to our children looked after and Care Leavers.

This Strategy to be Multi-Agency, we want to work closely with partners as this is the best way and to ensure that Children Looked After and care leavers receive the best possible outcomes.

As a multi-agency and as corporate parent we all will:

- Provide oversight of the actions associated with their outcome
- Offer their expertise in developing realistic and meaningful actions
- Act as champions for their outcome within their organisations

Relevant professionals from across different partner organisations form the multi-agency **Corporate Parenting Board**. This group, will monitor progress and support activity within the Next Steps Action Plan. Regular updates on progress will be delivered to the **People Directorate Management Team** and **Children in Care Council**.

Twice a year, progress will also be reported to the **Corporate Parenting Board** with an annual report provided to the **Children and Young People's Scrutiny**. It is important that the governance of this strategy reflects its multi-agency nature, and as such, updates will also be provided to the **Children's Trust, Board** and **Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board** as appropriate.

At the end of the year, all of the actions and all of the outcome statements within the Strategy will be evaluated.

Children and young people will be a key part of this evaluation and will be invited to give their feedback on how things have improved during the year, and what we need to focus on next. Based on the end of year evaluation, the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy Group will identify a set of outcome measures which will be the focus of the next year's Annual Action Plan.