

THURROCK COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 24



Forward by Cllr Adam Carter (Chair of Corporate Parenting Committee)

- In Thurrock, we believe that children should be given the best start in life, with every opportunity to develop and thrive. Our number one priority will always be the safeguarding of our children and young people; ensuring that they are happy, safe, and well-prepared for adult life.
- When a child is looked after, the whole Council becomes their Corporate Parent. As Corporate Parents we have a special responsibility to make sure children and young people who have had disrupted experiences of family life get the support they need to live the happiest and healthiest lives possible. This means ensuring that our children are at the centre of our thinking and work and that we make sure that they have all the support they need. I want to ensure we all have high aspirations for our children looked after and care leavers as we have for the children growing up in our own homes, with our families and the people we are close to.
- To ensure we provide the best services and support for our children and young people, we must work together in partnership to provide joined up services that will help them to reach their full potential. I welcome Thurrock's Corporate Parenting Strategy which outlines our key vision and principles for our children looked after and care leavers and look forward to working with services, young people, and our partners to develop and deliver the best services possible.

Introduction

- Corporate parenting refers to the collective responsibility of all elected members, council staff and partner agencies to provide the best possible support and safeguarding to Children Looked After (CLA). Thurrock's Corporate Parenting Committee brings together all these people and provides a welcoming forum for our children, foster carers and care leavers to discuss and influence the full range of services available to them.
- This strategy outlines our priorities for supporting children looked after and sets a framework for the council and partners to be held accountable on their promises. Delivery against our commitments will be monitored diligently by the Corporate Parenting Board.
- Members will listen to young people and check that they are happy and healthy, receiving a top quality education and have access to training and employment opportunities, as well as their own home to go to when the time comes to live independently.
- Our approach means we engage directly and routinely with our children and young people, their carers and social workers, encouraging them to share experiences so that we can better understand the issues they face and adapt services to meet their needs.
- Our young people also give regular feedback through their statutory reviews, Mind of My Own App, participation events and the Children in Care Council. Children's experiences will always form the centre of our approach, with the foundations of this strategy set by young people. Our priorities respond directly to issues of primary concern for children young people and their carers.
- In Thurrock we understand that each young person has a unique history and vision for the future. This strategy seeks to ensure that their vision becomes a reality - every child must be supported to reach their full potential, with no one left behind. We have a diverse group of children and young people in care. Their experiences need to be heard, considered and acted upon. We are proud to have such a diverse group of looked after children in our care and will actively encourage everyone to feel confident and proud of who they are. Whatever their circumstances or characteristics, all our young people will receive complete support to make every success of their lives.

Children Looked After in Thurrock



In Thurrock we have a relatively stable Children Looked After population, which is diverse in make-up. In recent years the numbers of older children have increased reflecting numbers of older children starting care but over the last year our number of children looked after has decreased by a small number.

- The number of children looked after at March 2022 was 294, a rate of 64.8 per 10k compared to similar authorities of 65% and England average of 67% in 2020/21.
- During 2021/22 121 children started to be looked after and 122 left care during the year.
- 60.5% Male and 39.5 % female
- 30.5 % under 10years, 41.2% aged 10-15 and 28.2% aged over 16yrs
- 24 (8.1%) of CLA have a disability
- 27 (9.2%) of our children looked after were unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- 26.2% of the CLA population were BME
- Care leavers engaged in employment, education or training: 17/18yrs 80% above statistical neighbours and national performance.

What our young people have told us

Consistency of staff is likely to help young people to engage with their social workers, counsellors, mentors.	Promote supportive relationships between adolescents, their peers and families.	Help young people to build resilience and find coping strategies.	Develop a wide range of community-based interventions with families.
Train social workers to recognise the signs of trauma experienced and provide trauma-informed approaches.	IROs support relationships with peers and family. Where possible children are supported to return to family	Hear the child's voice. Provide help to children and young people to enable and encourage them to express their wishes and feelings.	Ensure access to early intervention for families through PASS
Continue giving young people opportunity to participate with interventions and opportunity to influence plans and decisions.	Ensure timely availability of services to access support and the right length of support.	Importance of good family relationships for the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people.	Ensure early intervention to support children's emotional and mental health in schools

Our priorities for looked after children and young people, 2022 – 24

- Safety and Permanence



- Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing



- Educational Achievement



- Employment and Independence



Priorities

Safety and Permanence

Key area of focus

- Children remain cared for in their family or return to family where it is safe to do so.
- Think Family and Early Help Service successfully working with children and young people on the Edge of Care
- Children move to permanent family care without delay
- Good outcomes secured through placement stability for children and young people who are looked after.
- Young people staying in their foster placements until they are ready to leave and feel prepared to live independently
- Young people will say they feel cared for and supported in their placements and are happy with the services that they are offered
- Increase in number of in house foster carers who are well supported and able to meet the needs of children with complex needs, sibling groups and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children.

How we will measure impact

- Reduction in numbers of children looked after.
- Timely matching for children to adopters
- Sufficiency Strategy to understand the placement requirements of our children including fostering recruitment
- Reduction in number of children placed at distance from their home, community and school
- Reduction of number of children placed in Residential settings and more children placed with families
- Monitor through permanence tracking
- Numbers of children staying put increase
- Young people will be prepared for independence and move on appropriately
- Feedback from children and young people during Feedback Weeks will demonstrate that children and young people are happy with the services that they are offered

Priorities

Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing

Key area of focus

- Involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives, and maximise the opportunity to make choices
- Children and Young People's health needs are assessed
- All children looked after have up to date immunisations, dental care and developmental checks where required.
- Children and young people have timely access to mental health assessment and treatment

How we will measure impact

- Attendance at LAC reviews Children in Care Council
- Advocacy feedback
- Feedback from Children and Young People
- Monitor timeliness of initial and annual health checks
- Through monitoring CAMHs performance and SDQ scores
- Care leavers have access to health passports

Priorities

Educational Achievement

Key area of focus

- To narrow the educational attainment gap between the CLA cohort and their peers
- Promote ambition for children looked after.
- We will identify any Special Education Needs (SEN) and meet these needs through an Education Health Care Plan or other SEN support - helping our young people overcome barriers to education attainment.
- Support young people to engage in further education and training

How we will measure impact

- The Virtual Head will ensure all children have a PEP that is supported by the designated teacher in school
- Children's outcomes at school and in education will continue to improve. Key stage and Attainment 8 scores are tracked
- More Young People entering Further Education
- More Young People in Training or Employment
- Increases in the number of young people going on to access higher education at university

Priorities

Employment and Independence

Key area of focus

- Ensure that CLA and Care leaver's rights and entitlements information is transparent and accessible.
- Care Leavers needing transition to Adult Social Care have timely assessment and plans
- Care leavers live in suitable accommodation and have access to a secure home when they are ready to manage a tenancy
- Care Leavers are engaged in employment, education or training
- Care Leavers are supported to develop independence skills

How we will measure impact

- Care Leaver Offer
- Big Wide World
- Pathway Plans
- Feedback from Care Leavers
- Tracking data EET
- Tracking data on suitable accommodation
- Care Leavers have good pathway plans to support them
- Track transition planning to Adult Social Care

CORPORATE PARENTING ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2024

Appendix 3

	Objective	Actions	Evidence	Lead	Completion/Review Date
1	Ensure that all Elected Members and partners are aware of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities	Provide copy of corporate parenting strategy to all Elected Members and partners.	Strategy distributed	Dan Jones/Janet Simon	July 2022
		Offer Corporate Parenting training to all Elected members and partners.	Training delivered to all members Training evaluation	Dan Jones/Janet Simon	Quarterly
2	Corporate Parenting Members strengthen their links with Children in Care Council and Care Leavers	Each Member of Corporate Parenting Committee (CPC) to attend the Children in Care Council (CiCC) at least annually by invitation Chair of CPC and Assistant Director to attend CiCC at least 6 monthly by invitation	Meeting minutes LAC more aware of CPC Improved collaboration and support	Participation Team and CPC Chair CPC Chair/Assistant Director Children's Services	Commencing July 2022 and annually thereafter 6 monthly
3	Corporate Parenting Committee Members to engage with LAC and Care Leavers to improve Services	CPC members support and attend Celebration events and appropriate activities attended by LAC and Care Leavers supported by the Participation worker	Feedback from young people and Members	Janet Simon/ CPC Chair	

CORPORATE PARENTING ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2024

4	Ensure all Children's Services Managers are aware of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities	<p>Link to Strategy sent to all CSC managers for dissemination</p> <p>Briefing to Managers</p>	Briefing delivered and Strategy shared	Janet Simon	July 2022
5	CSC and After Care managers regularly engage with CLA and Care Leavers to get an understanding of their lived experience of care and as a result are able to evidence an improvement in outcomes	<p>Managers to engage in and listen to the Voice of the Child through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful Supervision • Case Auditing • Work shadowing • Attendance at reviews • Exit Interviews 	Managers at all levels in Children's Service Managers routinely attend, contribute and facilitate improvement work with children and young people through these activities and are able to evidence change as a result of their engagement.	Strategic Leads Service Managers Team Managers	Regularly throughout the year
6	Ensure partner Agencies and all Council Departments are aware of the strategy and how it relates to their work,	Briefing through Local Safeguarding Childrens Partnership and engagement with partners	Minutes	Dan Jones/Janet Simon	Regularly throughout the year

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2024

Appendix 4

19 July 2022

Item	Lead Contributor	Purpose
Headstart Housing support to Care Leavers	Kate Kozlova-Boran/ Tiffany Bright	Report on Head Start Housing support to care leavers.
Corporate Parenting Committee Strategy 2022 - 2024	Dan Jones	For Members to discuss and approve the strategy
Children in Care Council Update	Open Door	To hear the views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Performance Report	Mandy Moore	To provide information on the performance of Children’s Services and trends.
Update on Initial Health Assessment Performance	Dan Jones	To provide an update on Initial Health Assessment performance and actions taken to improve it.
Sufficiency Strategy Update	Catherine Wilson/Dan Jones	To provide an update to committee on the performance in this area.

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2024

September 2022

Item	Lead Contributor	Purpose
Adoption Service Report Adoption Statement of Purpose	Dan Jones	To provide update and performance information on the Adoption Service
After Care Report	Luke Froment	To provide feedback on developments for Care Leavers
Update on Joint work and Housing Protocol for Care Leavers	Dan Jones /Ben Tovey	To report on the joint work between Housing and Social Care and the agreed arrangements for housing Care Leavers
Performance Report	Mandy Moore	To provide information on the performance of Children's Services and trends.
Children in Care Council Update	Open Door	To hear the views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers
CLA Health Report	Health	To provide an update to committee on the health offer to CLA
Update on Fostering Recruitment	Dan Jones	To provide an update on Fostering Recruitment in Thurrock

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2024

January 2023

Item	Lead Contributor	Purpose
LADO Report	Ruth Murdock	To provide feedback on the work of the Local Authority Designated Officer
Overview of Safeguarding Arrangements for Looked After Children	Ruth Murdock	To offer sufficient information to satisfy Elected Members that the safeguarding needs of Children including Looked After Children and Care Leavers are appropriately addressed
Placements and Commissioning Annual Report	Catherine Wilson	To provide assurance to the Committee about the work carried out with regards to commissioning and monitoring of children’s homes and supported accommodation.
Fostering Statement of Purpose Fostering Report	Dan Jones	To provide an update on the Fostering Service and share the Fostering Statement of Purpose
Children in Care Council Update	Open Door	To hear the views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Transition arrangements for CLA	Dan Jones/Iyobosa Osunde	To update Committee members on the joint work being undertaken between children and adult social care.
Performance Report	Mandy Moore	To provide information on the performance of Children’s Services and trends.
Virtual School Annual Report	Keeley Pullen	To report on the educational progress of Children Looked After

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2023

March 2023

Item	Lead Contributor	Purpose
Performance Report	Mandy Moore	To provide information on the performance of Children's Services and trends.
Early Help Annual Report Impact of edge of care work	Clare Moore	To provide information to the committee on Thurrock's Early Help Activity within Thurrock and the work carried out and the impact on children entering and leaving care.
Fostering and Adoption Panel Report	Dan Jones	To provide performance information on the Fostering and Adoption Panel.
Review Corporate Parenting Strategy	Dan Jones	Progress report
Participation Report	Ruth Murdock	To provide key messages to CPC about matters of importance to looked after children and care leavers
Children in Care Council Update	Open Door	To hear the views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Youth Offending Service Report	Clare Moore/Probation	To provide an overview to Committee on support provided to CLA and Care Leavers by the Youth Offending and Probation Services

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2024

June 2023

Item	Lead Contributor	Purpose
UASC Report	Luke Froment	To provide feedback to committee on the work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Missing Report	Clare Moore	To provide information to the committee on the work carried out with children who go missing to reduce episodes and report on findings of Return Home Interviews.
Private Fostering Report	Dan Jones	To provide information to the committee on Private Fostering Activity within Thurrock and the work carried out to ensure they are safe.
Children Looked After Initial Assessments – Update	Dan Jones /Health partners	To provide an update on the performance in this area and actions being taken to ensure children are having their health needs assessed and met.
Children in Care Council Update	Open Door	To hear the views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Performance Report	Mandy Moore	To provide information on the performance of Children’s Services and trends.
IRO Annual Report	Trevor Willis	To update Corporate Parenting Committee on the work of the IRO service
After Care Participation and Feedback Report	Luke Froment	To provide feedback on participation with care leavers

