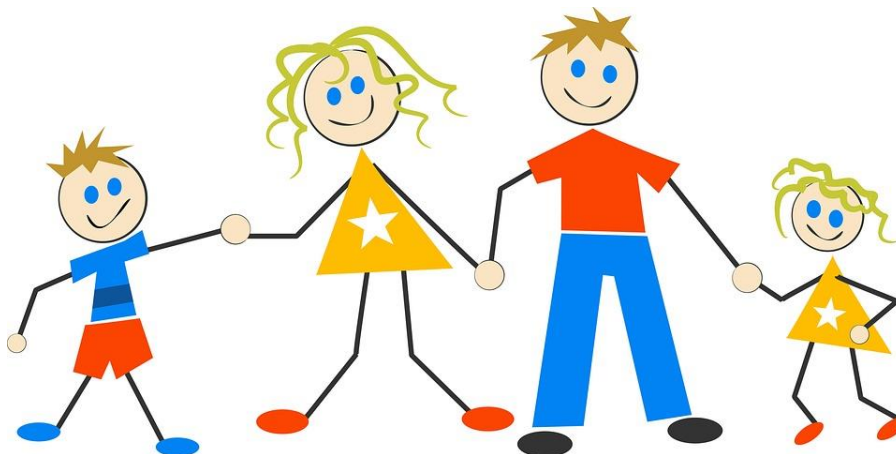


PETERBOROUGH AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

2022 - 2023



Document Control Sheet

Purpose of Document	To identify our priorities in relation to children in care and those that have experience of being in care. The vision, and plan to address the priorities.
Document ratified	
Equality Impact Assessment, Completed?	Not Applicable
Document Lead, author and their role	Myra O'Farrell Head of Service Corporate Parenting
What other documents should this be considered with	Sufficiency strategy Peterborough Strategic Framework Cambridgeshire Strategic Framework

Revisions

Version	Page	Description of Amendment	Date of Change
	throughout	The strategy has been amended to align the two separate Corporate Parenting strategies into one document.	December 2022

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Our Vision

At Peterborough and Cambridgeshire there is a vision to ensure children have the opportunities to reach their potential (PCC Strategic Framework 2022-2025: priority 2) are supported to have the best possible outcomes, accessing the right support to do so (Cambridgeshire Strategic Framework 2022-23)



We have a strong responsibility in ensuring that children who are in our care and who have had experience of it, are included in the priorities that shape their lives into adulthood. Our Strategy actively promotes resilience, improving life chances, developing creative approaches to care planning whilst adhering to budget requirements.

The Strategy links to the corporate priorities of both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and is part of the integral ambition of both councils to provide outstanding services to this vulnerable group.

The purpose of the Strategy is to amalgamate the two previously separate Corporate Parenting Strategies into one document as this is a shared service across both councils. The Strategy builds upon the strengths already achieved and the next steps in improving the areas identified that need further focus.

Cambridgeshire County Council Strategic Framework 2022-2023: Priority Four

Children and Young People: We are committed to ensuring Children and Young People have the opportunity to thrive, so we will:

- Focus on the early years of a child's life to provide them with the best opportunities possible to give them the Best Start in Life
- Develop the Children's Collaborative as part of the Integrated Care System in order to better align health, early help and social care support, to improve outcomes in areas including mental health and child criminal exploitation
- Work across the partnership including Health, District Councils, the community and voluntary sector to deliver targeted support at neighbourhood and district level in line with our Early Help Strategy: Strong Families, Strong Communities
- Continue the Family Safeguarding approach in our Children's Social Care Services, so that children and young people are safeguarded from harm
- Support our children and young people in care to achieve the best possible outcomes and ensure that our care leavers are able to access the support they need as they move into adult life
- Ensure that our schools have the support they need in order that all of our children, including those with Special Educational Needs succeed in learning.

Peterborough Corporate Strategy 2022-2025: Priority Outcomes 2

Prevention, Independence and Resilience Our plans:

Priority Outcomes for children and young people are safe from harm and lead healthy lives children and young people are confident, resilient, thrive in their learning and engage positively and actively in their communities.

All young care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing and employment needs.

Adults react to pressing social challenges and emergencies (i.e. cost of living crisis), providing imminent help & support to those who are most at risk of slipping into crisis long-term care and support when needed is personalised and keeps people connected to their communities

Ensuring transitions between health and social care services work well.

Find ways to create job opportunities for our most productive generation, then create an environment of hope and a vision and plan that inspires the young to do more and do more locally Education & Skills for All.

Narrow the productivity gap within our future City workforce through an education strategy and plan for early and secondary years and a plan our parents and communities can get excited about.

An adult skill offering that meets the needs of our residents and existing and future employers. This includes our residents that are most at risk of exclusion from society

How this Strategy links to other activities

- A Pledge to children in care and care leavers which outlines our commitments to them and the support they can expect from us
- A Local Offer for Care Leavers, informed by the views of our children and young people
- Corporate Parenting Committee's which are well established and are co-chaired with young people who have care experience.
- The Virtual School, which works with schools, colleges, training providers, education settings and Children's Social Care to improve educational outcomes for children in care and care supported by high quality placements needed by children in care and care leavers
- A joint Social Care and Housing Strategy that focuses on plans to prevent homelessness and support delivery of the Corporate Strategy
- A commitment to ensuring that Corporate Parenting responsibilities are embedded in all applicable policies, strategies and commissioning arrangements led by the Corporate Parenting Committees.
- The Council's overarching Corporate Strategies with dedicated priorities for children in care and those with care experience.

- A Placement Sufficiency Plan, that sets out how we will deliver the range and number of high quality placements needed by children in care and care leavers
- The children in Care Council and the Care reviewed and revised the children



Our Promise

The promises made to children in care and those who have experienced care are set out below and were produced by the Children in Care Councils in both Local Authorities. These therefore are the areas they feel are the most important aspects of how those caring for them should exercise their responsibilities.

Our Promise to Children and Young people in Care

1. **Keeping you Safe means** We will work to keep you safe and help you to keep yourself safe.
2. **Respecting You means** We will do everything we can to make you feel cared about and valued and respected as an individual.
3. **Being honest means** We will be honest with you and explain if we are unable to do something we said we would do. We will not make unrealistic promises to you.
4. **Making decisions together means** We will involve you in decision making so your views are listened to and will explain when we make a decision you may not agree with.
5. **Where you live means** We will work to keep you in a supportive and caring environment where you feel safe and happy.
6. **Your health means** We will support you to maintain a healthy lifestyle and help look after your physical and mental health.
7. **Your relationships means** We will help you see your family, friends and other people who are important to you. If there are people we can't support to see you we will explain why.
8. **Achievements means** We will support you to achieve your goals and reach your potential, in your education, hobbies and interests.

Those with Care Experience: the offer

1. **Respect-** We will listen to you as individuals with an open mind, with your different needs, ideas and beliefs. We will tailor the service to fit you or make sure you have an explanation if we are not able to do something for you.
2. **Helping you do the best you can-** We will value your strengths and talents, encouraging your aspirations. We will support you with education and employment. If we can't meet your needs we will try to help you find a service that can. We will do our best to help you break-down barriers you might encounter with other agencies, to ensure you reach your goals.
3. **Clear Communication-** We will stay in touch with you, make sure you can contact your worker in a way that is best for you. We will let you know how to complain or access an

advocate if you are not happy with the service you have. We will invite you to express your views on how services can be improved.

4. **Finding a home-** We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living. We will help you think about choices available and to find accommodation and furnishings that are right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times we might need to reconsider the plan depending on your differing needs.
5. **Support-** We will provide support set out in the current regulations and guidance. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We recognise that you might change your mind about what you want to do. If we cannot meet those needs we will try to help you find a service that can.

Strategic Context

The Children Act 1989 sets out Local Authority responsibilities to Looked After Children. Volume 3 of the Guidance Regulations: Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers and gives details of how Care Leavers should be provided with support and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 extended the responsibility of the Local Authority to young people leaving care, up to the age of 25.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of Corporate Parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for Looked After Children and Young People, and Care Leavers. Being a Corporate Parent means doing everything possible for every Looked After Child and Care Leaver to give them same opportunities that other children receive. This means that Corporate Parents should:

- act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those Children and Young People
- encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them
- make sure they have access to services
- make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships, education or work
- prepare them for adulthood and independent living

Local Authorities do not act alone in their Corporate Parenting role. The Children Act 1989 placed a duty on the NHS, Housing and Education authorities to assist Social Care Services to fulfil their responsibility by providing support and services.

What is Corporate Parenting

It means that there is a shared responsibility by the councils, the elected members, employees, and partner agencies to support children and young people in having the best start in life, no matter that starting point.

Being a good Corporate Parent means

- we accept children in our care are our responsibility
- we provide them with the same outcomes as any other reasonable parent
- prioritise their needs

We do this by working closely with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers forum to ensure we are listening and acting on their views in order to continuously improve our services.

Working in Partnership

Corporate Parenting works collaboratively with a range of partners to ensure children and young people have a wide range of opportunities and access to services to prevent things escalating. We do this by working closely with Fostering, Commissioning, the Virtual School, Looked After Children Team in Health called CPFT (Peterborough) and ICS (Cambridgeshire).

Local Context

The numbers of children in Cambridgeshire have reduced through targeted interventions over the last year. For Peterborough the number of children has remained relatively consistent over a number of years. Both Local Authorities have adopted the Family Safeguarding Model of Social Work Intervention, believing that the majority of children are best served in remaining with their families and where they cannot that they receive the right intervention from the point of access. As of the 31st March 2022, there were 596 children in care in Cambridgeshire and 344 in Peterborough.

Finding the right type of homes for children and young people has become more of a challenge over the last few years. This is a similar experience nationally and regionally.

Our Approach to Our Priorities:

Keeping you safe

Objective

To provide early responsive multi-agency intervention and support to prevent children and young people coming into care. Where children and young people come into care, we will use



the same approach from early help to be responsive and timely in providing services to prevent a child's living arrangements breaking down.

We will work directly to help children and young people to understand how to keep themselves safe. This will include a multi-agency approach and care planning.

We will include children and young people in preparing for adulthood so that they stay safe as they enter adulthood.

Where needed we will get the right specialist services to support children and young people's needs.

Evidence

Reduction of children coming into care by providing early help approaches, implementing the multi-agency Family Safeguarding Model of Intervention to Support Families.

Reduction of the number of contact to referrals as a marker of evidencing we are offering early, multi-agency interventions.

Impact Measures

- Reduction in the number of children coming into care
- Increase the number of children being supported through early intervention, and Early Help Services.
- Increase the use of de-escalation of need in relation to child protection to child in need.
- Reunify children and families when it is safe to do so.
- Increase Staying Put as the support for post 18 care planning.
- Offer return home interviews to all children who go missing.
- Improve stability in the homes to children in care who live further away.



Respecting You

Objective

We will ensure that every child who comes into care has a 'Welcome Pack' so that young people know what being in care is about, with key information about children's rights and what happens next. Where possible we will ensure that every child has a 'buddy' from another young person who is in care who can offer guidance and real life experience of what it is like to be in care.

We will undertake regular direct work with children and young people linked to their care plan so that children and young people are informed about their plan and can fully participate by sharing their feelings, thoughts and wishes.

We will do everything we can to make a child feel cared about. As part of this children and young people will be offered an advocate in some instances if it is felt that additional support is needed. The 'Welcome Pack' also gives children information about what it is like to be cared for away from family.

Evidence

Age appropriate 'Welcome Pack's' are in every office for Social Workers to share and support those coming into care.

Regular audits review the frequency and quality of direct work being undertaken along with the usage of direct work tools used. The learning from these will be reviewed through repeat audit activity.

Regularly review each child's care plan through the childcare review system.

Ensure that every care plan has a focus on outcomes with SMART planning to support this.

Impact Measures

- Increase permanency plans such as adoption, Special Guardianship Orders and long-term matching for foster homes.
- Increase the use of advocates and independent visitors.
- Increase young people's participation in their childcare reviews.
- Evidence in case work, that children and young people's views have been sought creatively and these inform care planning and their reviews.
- Evidence that children participate and or are offered the opportunity to participate, in a range of reviews that affect their lives, such as their Personal Education Plan, their health assessment and child care reviews.

Being Honest

There are times when children and young people's wishes cannot be fulfilled due to a number of reasons such as it not being safe, or unrealistic. Our approach is that the child's Social Worker will remain as their Social Worker for the duration of their childhood where-ever possible.

We will make sure that those working to support a child or young person has the right training to know how to explain sensitive things in the right way at the right time so that the impact of explaining such sensitive things does not have an adverse effect.

We will work with specialist services and will also listen to their advice when working with children and young people to develop bespoke Care Plans and Pathway Plans.

Evidence

Every child will have an allocated Social Worker

Every child and their carers will be offered services that are timely and responsive when required. These will be based upon need and effectiveness of the intervention.

Where a want, or wish cannot be fulfilled this is responded to clearly, sensitively explaining the situation age appropriately.

Impact Measures

- Reduce the number of changes of Social Worker unless there is a valid reason.
- Clarify further transition planning to promote smooth handover from Children in Care Team to the Leaving Care Teams.
- Incorporate specialist advice and guidance into the assessment and analysis of outcome focused Care Plans
- Monitor the number and types of complaints made by children and young people to inform practice.
- Further increase stability of the place you live in

Make Decisions Together

We recognise that children and young people have come into care due to significant issues for them at home. Therefore, making decisions together is part of the recovery process for a child and young person.

Listening to children, their views whether verbal or non-verbal is the key to understanding where they are on the journey of recovery and the services they need.

Evidence

- Every Social Worker will undertake statutory visiting within the timescales and guidelines set.
- Care planning will include the voice and lived experience of a child.

Impact Measures

- All statutory visits meet the timescales set and children are recorded as per the regulations and guidance for statutory visits.
- Direct work includes non-verbal observations of children pre speech and those that use other forms of communication.
- Decisions about children's futures and care planning will include the views of other professionals, carers and family.

Where you live

Where a child lives is important as it supports children and young people's identity, networks, and the path to successfully preparing for adulthood.



Evidence

- All children will have initial health assessments within 20 working days of coming in care unless in this time they return home.
- All children will have access to a dentist
- All children will have a strengths and difficulties questionnaire and that this is regularly updated as part of their wider health and care needs
- All young people leaving care will have health passports at the point of leaving care for them to keep
- We will ensure children and young people who need other bespoke services will have these needs assessed as a starting point to determine whether this is needed and its effectiveness

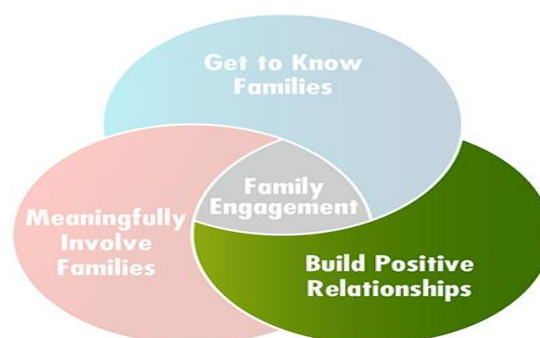
Impact Measures

- Increase in children and young people accessing dentists
- Increase in performance of initial health assessments and annual health assessments within timescales
- Feedback from Health is that the quality of initial health assessment referrals improves
- Increase in the use of clinician support and intervention to prevent instability in the places children live
- Foster carer feedback in the Annual Foster Carer report shows an improvement in 'customer satisfaction'
- Increase in young people accessing the ICASH blood borne virus service

Your Relationships

Children and young people tell us regularly who and what matters to them. Our role is to support and nurture positive and safe relationships with those that are important to them.

There are occasions where the person who is important to a child, young person may not be someone who is safe for them to see or live with. We have a duty to explain why age appropriately.



Evidence

- Every Childcare Review will review contact arrangements to assess what has changed in the last 6 months to enable face to face contact to occur
- All changes to a child's living arrangements such as being separated from their sibling must be evidenced with a Sibling Assessment before decisions are made about separating siblings

- All significant changes to a child's living arrangements will be supported by an assessment to inform care planning
- The child, young persons views on who they live with is assessed through direct work, statutory visits
- Every file has an up-to-date genogram and eco map on it updated as required per the guidelines from the moment they come into care
- All parents are offered the opportunity to participate within their child or young person's review unless their presence would be unsafe for the child
- Increase in staying put arrangements
- Reduction in young people living in unsuitable accommodation

Impact Measures

- Siblings remain together unless an assessment has underpinned the move
- Increase in reports for childcare reviews being sent to parents 5 days before a Review
- An increase in children having unsupervised contact with parents that is age appropriate and safe.
- Increase in reunifications
- Increase in Staying Put arrangements

Achievements

All children who come into care do so at different starting points in relation to their educational and emotional experiences. We know that helping children maintain their school, friends and local networks helps children and young people's resilience to the trauma they have experienced and achieve.

Our aim therefore is to support children to enjoy learning in all its forms, seeing it as the means to support self-esteem, self-worth, and life-long emotional and physical health.

As part of celebrating the achievements of children in care and those who have care experience, we hold annual events.

Evidence

- Every child who is in care will have access to education
- Every child will be offered 15 hours education whilst a school is being organised as a minimum for a short period of time
- Children who are not in education will be offered education from the virtual school to compensate
- Hobbies and interests will be supported within reason as a parent would in the community
- Apprenticeships are promoted as a viable option within the council

Impact Measures

- There is an expectation that all children should be achieving grade 4 and above in English and maths. The performance data will be monitored, reviewed annually.
- There is an increase in young people going onto higher education and apprenticeships.
- Reduction in NEET performance data.

For young adults who have had experience of being cared for.



Respect

Young adults are clear about how they would like to be communicated with based upon their wishes, feelings, experiences and what works best for them given their lifestyle. At 17.5 the Personal Adviser will start those conversations but with the understanding that face to face is the best way to stay in touch.

Evidence

- Personal Advisers will stay in touch as a minimum every 8 weeks but more if required and agreed by both
- Personal Advisers will see care experienced young people face to face at a place mutually agreed

Impact Measures

- There is an increase in staying in touch
- The starting point will be face to face is best but not always suitable for all care experienced

Helping you be the best you can

Staying in touch with those who have been in our care is important as our corporate parenting responsibilities are much more than just caring for children in care. What happens to those who have been in care matters because like any parent to see a child blossom and grow into a young adult makes us proud.

The Personal Adviser will be the key person assigned to a young person prior to them leaving care, remaining with them until 21 with the option of remaining in contact up to the age of 25 where needed. Our focus will always be about valuing strengths, talents, whilst supporting aspirations. This will take the form of practical help in some instances, offering guidance on how to navigate other agencies and situations so that those that have left care are resilient and confident to manage in the adult world successfully.

Evidence

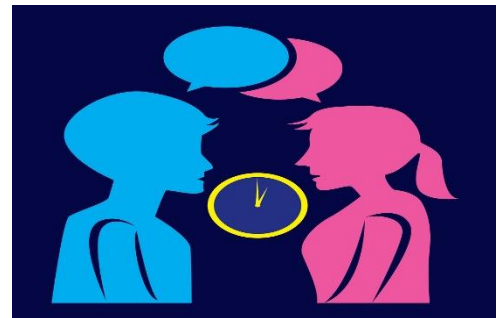
- Pathway plans include the strengths and aspirations
- Pathway plans are outcome focused promoting independence and resilience at all stages.

Impact Measures

- Pathway plans are up to date, being undertaken with the young person
- Pathway plans are S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) and outcome focused
- Reduction in NEET (not in education, employment and training) and unsuitable accommodation
- Reduction in street homelessness and rough sleeping

Clear Communication

Communicating how the Personal Adviser and young adult will work together is the starting point of a positive relationship. There may well be times when the expectations of a person who has care experience and the Personal Adviser is at odds. There will be opportunities for those who have experienced care to raise concerns and complaints to ensure situations can be resolved early and amicably so that trust does not break down.



Evidence

- Complaints from those who have care experience reduce and are resolved at an earlier stage
- Pathway plans set out how each will communicate
- The use of advocates is evidenced within case work as part of promoting young adults rights
- Audits will evidence the quality of work as above
- Young people leaving care know about the local offer and what they can expect

Impact Measures

- Pathway plans are up to date and reflect the work being undertaken
- Case recording meets the expectations set as per guidance and links to the progression of the pathway plans

Finding a home

Our approach will be to prepare young adults for independent living as early as possible. This will include age-appropriate independence training while in care. Personal Advisers are there to support the transition from being in care to living alone. Where possible we will promote staying put as the best option to support the plan of transitioning to adult hood.

Not all young adults are ready for a home of their own, in those circumstances. It is the role of the Social Worker to ensure that where young people need ongoing support such as from adult services or mental health services that this is in place prior to them turning 18. The Personal Adviser will work collaboratively with ongoing services but will not have overall responsibility.

Evidence

- Personal Advisers will support the setting up home grant
- Pathway plans will include how young experienced young people will be supported to find homes based upon their needs, level of independence.
- The stepping out assessment tool will support the preparation for independence.

Impact Measures

- That all young people needing ongoing services have these secured prior to them being 18.
- The stepping out document is used routinely to support independence planning prior to the final pathway plan pre 18.



Support

We will continue to offer support as part of our duty under the leaving care legislation. We will provide information, advice, practical and some financial help along with listening and caring. We will always support those who have been in care to develop resilience and independence as part of that support.

Evidence

- Pathway plans are S.M.A.R.T. and outcome focussed
- Pathway plans include how those that have been in care wish to be communicated
- Pathway plans support independence development

Impact Measures

- Reduction in unsuitable accommodation
- Reduction in NEET
- Increase in apprenticeships within the council.

Monitoring of the Strategy

The Strategy will be monitored through the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board. In addition to this the 'You Said, We Did' feedback quarterly report which is lead on by participation will ensure the Strategy is kept and a live document. Other internal systems and processes such as Performance meetings, monthly performance reporting and audits will support the progression of the Strategy. We will provide impact of the Strategy to the Corporate Parenting Committees on an annual basis.

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