

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 10th October 2016

Title of paper:	Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2016 – 2017 (One Year Refresh)	
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Other colleagues who have provided input:	N/A	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	31 st August, 2016	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:		
Strategic Regeneration and Development		<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools		<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services		<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer		<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture		<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration		<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>In order to fulfil its obligation as set out in Annex A of Ofsted’s ‘Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards’ (2016), local authorities are required to produce a strategic plan for looked after children that includes corporate parenting objectives.</p> <p>The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2016 – 2017 has been produced in order to meet this requirement. The strategy identifies strategic priorities. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board (‘the Board’) accepts the strategic priorities as ‘corporate parenting objectives’.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	To agree the strategic priorities. By doing so, the Board will accept the strategic priorities as ‘corporate parenting objectives’.	
2	To endorse the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2016 – 2017.	

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 As Corporate Parents we are committed to ensuring that children who come into our care, experience safe and positive parenting, are helped to achieve their full potential, and obtain the best possible outcomes. We are also dedicated to securing permanency, as quickly as possible for children who are unable to live with their birth parents or extended birth family network, through adoption or other arrangements.

- 1.2 To achieve this, all agencies involved in caring and supporting children in care and care leavers must work together. To work together effectively, a multi-agency approach is needed. This is only possible when all partners understand and accept their respective responsibilities. This in-turn requires a multi-agency strategy that clearly states the areas that require improvement (i.e. strategic priorities), the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the necessary improvements, and the lead person or agency that is responsible for each activity.
- 1.3 A strategic plan for looked after children, which includes corporate parenting objectives, education and housing priorities, planning for permanence and children's futures forms part of the mandatory documents listed in Annex A of the 2016 Ofsted inspection framework.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to set out our strategic priorities and corresponding strategic priority statements, and to explain how they were identified.
- 1.5 To produce Nottingham's strategic plan it was essential to identify a comprehensive list of strategic priorities which fully represented the assessed and expressed needs of children in care (CiC) and care leavers (CLs).
- 1.6 The strategic priorities described in this report reflect the expressed needs of CiC and CLs as detailed in the Children in Care and Care Leavers 'Have Your Say' 2015 Survey Full Report. The strategic priorities also reflect the assessed needs of CiC and CLs as determined through the analysis of national and local performance data.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board agrees the strategic priorities presented in this report. In doing so, the Board will accept the strategic priorities as 'corporate parenting objectives'.
- 2.2 Seven strategic priorities have been identified. The priorities represent areas that require improvement in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children in care and care leavers, and to meet the commitments set out in Nottingham City Council's 'Children in Care and Care Leavers' Charter'. Paragraphs 2.3 to 2.37 provide a description of each priority and include corresponding local data and relevant feedback from our young people.

2.3

CiC and CL Strategic Priority One
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To actively seek the wishes and feelings of our young people and use the information to influence the care and support they receive. We will ensure our young people are able to access the advocacy, independent visitor and complaints services. We will ensure our young people feel treated with respect and will be given enough time and help to understand and be happy with their circumstances.
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2.4

Local Data

Children in care (aged 3 years and over) and care leavers are asked to take part in the annual Have Your Say (HYS) survey. Launched in 2011, responses to the survey help us gauge how well we are performing against the commitments made in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Charter. We achieved a 19% response rate in 2015. This is a slight improvement on the 2014 response rate of 18% but lower

than our 2012 high of 24%. In 2015/16 96.6% of children in care participated in their CiC review. 98.4% of CiC reviews took place within timescale.

2.5 Children in Care and Care Leaver Feedback

In 2015, 92% of our young people knew where to go if they had a problem or wanted to make a complaint. 84% knew where to go if they wanted to speak to an independent person apart from their social workers/personal advisors or carers (a 5% decrease from 2014). 7% said they would talk to the advocacy service; this is a decrease from 2014 (12.7%). There has been a reduction in the number of children who reported speaking to the complaints service from 2014 to 2015 with a figure of 18.6% to 12%, respectively. A reduction in the percentage of children reporting having spoken to the complaints or advocacy service should not automatically be considered a concern. Especially when it is considered that the majority of young people know where to go if they wanted to make a complaint or speak to someone independent.

2.6 93% felt that their carers had enough time for them 'All the time/ most of the time' in 2015. This is a small decrease on 2014 figures when 93.7% of young people felt their carers had enough time for them 'All the time/most of the time'.

2.7 A small proportion (7%) of our young people felt that their opinions were 'Never' heard and 'Never' made a difference to decisions made in their lives in 2015 survey; this is an increase from 2014 (4.4%).

2.8 69.6% attended their 'Looked After/ Pathway Plan review' and 23.5% did not attend their 'Looked After/ Pathway Plan review' but told their social worker/ personal advisors their thoughts before the meeting. This is an increase on 2014 and indicates an increase in involvement in CiC reviews. 2% did not attend the meeting and did not want to tell anyone their thoughts; this is a decrease on the previous year from 10.9%. 85% felt their voices were heard in their Looked after/ Pathway Plan review 'All the time/most of the time'. This is a decrease from 90% in 2014. There was an increase in those who felt that their voices were 'Never' heard in their Looked After/ Pathway Plan reviews, 10% compared to 5.7% in 2014.

2.9 14% felt that they 'Never' (9% 'Only sometimes') got help in preparing for their Looked After/ Pathway Plan review' in 2015, this is an increase on 2014.

2.10 **CiC and CL Strategic Priority Two**

To help our young people achieve educational success and to ensure those leaving care are engaged in either employment, education or training.

2.11 Local Data

93% of children in care have a completed Personal Education Plan (PEP); this is 2% below our 2015/16 target. The current educational attainment trends over Key Stage 2 and 4 are mixed. Key Stage 2 results have improved over the four academic years ending in 2015 and outcomes in Nottingham are higher across every measure (see table 2).

Outcomes for Children in Care	2013	2014	2015	2014 National Average
L4 +	53%	61%	64%	48%
L5	Not recorded	Not recorded	0%	-

Table 2: Key Stage – Reading, Writing and Maths Combined (Source: Corporate Parenting Board Report – Attainment of Children in Care (March, 2016))

2.12 Key Stage 4 results are down on the results in 2014. The proportion of pupils obtaining the headline 5+ A*-C passes including English and Maths in Nottingham was down 4% (1 pupil) on the 2014 results. However the number of pupils achieving a pass in at least one qualification improved from 62% to 84% in 2015.

2.13 65.9% of care leavers (aged 17 to 21 years) are in employment, education or training; this represents a 15.9% increase on the previous year and is 10.9% above the target set for 2015/16.

2.14 Children in Care and Care Leaver Feedback

61% felt that they are doing very well or well at school in 2015, the same as 2014 (53.5% in 2013, 69.3% in 2012 and 55.3% in 2011). There was a slight increase in those who felt they were not doing very well, at 4% compared to 3% in 2014. 21% did not know about their PEP, compared to 17.5% in 2014. 74% were happy with their PEP either 'All the time' or 'Most of the time'. However, 20% are not happy with their PEP – this is the largest proportion not happy since the survey began. 72% felt that they would do better with more help in 2015, a 10% increase from 2014, suggesting CiC may want more help with education than they are receiving.

2.15 **CiC and CL Strategic Priority Three**

To ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support in order to facilitate the best possible transition into independence.

2.16 Local Data

89.6% of care leavers (age 17 to 21 years) are in suitable accommodation; this represents an increase in performance of 9.6% on both the previous year and the set target. 94.7% of applicable¹ care leavers have a Pathway Plan that has been completed / authorised in the 6 months preceding the 2015/16 financial year end.

2.17 Children in Care and Care Leaver Feedback

In 2015 87% of our young people were 'Happy/Very happy' with the support they were getting to plan for their future. This has improved consistently year on year, from 76.3% in 2011. 80% felt that they have the basic skills to become independent but would like help with budgeting, preparing for work, further education and employment to move on their lives, similar to previous years. 51% would like help with becoming a responsible tenant.

2.18 38% knew what was in their Pathway Plan, a drop from 44% in 2014. 1 in 5 care leavers do not know they have a Pathway Plan.

2.19 **CiC and CL Strategic Priority Four**

To keep young people safe and avoid the criminalisation of young people through strong collaborative partnership work.

2.20 Local Data

Data shows that, in Nottingham, the percentage of CiC aged 10 years old or older with convictions/cautions and reprimands are at their lowest when compared to previous years – see table 3.

06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
13.00%	9.00%	9.00%	9.80%	9.00%	9.80%	8.70%	8.2%	6.0%

Table 3: (Source. OC2 Statutory Return)

¹ Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant care leavers

2.21 Fewer young people are being criminalised. This can be attributed to the high level of support from the Authority's CiC Police Officer and targeted support provided by our Youth Offending Team (YOT). The YOT have been effective in embedding the Restorative Justice approach throughout the Authority and achieved the Restorative Justice Council's (RJC) Restorative Service Quality Mark (RSQM). Research shows that restorative practice works. It delivers better outcomes for young people across schools, care, community and the Criminal Justice System. Done well, it has the potential to positively change the lives of young people and others.

2.22 Children in Care and Care Leavers Feedback
No relevant feedback has been collected in regards to this priority.

2.23 **CiC and CL Strategic Priority Five**
To ensure young people are healthy through the delivery of appropriate intervention and health services. This will be facilitated through the timely undertaking of health assessments, dental checks, immunisations, and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs).

2.24 Local Data
We did not meet our target of 90% in regards to young people with update to date health checks, dental checks and SDQs. Performance was 71.6%, 85.2% and 63.5%, respectively. A concerted drive from staff has led to a significant improvement in performance over quarter 3 and 4 of 2015/16. Work is being undertaken to ensure robust consistent processes are put in place to improve performance.

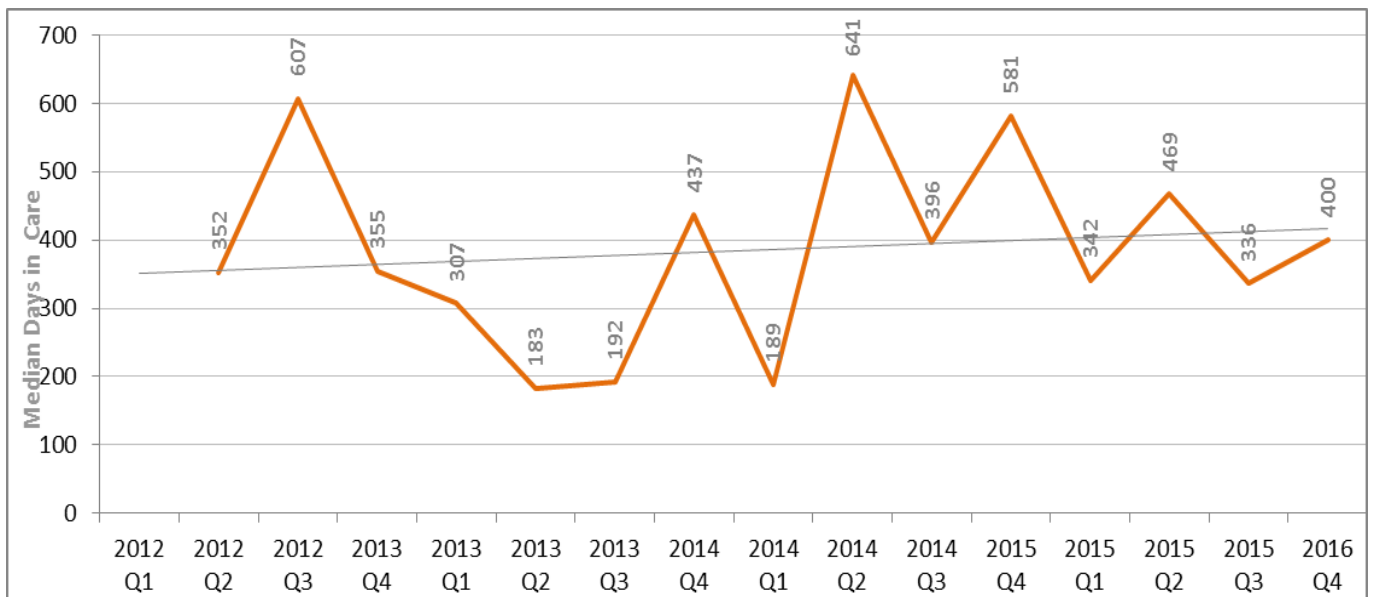
2.25 Dedicated Business support has now been re-established which has led to a rise in performance in regards to SDQ completion. Meetings are now established to look at children's emotional well-being and data is available to ensure we capture those young people with high scores have appropriate intervention is in place.

2.26 Front line practitioners are embedding health checks as party of their practice.

2.27 Children in Care and Care Leaver Feedback
In 2015, 88% felt healthy (all the time or often) in 2015, the same as 2014. Before 2014 this had reduced year on year since the survey began, (92.9% in 2013, 95.4% in 2012 and 97% in 2011). Most children in care (55.4%) and care leavers worried about their family, followed by 43% about their futures, 39% about their education and 32% about finding a job/career. 'Living on my own/loneliness' was the worry which had a 10% increase when compared to the previous year.

2.28 **CiC and CL Strategic Priority Six**
To reduce delays in securing stability and permanency for our young people. We will ensure unnecessary change in home, carer, social worker or school are avoided.

2.29 Local Data
Data shows fluctuations in the median number of days in care (graph 6) on a quarterly basis from April 2012 to March 2016. During this period the median number of days in care for those who have been discharged from care has risen from 352 to 400. This demonstrates the need for effective exit planning and obtaining permanency as early as possible.



Graph 6: Median Days in Care of Discharged CiC (Source - Management Information: Children in Care report)

2.30 We are committed to achieving adoption and permanency for our children. At the end of March 2016, the Authority had ninety-three children in the adoption process i.e. children who adoption was deemed in their best interest but had not been adopted. Forty-five children were adopted during the 2015/16 financial year, which represents a drop on the previous year, where 70 children were adopted. Reducing unnecessary delay in placing children for adoption remains a high priority. Recently published scorecard data shows children in Nottingham are waiting for too long to be placed for adoption. Timely adoption for our children remains as a priority.

2.31 Achieving stability is essential to achieving the best possible outcomes for our young people. Ensuring that unnecessary change in home, carer, social worker and school is avoided is therefore a priority. During 2015/16, 12.9% of our children in care had experienced three or more placement during the preceding 12 months – our aim was 11.1% or less. Data shows that 70% of children in care² had been the same placement for two or more years (our target was 66%). Performance is therefore good but needs to be maintained. Last year, 40% of children in care¹ had three or more allocated social workers. Improvements are required in this area.

2.32 Children in Care and Care Leaver Feedback

84% felt that 'where they are living is the right care place for them' in 2015, an increase from 2014. 85% felt safe where they lived 'All the time' compared to 76% in 2014, 81.2%. This is the largest proportion reporting they felt safe where they live since the survey began. 82% felt safe at school 'All the time', this is more than last year with 70.1% in 2014. This is the highest proportion stating they felt safe all the time at school since the survey began. 78% felt safe in their neighbourhood "All the time", this is an increase from 66.3 in 2014 and again the highest proportion since the survey began.

2.33 There has been an increase in the percentage of children stating they had experienced no changes in 2015 when compared to 2014, across all categories (home, carer, school and social worker), from 17% to 22%. However this still means

² Children who had been in care for at least 12 months

that 4 in every 5 children or young people have had a change of home, carer, social worker or school in the past 12 months. Despite these overall reductions, still more than half of respondents had a change of social worker over the previous 12 months.

2.34 For those who had a change, 61% felt the help they received to cope with the change was very good or good, a 3% increase from 2014.

2.35

CiC and CL Strategic Priority Seven
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To increase use of internal foster and residential placements through the recruitment and retention of foster carers, and to explore if the types and numbers of residential placement can be increased, in order to offer more local homes.
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2.36 Local Data

We use a mix of internal Local Authority recruited foster carers and Local Authority managed residential homes, as well as commissioned independent fostering agencies (IFAs) and external residential homes. At the end of March 2015/16, we had 59% of children placed in external IFA placements. Over the next year, we will be working to get a 50% of our children placed with our carers. We will also be working hard to ensure that 85% of our children are placed within 20 miles of Nottingham. Data shows that 80.7% of our young people live within 20 miles of the City (Analysis and Insight, 2016).

2.37 Children in Care and Care Leavers Feedback

Children in foster care are asked their views about the support they receive from their carer at each review and following a placement coming to an end. This information is factored into the annual fostering review which will agree what support carers need in their role.

2.38 The CiC and CLs strategic priorities are in accordance with the overarching priorities of the Directorate (as identified in the Children Integrated Services (CIS) Delivery Plan (2016)). Work undertaken to address the CiC and CL strategic priorities will contribute to the Directorate's effort to meet its priorities. For reference, paragraphs 2.39 – 2.44 describe the Directorate priorities and indicate corresponding CiC and CL strategic priorities.

2.39 **CIS Priority:** We will play an active role in supporting families to address the issues that can become barriers to learning and aspiration for children, young people and their parents/carers. We will work with education colleagues to support vulnerable learners, including looked after children. This will contribute to the successful delivery of Nottingham City's Education Improvement Strategy. We will promote a learning culture within our services that ensures our practice is informed by a strong evidence-base, emerging best practice and learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and other serious incidents. We will act on the findings of inspections, peer reviews, audit activity and our regular performance monitoring.

2.40 **Corresponding CiC and CL strategic priorities: 1 and 2**

2.41 **CIS Priority:** We will provide early help, parenting and family support, targeted interventions and specialist services to build resilience, not dependence, in the children and families we serve. We will work with our communities to build their capacity to support one another. We will work to safeguard children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation and we will support children who are in

our care and their carers. We will use restorative approaches with young people to enable them to make a positive contribution to their communities.

2.42 Corresponding CiC and CL strategic priorities: 3, 4 and 5

2.43 CIS Priority: We will work with our partners to ensure children and young people have the self-esteem, confidence and knowledge to keep themselves safe in their relationships, seeking help when needed. We will, at the earliest opportunity, directly support children, young people and their families that are struggling with significant mental health issues that may result in harm to themselves or others.

2.44 Corresponding CiC and CL strategic priorities: 5, 6 and 7

2.45 A strategic action plan has been developed by members of the Children in Care (CiC) Outcomes Group – see pages 23-33 of appendix 1. The action plan provides a summary of the activities that will be undertaken by the Authority and its partners to improve the areas identified as strategic priorities. The action plan is a working document and its content will be added to during the life of the strategy as the effectiveness of activity is monitored. The action plan included in the strategy serves to provide an indication of activity and should not be viewed as a comprehensive and complete list of remedial action.

2.46 Members of the CiC Outcomes Group will be required to;

- (a) Communicate the Strategic Priorities as set out in the Authority's strategic document to their respective service areas or agency
- (b) Ensure agreed actions relevant to their respective area are undertaken

2.47 The Board is asked to endorse the strategic action plan

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 As previously stated, as an Authority we are required by Ofsted to produce a document that sets out our strategic plan for looked after children. Therefore no other options have been considered when making the recommendation presented in this report.

4 FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 None.

5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 Not Applicable

6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)

6.1 Not Applicable

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because:

(Please explain why an EIA is not necessary)

Yes



Attached as Appendix x, and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

8.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers' Charter

9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

9.1 'Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards' (2016).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544533/Framework_and_evaluation_schedule_children_in_need_of_help_and_protection_CLA_and_care_leavers_LSCBs.pdf

9.2 Children Integrated Services Delivery Plan (2016)

<http://gossweb.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nccextranet/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=37856&p=0>