

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room 2) on
Monday 10 October 2016 at 5.30pm**

Part I

ITEM	PAGE
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Declarations of Interest	
3. Minutes	1
Minutes of Meeting held on 4 July 2016 (copy attached)	
4. Change Council Update	13
Report of the Change Council (copy attached).	
5. Sunderland Looked After Children's Pledge	15
Report of the Participation and Engagement Lead (copy attached).	
6. Viewpoint	17
Report of the Participation and Engagement Lead (copy attached).	
7. Ofsted Monitoring Visit – Next Steps	41
Report of the Head of Looked After Children (attached).	

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Information contained within this agenda can be made available in other languages and formats.

8.	Provisional Data Outcomes for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4	49
	Report of the Virtual Headteacher (copy attached).	
9.	Use of Pupil Premium Funding	-
	Verbal update from the Virtual Headteacher.	
10.	Health of Looked After Children	53
	Report of the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children (copy attached).	
11.	Fostering Panel Annual Report	61
	Report of the Strategic Service Manager (copy attached).	
12.	IRO Performance Update	-
	Report of the Manager of the Children's Independent Reviewing Service (copy to be printed separately).	
13.	Corporate Parenting Training	67
	Report of the Senior Organisational Development Consultant (copy attached).	

ELAINE WAUGH
Head of Law and Governance

Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND

30 September 2016

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 July 2016 in Committee Room 2,
Civic Centre, Sunderland at 5.30pm**

Part I

Present:

Members of the Board

Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair)	Washington South Ward
Councillor R Davison	Redhill Ward
Councillor B Francis	Fulwell Ward
Councillor L Lauchlan	Washington Central Ward
Councillor Marshall	Doxford Ward
Councillor L Scanlan	Millfield Ward
Councillor P Smith	Silksworth Ward
Councillor W Turton	Houghton Ward

Young People

Hannah Dixon
Loren Nergaard
Leighton Conlon
Billy Hardy
Kirk Hirst
Dylan Breeze
Blaine Richardson

Also in Attendance

Councillor P Gibson	Silksworth Ward
Councillor A Lawson	Shiney Row Ward
Councillor R Oliver	St Michael's Ward
Councillor MacKnight	Castle Ward
Councillor P Stewart	Redhill Ward
Councillor M Turton	Copt Hill Ward

All Supporting Officers

Alex Hopkins	Director of Children's Services
Debra Patterson	Director of Children's Social Care
Martin Birch	Head of Looked After Children
Dawn Shearsmith	Sunderland Virtual School
Jane Wheeler	Participation and Engagement Lead, People

Sheila Lough	Services
Sharon Willis	Strategic Service Manager
Jo Robinson	Acting Strategic Service Manager
Tracy Hassan	IRO Services Manager
Dave Laverick	Commissioning Lead, Children
	Senior Organisational Development
	Consultant
Louise Darby	Senior Communications Officer
Bryn Littleton	CREO Communications
Anne Brock	Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse and
	Designated Nurse LAC
Jen Younger	YMCA
Jennifer Bradshaw	Local Vicar
Gillian Kelly	Governance Services

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lawson declared an interest in item 7 'Update on Semi-Independent Homes and Supported Lodgings' as she was a Board member of Sunderland YMCA.

Minutes

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

The Chair welcomed Alex Hopkins to the meeting. Alex had just taken up the post of Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive of Together for Children Sunderland and stated that he was looking forward to getting on with the job and felt that the future was looking positive for Children's Services in Sunderland.

Change Council Update

Hannah Dixon presented the report of the Change Council and drew the Board's attention to the changes which had been made in relation to pledges over recent months.

The £3 Challenge had been extended to the end of August and would also be discussed with the regional children in care council. The Chair noted that this challenge was proving difficult for elected Members who were perhaps not used to cooking for one but she encouraged all corporate parents to make a contribution to the challenge.

The Change Council had discussed re-instating a celebration event for looked after children in December as it had been a number of years since an event was held. Dawn Shearsmith highlighted that the Virtual School celebration event had been held on 30 July and social workers and schools had been asked to nominate young people who had done well and she was concerned that this message had not got through.

There were currently 12 members of the Change Council and letters had been sent to all young people in care or leaving care who were over 11 years old with the aim of creating two forums, one for young people in care and another for care leavers.

Blaine Richardson advised the Board that the Change Council continued to be involved with foster care recruitment and had been given the opportunity to look at some of the draft fostering campaign materials being developed by CREO.

Members of the Change Council had also been involved in the recruitment of the new Director of Children's Services and had enjoyed being part of this process. Three of the young people had been lucky enough to represent looked after children in Sunderland as young ambassadors for the Tall Ships Race and some other young people would be taking part in a tall ship voyage during July.

The group had created an A-Z guide for young people who came into care and these pocket-sized guides were circulated to the Board at the meeting. The Change Council had been working with other authorities in the North East to plan a conference which was to be known as 'When We're Ready' and would take place in September.

Councillor MacKnight congratulated the young people who were to be ambassadors for the Tall Ships Race and having thanked Hannah and Blaine for presenting the update, the Board: -

2. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Pledge Update

- If you need to come into care, we will make sure that you are safe and properly cared for

This pledge was now owned by Kate Service, Leighton Conlon and Blaine Richardson, with Martin Birch and Councillor Paul Stewart acting as buddies for the pledge.

Councillor Stewart reported that he, Martin Birch and two young people from Colombo Road had initially concentrated on looking at leaving care provision. The initial impressions of the provision at the YMCA at Toward Road were not positive but changed once inside the accommodation and the group were impressed with the size of the rooms, the kitchen facilities and the courses available.

A visit had also been made to Centrepont and Councillor Stewart said that he was appalled that the provision would even be considered appropriate for care leavers; however Bell House, another Centrepont provision, was more positively received.

A care leavers consultation exercise had recently been undertaken and the results of this would be presented to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board. Councillor Stewart highlighted that the pledge owners had now changed and he would be meeting with the relevant young people in the near future.

The Chair of the Board advised that the Chief Executive of the YMCA had been in touch to issue an invitation to members of the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee to visit the provision for care leavers offered by the YMCA. Arrangements would be made for any interested members to visit the accommodation.

Following the presentation of the report, the Board had the opportunity to watch a DVD presentation on accommodation which had been made by some of the members of the Change Council.

3. RESOLVED that the Pledge Update be noted.

Recruitment Strategy – Adoption and Fostering

Bryn Littleton from CREO Communications delivered a presentation on the work which had been taking place to develop a creative identity for Fostering and Adoption.

Bryn outlined the starting point for the work and the need to increase the number of enquiries and the conversion rate from enquiries to successful applications to become foster carers or adopters. Generally it was found that open evenings were very popular and people felt reassured by seeing positive examples of fostering and adoption.

The Board were shown a number of potential images to be used for Fostering and Adoption creative campaigns. Members of the Board commented that they liked the action shots on the posters but were not as keen on the images of children holding placards. The Director of Children's Social Care highlighted that the number of non-white British children awaiting adoption or fostering was quite low and it was important not to over-represent these groups.

Reference was made to the statement that 'over 500 children' were living in care in Sunderland and Councillor Gibson asked how this compared to other local authorities. The Head of Looked After Children stated that 100 out of every 10,000 children in the city were looked after and this was at the upper end of the scale.

Board Members were asked to provide feedback to the Head of Looked After Children on the concept presentation for Fostering and Adoption recruitment.

4. RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

Update on Semi-Independent Homes and Supported Lodgings

The Acting Strategic Service Manager submitted a report providing Members with a service update on semi-independent homes and supported lodgings.

Sharon Willis, Acting Strategic Service Manager – Accommodation, advised that one of the recommendations of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services had been to 'ensure there was sufficient breadth and quality of placements to meet the need of children looked after and care leavers'. As part of working towards this recommendation, the Support 2 Independence Team had been expanded and restructured and a new provision at Elwin Terrace had opened on 21 June 2016 and would provide accommodation for up to four care leavers. Two young people were already living at Elwin Terrace and would be joined by a further young person later in the week and another would arrive the following week. The provision was being staffed by a combination of workers from existing provision for care leavers at Chester Road and Burlington Close and some from children's homes.

The Supported Lodgings scheme provided an opportunity for young people to become a lodger within someone's home and efforts were being made to expand the scheme, with the numbers of providers increasing from four in January 2016 to seven providers offering up to ten placements at the current time.

CREO Communications were preparing an advertisement for the scheme and it was important that Supported Lodgings was considered as an option, what it would mean for the provider and the young person and what it might look like.

Sharon advised that she chaired a weekly Allocations and Pathways Panel meeting for all providers of semi-independent provision within the city and this considered all referrals for accommodation through the Sunderland 'gateway', determined who would be the best provider and managed any potential disruption. This approach was working well and quick decisions were able to be made for young people.

Work was taking place with the Children's Commissioning Team to establish the service specification for Harbour View, a new semi-independent accommodation provided by Centrepont for up to nine young people.

Councillor MacKnight welcomed Sharon's report and commented that it was pleasing to see a more positive picture emerging.

Councillor Gibson asked about the contact with partners and Sharon stated that a new post had been established which would focus on access to housing and would work with partners to develop a trainer flats scheme. There were also a number of other potential providers to be considered moving forward.

Councillor Francis asked about the number of young people who may require semi-independent accommodation and also the skills which they would have on leaving care and moving into such provision. Sharon advised that there were a number of young people who were on a waiting list for 'staying put' with a foster carer and there were between four and five weekly gateway referrals.

Sharon went on to say that there was an agreed format for preparation for independence and there was a standard level to decide if young people were tenancy ready. Semi-independent provision was about preparing for full independence and this began in subtle ways from age 14. The Head of Looked After Children added that the preparation for independence work programme had been developed because it was discovered that young people were leaving care without the basic skills needed to start out on their own.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Strategy for Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children

The Virtual Headteacher submitted a report outlining the strategy for improving the attainment of looked after children.

Sunderland Virtual School aimed to promote the educational attainment, progression, achievement and welfare of looked after children and was committed to providing quality education for all looked after pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

Dawn Shearsmith advised that finding good and outstanding schools was prioritised for all looked after children and it was a challenge to maintain standards. The Virtual School also worked to maintain placements in order to prevent permanent exclusions and alternative learning provision was supported. Young people were always talked to about what they wanted and efforts were made to raise aspirations through visits to universities and open days for further and higher education.

The Head of Looked After Children highlighted that 56% of care leavers were classed by the Department for Education (DfE) as being in education, employment or training and although this had improved significantly from around 20% in the last 12 months, the figure needed to be nearer 80%. He advised that it had been agreed to work across services as a team to address this and services involved would include Next Steps, Connexions and the Virtual School.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Post 16 Care Leavers NEET Figures

The Virtual Headteacher submitted a report setting out the current position with regard to looked after young people over the age of 16 who were not in employment, education or training (NEET).

There were 62 eligible young people in Years 12 and 13 active in the Virtual School and of these, 13 were classified as NEET, representing 20% of the total figure. Of this number: -

- Four were or were about to become young mothers and did not wish to engage in education or training currently;

- One young person was awaiting a full psychological and cognitive assessment;
- Two young people were temporarily NEET and were enrolled on courses which did not start until September 2016;
- Two were about to become young fathers and wished to concentrate on this;
- One was about to return to the care of birth parents;
- Two were heavily involved with the Youth Offending Service and being encouraged to engage with wider professional support; and
- One had recently moved placement due to alleged abuse.

Dawn Shearsmith advised that the Post-16 Education Coordinator would meet young people of concern in Year 11 and would also meet their teachers and social workers and accompany them on visits to education and training providers. There was a variety of work done for young people both pre and post 16 and the Virtual School worked jointly with the Youth Offending Service, Next Steps and Connexions to provide practical support and information on opportunities including apprenticeships, training and education placements and Princes Trust opportunities with a range of providers. Work was also carried out with residential care home staff and foster carers to provide tailored education and support and with partners to develop a range of work experience and work opportunities for NEET looked after children.

Councillor Stewart commented that the breakdown of the young people classed as NEET was helpful but stated that this could give the impression that these young people were not receiving any input from the Virtual School. Dawn Shearsmith assured the Board that these young people still received a lot of support and were talked through their options. These young people remained a priority and every effort would be made to provide appropriate options for them.

The Director of Children's Services noted that the onus was on officers to be as creative as possible in the educational opportunities which were provided for young people to get them closer to being in education, employment or training.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Regulation 44 Visits

The Quality Assurance Officer submitted a report detailing the outcomes of Regulation 44 visits which had taken place between October 2015 and May 2016.

From October 2015, the Quality Assurance Officer had taken on the role of the independent visitor carrying out the Regulation 44 monthly monitoring visits to the five children's homes in the city and elected Members were also involved in the visits. The visits looked at the nine Quality Standards: -

- Quality and Purpose of Care
- Children's Wishes and Views
- Education
- Enjoyment and Achievement
- Health and Wellbeing

- Positive Relationships
- Protection of Children
- Leadership and Management
- Care Planning

The report set out the key observations made under each of the standards and any recommendations which had been made as a result and Sharon Willis highlighted the update under the Enjoyment and Achievement Standards which showed how far things had come in this regard.

In relation to the Protection of Children Standards and the 'Missing from Care' records, all incidents were reported, even if this was a young person being half an hour late coming home. Workers erred on the side of caution with reporting but overall this showed a downward trend.

The number of Critical Incident Records was quite high and the service was working on a joint protocol with the Youth Offending Service and the Police and trying to find restorative ways of dealing with these incidents in-house. These were reported so there was a record but the majority of incidents were managed in-house.

Councillor Davison referred to the 175 recorded 'missing from care' episodes and queried how many individuals these related to. Sharon stated that she did not have the figures to hand but it was only a small cohort and some individuals may have ten recorded missing episodes each month. She said that the independent return interviews were now being dealt with more effectively and a more joined up approach was being taken.

Elected Members had been asked to support Regulation 44 visits in January 2016 and following this, two training sessions had been carried out and ten elected Members were now able to accompany the Quality Assurance Officer on the visits. In April, all of the homes had visits from elected Members and this was scheduled to take place twice a year.

The Chair requested that the Quality Assurance Officer send another email to all councillors inviting them to be involved as there were a number of new Members of the Council following the recent local elections. She also reminded Board members that they would need an up to date DBS in order to take part in the Regulation 44 visits.

Having considered the report, the Board: -

8. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the report be received and noted; and
- (ii) it be noted that Regulation 44 visit reports would be presented to the Board on a six monthly basis.

Annual Performance Report of the Adoption Service

The Head of Looked After Children submitted a report presenting an overview of the recently published adoption scorecard.

The adoption scorecard was based on three years of data and enabled the local authorities and adoption agencies to compare their performance. For Sunderland, the scorecard evidenced an improving picture but Members were cautioned that the data was not current due to a three year average being used.

The Head of Looked After Children indicated that the authority had identified some cases which had experienced delay and were prioritising care plans for these children. He stressed that the service did not want to give up on any children and would not focus on those who were seen as easier to adopt. Within the region, Sunderland's adoption service was seen as good and Ofsted had also found it to be good, but this had not been included within the outcome of the inspection of Children's safeguarding services.

Councillor Lawson commented that although it was important for children to be adopted as soon as possible, it was also vital that the right families were available. She noted that detail of unsuccessful adoptions was not usually provided but was pleased to see that after adoption support was available.

The Head of Looked After Children stated that he could provide information and unsuccessful adoptions but believed that there was possibly only one of these within the last 12 months and this was due to the thorough assessment process and support provided for adopters. Councillor Lawson said that she was encouraged to hear this. It was highlighted that an independent adoption agency would chair a disruption meeting following a placement breakdown and the lessons learned fed back to the service.

Councillor MacKnight referred to the 22 children who were considered 'hard to place' and were currently placed with adopters but not subject to an Order and asked if it was their age which made them hard to place. The Head of Looked After Children stated that the issue might not just be a child's age but in general there was a much longer time frame associated with adoption of children over the age of six.

Councillor MacKnight welcomed that the numbers of children waiting to be adopted had been reduced and asked if care plans were still being twin tracked. The Head of Looked After Children said that this was still the case and there had been success with the fostering to adopt process but this required a lot of planning ahead.

Following consideration of the report, it was: -

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

IRO Annual Report and Performance Update

Due to issues regarding the circulation of this report, it was agreed that it would be taken to the next meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

Update on Corporate Parenting Training

Dave Laverick, Senior Organisational Development Consultant, submitted a report setting out the proposed course content for an 'Introduction to Corporate Parenting' training course.

Dave advised that it was intended to young people's views on specific areas of the training and he had not been able to get this input as yet. It was proposed that the Introduction to Corporate Parenting training be arranged as a two hour session which would be very accessible to elected Members.

The Board were also made aware of 'In Your Shoes' training which was available as a three day course covering many aspects in which looked after children could be empowered and have their voices heard in decisions that affect them. There was also a two day course on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which provided an introduction to the history of Children's rights, legal rights and differences around the world.

It was noted that a three day course was a large commitment which many councillors would not be able fulfil but the Board welcomed the opportunity to attend bespoke, bite size training on the role of corporate parent.

10. RESOLVED that the information contained within the report be noted.

Commissioning Placements for Outcomes – Update on the Commissioning Strategy

The Commissioning Lead for Children submitted a report providing an update on the Commissioning Strategy and commissioning placements for outcomes.

Tracy Hassan advised that the responsibility for commissioning placements had been transferred to her service approximately a year ago and it had been found that there were not processes in place to ensure that the correct placements were available. In order to achieve better outcomes for young people in commissioning quality accommodation, the following had been produced: -

- A placements process with supporting documentation
- A sufficiency strategy
- An accommodation strategy
- An 'Other Arrangements and Suitable Accommodation' framework for un-regulated accommodation (working in partnership with the service area).

In the past, a lot of requests had been received as emergencies but the new processes enabled paperwork to be provided to social workers in advance which meant that better, lower cost placements could be achieved which were also closer to home. Monitoring arrangements were also in place and case studies showing the operation of the process could be provided for the Board if required.

Tracy also stated that the team was working closely with the Head of Looked After Children and Sharon Willis with regard to the development of Harbour View in order to provide a much better offer for young people.

With regard to the Sufficiency Strategy, the Head of Looked After Children advised that this should be finalised for the next Board meeting and the Director of Children's Services noted that this would answer questions about such matters as the flow of placements. In relation to costs, the Head of Looked After Children commented that best value was considered in identifying placements which best met the needs of young people at a reasonable cost and adopting this approach had led to external charges had being reduced by £2.2m.

11. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

Health of Looked After Children

The Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse and the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children submitted a report providing an update on health activity for looked after children.

Anne Brock advised that the MALAP Health Sub-Group met on a bi-monthly basis to review and take forward health activity for looked after children. The Board were advised that local authorities were responsible for making sure that a health assessment of physical, emotional and mental health needs was carried out for every looked after child. Initial health assessments had to take place within 20 days of the child starting to be looked after and a review health assessment had to be carried out at least every six months before a child's fifth birthday and every 12 months after the age of five.

The compliance data showed that 66% of initial health assessments had been carried out within timescales and 68% of review health assessments. There were a number of reasons for this including late notifications from the local authority, some errors from the health team, some young people failing to attend appointments and some young people being placed out of the area and not seen by an outside trust within timescales.

A dedicated Looked After Children nurse was due to come into post in October and it was anticipated that they would visit young people in placement, which would result in improved out of area compliance, and it was also hoped that they would be able to offer evening and weekend appointments.

An audit of health assessments was undertaken in March 2016 and this had highlighted the need to monitor the quality and usefulness of the assessments for looked after children.

Councillor Davison commented that there was not a lot of information about the mental health side of the assessment and she would welcome a report about that area specifically. Anne stated that she would be meeting with the CCG commissioner to discuss this area and would look at pulling together this information. The Chair welcomed the appointment of a nurse for looked after children and felt that the offer of appointments at evenings and weekends would be more appropriate for some children, especially if it avoided the embarrassment of being taken out of school for health appointments.

Having thanked Anne for her report, it was: -

12. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the content of the report be noted; and
- (ii) it be noted that the LAC Health Team would continue to support the local authority with the improvement plan in respect of looked after children.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair



CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

CHANGE COUNCIL UPDATE

1. **£3 Challenge:** The challenge is still there but we haven't had the take up that we would have liked for the £3 challenge. We have even had the offer of using the new City Campus site to trial the recipes. We are going to discuss this at our next regional meeting to see how the other areas are doing with their challenge.
2. **Celebration/Awards Evening:** We are really excited that we have our first annual Christmas celebration/awards evening planned for Friday 16th December. We have been spending time as a group planning some fun activities for the evening for all ages. We also hope to see some of you there. Apparently Santa may even make an appearance...!
3. **DVD Filming:** In the summer we added to our accommodation presentation by filming Harbour View. The completed memory sticks to be used with young people will be available in the next couple of weeks.
4. **Tall Ships:** So over the summer a few of us have had the most amazing opportunity to go on some voyages aboard a tall ship. The experience was amazing, however we weren't too keen on the food.
5. **Regional Children in Care Conference:** We held our first regional children in care conference on Friday 30th September. The aim of the conference was to highlight our regional campaign 'improving the leaving care system'. We decided as a region on 6 areas that we wanted to concentrate on and ran 6 workshops to cover the themes. We ran a workshop about how important it is to have someone we can trust in our lives and supported another one regarding accommodation choices. We all really enjoyed the day and hope that we can do something similar again. We know that some of you attended the conference so hope you also enjoyed it?



6. **Next Steps Official Opening:** In August we invited you all to come and look at our new building in Sunnyside, lots of people attended and we gave everyone tours around the building. We are really happy with our building and hope you were all impressed to.
7. **IRO leaflet:** we are currently helping the IRO team to design a leaflet to explain what an IRO is to children and young people? We have had a look at a few we like and the communications team are going to show us some potential designs.
8. **Delivering training:** a number of change council members have been supporting the workforce development team to deliver training to social workers and foster carers over the past few weeks.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

SUNDERLAND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S PLEDGE

Report of the Participation and Engagement Lead

1 Introduction

- 1.1 To inform and update corporate parents on the progression of Sunderland's Looked After Children's Pledge.
- 1.2 The Pledge was reviewed and agreed by Sunderland's People Directorate and Corporate Parenting Board, and most importantly, with our young people through the Change Council (Sunderland's Children in Care Council) in a workshop held in September 2015. Our young people have contributed significantly to assist us in reviewing the current pledge in a meaningful way.
- 1.3 The aim of the pledges are;
 - to empower the child or young person and those who care for them
 - to inform individual care planning
 - to be used as a tool to help improve services for all children and young people who are looked after
 - to inform the child or young person of their rights and opportunities
- 1.4 Each pledge identified is owned by a young person in care, they hold the responsibility as critical friend. The young person has been buddied up with a corporate board member and councilor who will act as the strategic drivers.
- 1.5 The pledges that have been identified by our young people are our statement of intent to our young people.

2.0 Our Pledge

Pledge	Young Person	CPB Member	CPB -Councilor
1. If possible I want to live with my own family or relatives	Saul Cranson Luke Bittlestone	Catherine Witt Chief Social Worker	Cllr Louise Farthing

2. If you need to come into care we will make sure that you are safe and properly cared for	Leighton Conlon Blaine Richardson	Martin Birch Interim Head of LAC	Cllr Paul Stewart
3. I feel I am being listened to	Loren Nergaard	Debra Patterson Director of Children's Social Care	Cllr Rebecca Atkinson
4. I want to get a good education and enjoy my free time	Kirk Scotter Gabby Turner	Dawn Shearsmith Virtual Head	Cllr Patricia Smith
5. I want to keep fit & Healthy	Billy Hardy Tyler Davison	Anne Brock Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse	Cllr Daryl Dixon
6. I don't want to leave care Until I feel Ready	Kieran Boyce Dylan Breeze	Sheila Lough Strategic Service Manager	Cllr Christine Marshall

3.0 Pledge Update

- 3.1 The updated pledge has now been in place for over 12 months.
- 3.2 Pledge 2, 5 and 6 have all updated the Corporate Parenting Board on their progress over the past nine months.
- 3.3 It has to be acknowledged that changes have been made to pledges over the past 12 months due to changes with young people and corporate buddies.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 To identify a corporate pledge lead to ensure that pledges are worked on and actions are addressed.
- 4.2 To agree a timetable for pledge updates to be brought to Corporate Parenting board.
- 4.3 To support the arrangement of another workshop, where all pledge young people and buddies meet together to share best practice and look at how we can ensure the pledges inform planning in the future.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

VIEWPOINT

Report of the Participation and Engagement Lead

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To give an overview of the attached viewpoint report.

2. Introduction/Background

- 2.1 Viewpoint is a computer assisted interviewing tool which is used nationally by a number of councils. Viewpoint offers local authorities a large number of in-depth service-led consultation questionnaires.
- 2.3 In Sunderland we use viewpoint to gain the views of looked after children to give them a voice in relation to their experiences of being in care. Results from the viewpoints are used within their looked after reviews to support and change things on an individual basis and used to improve service delivery and design.
- 2.3 In Sunderland we have a dedicated Viewpoint officer based within the participation and engagement team for 18.5 hours per week.

3. Main Body of the Report

- 3.1 That attached report gives an overview of responses collected from looked after children and young people in Sunderland from Jan 2016 – August 2016. The report presents the views of 73 children and young people aged 4-15 in Sunderland.
- 3.2 Viewpoint can be used with older young people when it is requested by a social worker or IRO. A young person can also be sent their viewpoint profile via email and complete the survey on their own if they do not require any assistance.
- 3.3 Please note that although differences are observed throughout the report in relation to the young people's responses and different groups, these should be viewed with caution, as number of responses is low for some age groups and differences could have occurred by chance.
- 3.4 The report is split into the sections identified by viewpoint which include;

- Placement: safe and settled
- Care planning
- Health
- Education
- Identity
- Family and Relationships
- Self-care skills

3.5 In Sunderland we asked viewpoint to divide responses in sections that relate to our looked after children pledges. Please see appendix of viewpoint report for pledge breakdown and information.

4. Recommendations

4.1 To discuss with corporate parents how they would like the viewpoint report to be presented in the future.

4.2 To acknowledge the use of the viewpoint tool and how we can use this data to inform service design and evaluation.

Views of Looked After Children and Young People Sunderland 2016

Introduction

This report provides an overview of responses collected from Looked After children and young people in Sunderland from **January 2016 to the present**. The report presents the views of the **73 children and young people aged 4-15** who gave their views during this time period, with the report structured according to key outcome categories and Sunderland Pledges.¹

The survey was conducted using age-appropriate questionnaires administered using a specialist Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) survey software, produced by the Viewpoint Organisation. The software has been designed specifically to enable young people to give their views directly and independently; it has a range of engaging interfaces and includes functions such as allowing all text that appears on the screen or is typed to be read aloud. Questionnaires can be completed online or downloaded to a laptop, and all responses that are given are recorded in a secure database and are immediately available for analysis.

The self-complete method is viewed as advantageous in terms of being cheaper and quicker to administer and avoiding interviewer variability and bias, particularly in terms of social desirability and under-reporting issues that could be sensitive. The issue of social desirability and the power relationship between interviewer and interviewee is thought to be particularly salient for groups such as children and young people. ACASI approaches have also been associated with aiding literacy difficulties, with an enhanced sense of privacy and with increased disclosure of sensitive information. Such considerations are of particular importance when asking sensitive questions or when asking questions of more vulnerable groups of children and young people.

The importance of social workers talking with young people about their responses is emphasised; the completion of a questionnaire is not the end of the process. Talking with young people about their responses can help them develop more understanding of their circumstances. It enables young people to become better informed, to clarify what they need to do, to consider actions and, together with practitioners, to work out plans.




¹ NB. Questionnaires are available for the 16+ age group, but none have been completed in Sunderland during the time period covered.

In the following report the percentage of **most positive responses** for each question is reported. Research has demonstrated that it is typically only around a fifth to a quarter of respondents who select the most or least positive responses with the majority selecting the middle set of responses. Where 75% or more young people select the most positive response to a question this is particularly significant. Scores in the red band, particularly lower percentages show few young people selecting the most positive response and highlight particular areas for improvement.

Comparing the responses over time will add strength to the response set, in the consistency of the responses given and the demonstration of key areas that continually emerge as an issue for the groups of young people responding. The report presents the responses of children and young people gathered since the introduction of revised questionnaire content at the beginning of 2016. With more data collected, comparisons and changes over time can be included in reports, with reports produced every 6 months allowing a tracking of emerging issues and changes in children and young people's responses over time.

Although differences are observed throughout the report in relation to the young people's responses and different groups, these should be viewed with caution, as the number of responses is low for some age groups and differences could have occurred by chance. Percentages are also given for consistency of presentation. However, these should also be viewed with caution where they are based on a low number of responses.

Throughout this report the following scales are used:

	Where 75% or more gave the <i>most positive response</i>
	Where 50-74% gave the <i>most positive response</i>
	Where under 50% gave the <i>most positive response</i>

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

During the period from January 2016 to the present, questionnaires were completed by **73 looked after children and young people (LACYP)**.

Over half of the respondents were male (56%) and over three-quarters (81%) were in a foster placement.

	4-6 years		7-9 years		10-15 years		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	8	100	19	100	46	100	73	100
Male	5	37.5	13	68	23	50	41	56
Female	3	62.5	6	32	23	50	32	44
White / White British	7	87.5	18	95	42	91	67	92
Asian / Asian British	1	12.5	0	-	2	4	3	4
Black / Black British	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Mixed	0	-	0	-	1	2	1	1
Gypsy Roma	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Other	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Not known / not recorded	0	-	1	5	1	2	2	3
Foster care	7	87.5	14	74	38	82	59	81
Residential care	0	-	0	-	4	9	4	5
Family and friends	1	12.5	5	26	4	9	10	14
Parent(s)	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-

NB. Where the same young person has completed a questionnaire more than once in this period, only their most recent set of responses has been included.

PLACEMENT (SAFE & SETTLED)

Cardiff University on behalf of the Viewpoint Organisation has carried out research into this critical area, which has established the significance of feeling safe and feeling settled (Zhang, 2013). Creating an environment where the child feels both safe and settled is recognised as an important goal of care. Furthermore there is a strong correlation between the two variables of feeling 'safe and settled' and achieving positive wellbeing outcomes.

Research has identified stability and security of placements to be critical to positive outcomes for LACYP. The Social Services Improvement Agency / Institute for Public Care (2007) found that across a wide range of factors (attachment, education, health, mental health), improved outcomes were particularly associated with placement stability and factors relating to placement stability. Feeling secure, feeling able to trust and talk to carers and receiving care and support from carers is closely linked to such outcomes.

McAuley et al (2009) use Rutter's description of resilience (Rutter, 1985) as incorporating three factors: positive self-esteem; belief in self-efficacy; and ability to solve problems. They describe the protective factors likely to foster these as including: secure, stable, affectionate relationships and experiences of success and achievement.

Schofield et al (2009) report that 'felt security' is important and young people need to know that they have someone to turn to if things go wrong – and indeed someone to celebrate with when things go well. Both stability and felt security are powerful predictors of positive outcomes, however felt security was actually found to be more powerful. A 'sense of security' was found to be a more powerful predictor of outcomes after leaving care than stability. Felt security was also associated with staying on in the same placement and having more and wider social support network.

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Feel safe at placement (n = 8)	88%
4 to 6	Feel okay where they live (n = 8)	88%
4 to 6	Nobody upsets them at placement (n = 8)	50%
4 to 6	Easy to talk to carer (n = 8)	63%
4 to 6	Carer helps them (n = 8)	75%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
7 to 9	Feel safe at placement (n = 18)	89%
7 to 9	Feel okay where they live (n = 19)	79%
7 to 9	Nobody upsets them at placement (n = 18)	89%
7 to 9	Can keep own things safe at placement (n = 18)	100%
7 to 9	Like what they have to eat (n = 18)	83%
7 to 9	Have new clothes bought for them (n = 18)	78%
7 to 9	Easy to ask carer about things (n = 18)	67%
7 to 9	Carer helps them (n = 18)	100%
7 to 9	Know how to get help (n = 18)	72%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Feel safe at placement (n = 45)	96%
10 to 15	Feel settled at placement (n = 45)	89%
10 to 15	Not bullied / picked on at placement (n = 45)	93%
10 to 15	Can keep own things safe at placement (n = 45)	80%
10 to 15	Get on 'Very well' with carer (n = 44)	80%
10 to 15	Easy to talk to carer (n = 44)	84%
10 to 15	Enjoy the food at placement (n = 45)	69%
10 to 15	Have new clothes bought for them (n = 45)	60%

REVIEW OF CARE PLAN

Analysis of responses from children and young people in Care Plan reviews by Cardiff University has shown that children who feel that their social worker visits as often as needed, is someone they can talk to, and is someone that helps them are more likely to feel 'Safe and Settled'. Children and young people want social workers to listen to them and to have more time for them (Department for Education and Skills, 2007).

The importance of listening to the views and experiences of LACYP is a recurring theme in the research. The Children's Care Monitor (2014) identifies 'having a say in what happens to them' as one of six things looked after children have said are important to their lives. From the young person's perspective, feeling engaged with carers and social workers about decision-making contributes to placement stability.

Research studies have found the small and the personal to be central to children and young people's experience of out-of-home care, particularly issues relating to their daily lives, and day-to-day decision-making and negotiation (Thomas and O'Cane, 1999). The Messages from Research report, which gives an overview of research relating to out-of-home care in Australia, outlined a number of instances where apparently small decisions had a large impact on the children and young people concerned, such as not being told why a worker had moved on or not being allowed to bring a pet to a new placement (Bromfield, Higgins, Osborn, Panozzo and Richardson, 2005).

Vis et al (2011) concluded that there is the potential for participation to impact on children's health in different ways, depending on the child's developmental maturity and the ways decision-making processes are implemented. Positive effects of participation are thought to relate to the procedure itself being therapeutic, and participation leading to better decisions and tailoring of services. Vis et al also cite research on health promotion that associates empowerment, and promoting positive feelings of mastery and control, with an enhanced ability to manage stressful experiences.

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Know why they are living at placement (n = 8)	63%
4 to 6	Know how long will be staying at placement (n = 8)	63%
4 to 6	Someone talks about how family is being helped (n = 8)	50%
4 to 6	Someone asks what would help their family (n = 8)	63%
4 to 6	Know who their IRO is (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	IRO talks about Looked After Review (n = 8)	38%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
7 to 9	Social worker talks about why living at placement (n = 18)	50%
7 to 9	Social worker talked about what want to happen (n = 18)	61%
7 to 9	See their social worker when they need to (n = 18)	56%
7 to 9	Social worker helps (n = 18)	83%
7 to 9	Easy to talk to social worker (n = 18)	72%
7 to 9	Know who their IRO is (n = 18)	39%
7 to 9	IRO talks about Looked After Review (n = 18)	44%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Social worker visits as often as they need (n = 44)	50%
10 to 15	Social worker listens to them (n = 44)	66%
10 to 15	Social worker helping to improve things (n = 44)	61%
10 to 15	Know why they are living at placement (n = 44)	77%
10 to 15	Know they have a care plan (n = 44)	77%
10 to 15	Are helped to understand their care plan (n = 34)	62%
10 to 15	Views and opinions are always listened to (n = 44)	61%
10 to 15	Know who IRO is (n = 44)	57%
10 to 15	IRO discusses their review meeting (n = 44)	57%
10 to 15	Social worker discusses their review meeting (n = 44)	45%

HEALTH

Good health is vital to the lives of children and young people. It enables them to lead enjoyable and fulfilling lives and underpins achievement at school and in adult life (Department for Education and Skills, 2007).

LACYP share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. They often enter care with a worse level of health than their peers (in part due to poverty, abuse and neglect) and inequalities remain in long-term outcomes (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015). LACYP are also a high-risk group for behavioural and emotional problems; around half of looked after children in England are reported to have emotional and behavioural difficulties (NICE, 2010).

McCauley et al (2009) describe that the majority of children who enter care system have experienced abuse and identify three core areas of child development affected by various forms of abuse: regulation of emotions, development of attachment, development of an adequate sense of self and relationships. The effect on child is complex.

Price-Robertson et al (2015) in a longitudinal study highlight the complexity of associations between different aspects of childhood experiences and long-term wellbeing. Experiences of maltreatment were associated with increased levels of *internalised* issues such as depression and anxiety, and were more likely to be associated with difficulties in *personal functioning*, as opposed to social functioning. For example, personal strengths, life acceptance, autonomy, identity and ability to plan were found to be affected by maltreatment, where social competence, social trust and levels of civic action and engagement were found to be less affected. Conversely, parental mental illness and substance misuse were found to be associated with long-term health problems and were linked to lower levels of trust, but not associated with lower levels of personal strength.

The study also found that supportive parent-child relationships were associated with valued positive qualities, such as planning, independence, social skills and trusting and tolerant attitudes. The researchers again pointed to concepts of resilience and the importance of ‘... *strengthening protective factors (such as positive relationships with caregivers), rather than solely minimising risk factors (such as child maltreatment)*’

Children and young people say that their emotional wellbeing and self-esteem is supported when they are cared for in an environment where they feel they belong (C4EO, 2010). Participating in the wider network of peer, school and community activities helps to achieve a sense of belonging and carers have a crucial role in enabling and encouraging this participation (NICE, 2010).

Research studies have also identified the factors that are most strongly associated with positive outcomes for health and mental health for children and young people in Care. In general, improved outcomes have most strongly been associated with placement stability and factors relating to placement stability. Other factors have been found to include improved recording and assessment of

health history, including improved mental health screening, and tailored health-related interventions (SSIA / IPC, 2007).

Analysis of responses to Viewpoint questions by Cardiff University also shows that those who were 'Safe and Settled' were less likely to be concerned about their health and less likely to have trouble sleeping. Assessing Emotional and Behavioural Development includes the degree of appropriate self-control, and the appropriateness of response demonstrated in feelings and actions, initially to parents and caregivers and as the child grows older, to others beyond the family. Research carried out by Cardiff University showed that those who were 'Safe and Settled' were less likely to report feeling angry or frustrated.

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Do not get ill very often (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	Do not wake much at night (n = 8)	25%
7 to 9	Do not get ill very often (n = 18)	83%
7 to 9	Sleep well (n = 18)	83%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	No worries / concerns about health (n = 44)	91%
10 to 15	No problems with sleeping (n = 44)	70%
10 to 15	Have a health plan (n = 44)	68%
10 to 15	Have someone to talk to about health (n = 44)	86%
10 to 15	Play sport 2+ times a week (n = 44)	91%
10 to 15	Never times when they get angry / frustrated (n = 45)	4%

EDUCATION

A high quality education provides the foundation for transforming the lives of children in care. Those who do well in education are more likely to go on to employment, to lead healthier lives and to play a more active part in society (Department for Education and Skills, 2007).

Research over time and across many countries has consistently found an achievement gap between children in care and their peers. Evidence indicates that looked after children do not generally do as well at school as their peers. LACYP are more likely to move around, more likely to be excluded, more likely to have an EHCP, and more likely to have lower education outcomes (The Who Cares Trust). In 2014, 12% of looked after children achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs compared to 52% of non-looked after children (Department for Education, 2014).

Educational attainment for looked after children is particularly important because studies have linked educational success and better long-term outcomes in the general population. Those who have been in care are more likely than the general population to be unemployed, have mental health problems, spend time in prison or psychiatric institutions or experience homelessness (O'Higgins et al 2015).

Supporting LACYP in their education (via initiatives such as pupil premium plus, virtual school heads and designated teachers) is identified in national policy as a priority area to improve the quality of care for LACYP (Department for Education, 2014).

Encouragement to achieve in education and practical support, such as help with homework or provision of materials, has been identified by LACYP as key for achieving success in their lives (NICE, 2010). Young people enjoying school and not being bullied at school have been shown to be important factors in feeling 'Safe and Settled'. Fernandez (2012), in a matched cohort study of 202 12-18 year olds in care and not in care, found that carer and caseworker support strongly predicted school engagement.

The critical role of individualised education plans is emphasised, and the importance of young people being involved in its development to promote their engagement and to make it meaningful to the young person. Most young people were not aware of or lacked detail of their education plans and an opportunity to develop school engagement was missed.

'For example, if a young person does not appear to be emotionally engaged at school, this could be explored with them, in terms of which teachers they like and what possible additional support, mentoring and encouragement could be sourced for them. Likewise, if a young person has a particular career or job goal, their cognitive and behavioural engagement could be boosted by creating a clear pathway, with support for the young person. These initiatives could then be reviewed as part of planning.' (Tilbury et al)

Personal motivation and tenacity have also been found to affect the level of school engagement. Tilbury et al (2014) describe the importance of exploring life goals and motivations, and ensuring case-planning is future oriented. Aspirations could be many and varied, but if made explicit, discussed and

encouraged, may contribute to heightening young people's own answers to questions such as, 'Why bother to stay at school?'

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Are happy at school (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	Nobody hurts or upsets them at school (n = 8)	25%
4 to 6	Carer helps with school work (n = 8)	75%
7 to 9	Go to school every day (n = 18)	100%
7 to 9	Are happy at school (n = 18)	67%
7 to 9	Nothing at school makes them upset or sad (n = 18)	67%
7 to 9	Nobody bullies, hurts or upsets them at school (n = 18)	72%
7 to 9	Get enough help at school when they need (n = 18)	78%
7 to 9	Carer helps with school work (n = 18)	89%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Go to school every day (n = 44)	100%
10 to 15	Nothing at school they worry about (n = 44)	77%
10 to 15	Nobody bullies, hurts or upsets them at school (n = 44)	86%
10 to 15	Have a Personal Education Plan (n = 44)	68%
10 to 15	80+ out of 100 for doing well at school (n = 44)	84%
10 to 15	Get help with homework from carer (n = 44)	84%
10 to 15	Have quiet place to do homework at placement (n = 44)	93%
10 to 15	Have books and other things they need for school (n = 44)	91%
10 to 15	Can use a computer for schoolwork at placement (n = 44)	75%

IDENTITY

Evidence indicates that developing a positive personal identity and a sense of personal history is associated with high self-esteem and emotional wellbeing (NICE, 2010).

The importance to children and young people of information relating to their histories and their family cannot be understated. For children and young people in Care, being helped to develop and reflect on a coherent story about their lives and what has happened to them is significantly associated with positive outcomes (Osborn et al, 2008).

Helping children and young people to maintain the cultural and religious beliefs they choose is another key factor in promoting emotional wellbeing for looked after children (NICE, 2010).

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Have a life story book / information (n = 8)	13%
4 to 6	Have a passport (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	Play games / go places they like (n = 8)	63%
7 to 9	Have a life story book / information (n = 18)	11%
7 to 9	Can choose what clothes they wear (n = 18)	78%
7 to 9	Have a passport (n = 18)	39%
7 to 9	Can do the things they enjoy as often as they like (n = 18)	44%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Have a life story book / information (n = 45)	16%
10 to 15	Are able to follow religion / family customs (n = 15)	100%
10 to 15	Can do hobbies / sports they like as often as like (n = 44)	73%
10 to 15	Carer encourages hobbies / sports (n = 44)	73%
10 to 15	Have all things needed for personal care (n = 45)	100%

FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The quality of looked after children and young people's relationships with other people is a key factor in their emotional wellbeing. This includes being supported to maintain contact with and sustain relationships with chosen family members, peers and friends (C4EO, 2010).

Hedin (2014) found that access to peers is important. Young people seem to have a sense of belonging with peers, in whom they can confide. In exceptional cases, peers may be only people they feel belonging with. In a US study Farineau et al (2013) also found peer relationships are significantly related to adolescents' self-esteem and suggest peer relationships could be a source of stability for looked after children experiencing much other change. They suggested that trends in adolescence, the influence of peers, time spent with peers and the desire to 'fit in' may be stronger for those in care and seeking acceptance. The study concluded that not changing or disrupting school relationships is important.

Analysis of responses from children and young people in Care Plan reviews by Cardiff University has shown that there is a relationship between feeling 'Safe and Settled' and having contact with friends. Friends and easy access to them are important to children and young people.

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Friends visit where they live (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	See family as much as they want to (n = 8)	50%
7 to 9	See friends as much as they want (n = 18)	39%
7 to 9	Have friends their age (n = 18)	44%
7 to 9	Friends can come to see them where they live (n = 18)	33%
7 to 9	See family when they want to (n = 18)	33%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Able to make / keep friends own age (n = 44)	70%
10 to 15	Friends are able to visit where they live (n = 44)	36%
10 to 15	See friends as often as they want (n = 44)	52%
10 to 15	Able to keep in touch with family as often as want (n = 44)	43%

SELF CARE SKILLS

This area of development concerns the acquisition of practical, emotional and communication competencies required for increasing independence.

Leaving care is an important transition point for young people. There is evidence that care leavers are more disadvantaged and face more difficulties than other young people in achieving: moving to own accommodation, entering higher / further education, finding satisfying employment, achieving good health and a positive sense of wellbeing. Research has shown that early preparation and effective support for care leavers is associated with better outcomes in later life (NICE, 2010).

‘Having someone to talk to’ is important to LACYP (NICE, 2010). The Ofsted inspection framework (2015) states that children and young people should be helped to understand their rights and to understand how to complain, where necessary supported by an advocate.

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Have a bank account (n = 8)	25%
4 to 6	Carer tells them when they have done well (n = 8)	88%
7 to 9	Have a bank account (n = 18)	39%
7 to 9	Carer tells them when they have done well (n = 18)	72%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Have a bank account (n = 44)	45%
10 to 15	Have a passport (n = 44)	75%
10 to 15	Carer notices when they have done well (n = 44)	82%
10 to 15	Receive enough information to make decisions (n = 44)	75%
10 to 15	Know can get help to make a complaint, if unhappy (n = 44)	86%

APPENDIX: SUNDERLAND'S PLEDGES

I will be safe and properly cared for

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Feel safe at placement (n = 8)	88%
4 to 6	Feel okay where they live (n = 8)	88%
4 to 6	Nobody upsets them at placement (n = 8)	50%
4 to 6	Nobody hurts or upsets them at school (n = 8)	25%
4 to 6	Carer tells them when they have done well (n = 8)	88%
7 to 9	Feel safe at placement (n = 18)	89%
7 to 9	Feel okay where they live (n = 19)	79%
7 to 9	Nobody upsets them at placement (n = 18)	89%
7 to 9	Can keep own things safe at placement (n = 18)	100%
7 to 9	Nobody bullies, hurts or upsets them at school (n = 18)	72%
7 to 9	Have new clothes bought for them (n = 18)	78%
7 to 9	Carer tells them when they have done well (n = 18)	72%
7 to 9	Know how to get help (n = 18)	72%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Feel safe at placement (n = 45)	96%
10 to 15	Feel settled at placement (n = 45)	89%
10 to 15	Not bullied / picked on at placement (n = 45)	93%
10 to 15	Nobody bullies, hurts or upsets them at school (n = 44)	86%
10 to 15	Can keep own things safe at placement (n = 45)	80%
10 to 15	Get on 'Very well' with carer (n = 44)	80%
10 to 15	Carer notices when they have done well (n = 44)	82%
10 to 15	Enjoy the food at placement (n = 45)	69%
10 to 15	Have new clothes bought for them (n = 45)	60%
10 to 15	Have all things needed for personal care (n = 45)	100%

I want a good education and to enjoy my free time

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Are happy at school (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	Carer helps with school work (n = 8)	75%
4 to 6	Play games / go places they like (n = 8)	63%
7 to 9	Go to school every day (n = 18)	100%
7 to 9	Are happy at school (n = 18)	67%
7 to 9	Nothing at school makes them upset or sad (n = 18)	67%
7 to 9	Get enough help at school when they need (n = 18)	78%
7 to 9	Carer helps with school work (n = 18)	89%
7 to 9	Can do the things they enjoy as often as they like (n = 18)	44%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Go to school every day (n = 44)	100%
10 to 15	Nothing at school they worry about (n = 44)	77%
10 to 15	Have a Personal Education Plan (n = 44)	68%
10 to 15	80+ out of 100 for doing well at school (n = 44)	84%
10 to 15	Get help with homework from carer (n = 44)	84%
10 to 15	Have quiet place to do homework at placement (n = 44)	93%
10 to 15	Have books and other things they need for school (n = 44)	91%
10 to 15	Can use a computer for schoolwork at placement (n = 44)	75%
10 to 15	Can do hobbies / sports they like as often as like (n = 44)	73%
10 to 15	Carer encourages hobbies / sports (n = 44)	73%

I want to keep fit and healthy

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Do not get ill very often (n = 8)	38%
4 to 6	Do not wake much at night (n = 8)	25%
7 to 9	Do not get ill very often (n = 18)	83%
7 to 9	Sleep well (n = 18)	83%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	No worries / concerns about health (n = 44)	91%
10 to 15	No problems with sleeping (n = 44)	70%
10 to 15	Have a health plan (n = 44)	68%
10 to 15	Have someone to talk to about health (n = 44)	86%
10 to 15	Play sport 2+ times a week (n = 44)	91%
10 to 15	Never times when they get angry / frustrated (n = 45)	4%

I want to live with my own family and relatives

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	See family as much as they want to (n = 8)	50%
7 to 9	See family when they want to (n = 18)	33%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Able to keep in touch with family as often as want (n = 44)	43%

I feel that I'm being listened to

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
4 to 6	Easy to talk to carer (n = 8)	63%
4 to 6	Carer helps them (n = 8)	75%
4 to 6	Someone talks about how family is being helped (n = 8)	50%
4 to 6	Someone asks what would help their family (n = 8)	63%
4 to 6	IRO talks about Looked After Review (n = 8)	38%
7 to 9	Easy to ask carer about things (n = 18)	67%
7 to 9	Carer helps them (n = 18)	100%
7 to 9	See their social worker when they need to (n = 18)	56%
7 to 9	Social worker helps (n = 18)	83%
7 to 9	Easy to talk to social worker (n = 18)	72%
7 to 9	Social worker talks about why living at placement (n = 18)	50%
7 to 9	Social worker talked about what want to happen (n = 18)	61%
7 to 9	IRO talks about Looked After Review (n = 18)	44%

Age Group	Key Findings	Jan 2016 - present
10 to 15	Easy to talk to carer (n = 44)	84%
10 to 15	Social worker visits as often as they need (n = 44)	50%
10 to 15	Social worker listens to them (n = 44)	66%
10 to 15	Social worker helping to improve things (n = 44)	61%
10 to 15	Are helped to understand their care plan (n = 34)	62%
10 to 15	Views and opinions are always listened to (n = 44)	61%
10 to 15	IRO discusses their review meeting (n = 44)	57%
10 to 15	Social worker discusses their review meeting (n = 44)	45%

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

OFSTED MONITORING VISIT – NEXT STEPS

Report of Head of Looked After Children

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to comment and scrutinise the information provided within the letter.

2. Background

- 2.1 Where local authority children's services are judged to be inadequate, Ofsted will carry out monitoring visits and report on the progress made by the local authority, to support them to improve further.
- 2.2 Usually two HMI will undertake each visit. Each visit will usually last for two days. Wherever possible, the same HMI will lead all these monitoring visits.
- 2.3 Monitoring activity relates to the key weaknesses and recommendations in the inspection report. The role of the HMI conducting the quarterly visits is to monitor and report on the local authority's progress since the last inspection.
- 2.4 This is the first visit by Ofsted since the May 2015 Inspection and the visit looked at Sunderland's progress made in regard to the experiences and progress of care leavers.
- 2.5 The visit considered a range of evidence, and spoke to eight Care Leavers, and a number of staff, including Managers, Social Workers, and Housing providers.

3. Summary of Findings.

- 3.1 Senior managers within children's services have responded determinedly to the areas of improvement identified in respect of the experiences and progress of care leavers, which were judged to be inadequate at the last inspection.
- 3.2 Senior managers have a sound understanding of the key priorities for improvement in services for care leavers, demonstrated through a clear, evaluative and accurate self-assessment.

- 3.3 Workers at all levels within the Next Steps service for care leavers report that they feel more confident and supported by senior managers and that there is a more open and receptive culture of leadership.
- 3.4 New policies, procedures, documents and accompanying training are supporting workers to improve the quality of practice and recording.
- 3.5 Care leavers feel safe and well supported where they are living.
- 3.6 The percentage of care leavers who are now in touch with the Next Steps service has increased from 30% in May 2015 to 82% in June 2016.
- 3.6 While the number of pathway plans undertaken has improved, the quality of these is not consistently good, especially in consideration of chronologies, assessments of need, analyses of findings and the detail of plans.
- 3.7 The quality of case recording is not consistently good, lacks detail and does not evidence the work undertaken with care leavers.
- 3.8 Management oversight, including challenge from independent reviewing officers, is weak. It is not clearly recorded in young people's records and is not effective in progressing their plans.
- 3.9 The overall outcome of the monitoring visit is "The local authority is making significant progress to improve services for care leavers".

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to read the report and accompanying papers and to make any recommendations or comments on its content.

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2 September 2016

Mr Alex Hopkins
Director of Children's Services
Civic Centre
Burdon Road
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR2 7DN

Dear Mr Hopkins,

Monitoring visit of Sunderland City Council children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Sunderland City Council children's services on 4 and 5 August 2016. The visit was the first monitoring visit since the local authority was judged to be inadequate overall at the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, published in July 2015. This monitoring visit was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors, Fiona Millns and Rachel Holden.

Areas covered by the visit

During the course of this visit, inspectors reviewed the progress made in respect of the experiences and progress of care leavers.

The visit considered a range of evidence, including electronic case records, supervision records, observation of social work practice, performance data and young people's case file audit findings. In addition, we spoke to eight care leavers, and a range of staff, including managers, social workers, advanced practitioners and housing providers.

The local authority is making significant progress to improve services for care leavers.

Summary of findings

- Senior managers within children's services have responded determinedly to the areas of improvement identified in respect of the experiences and progress of care leavers, which were judged to be inadequate at the last inspection.

- Senior managers have a sound understanding of the key priorities for improvement in services for care leavers, demonstrated through a clear, evaluative and accurate self-assessment.
- Workers at all levels within the Next Steps service for care leavers report that they feel more confident and supported by senior managers and that there is a more open and receptive culture of leadership.
- Performance management, including data collection and quality auditing, has improved considerably, providing a more accurate analysis to inform areas for further service improvement and development.
- New policies, procedures, documents and accompanying training are supporting workers to improve the quality of practice and recording.
- Care leavers feel safe and well supported where they are living.
- There is a good range of housing options available, including newly commissioned accommodation and increased use of 'staying put' and supported lodgings.
- The percentage of care leavers with pathway plans in place has increased considerably, from 69% in November 2015 to 89% in June 2016.
- While the number of pathway plans undertaken has improved, the quality of these is not consistently good, especially in consideration of chronologies, assessments of need, analyses of findings and the detail of plans.
- The quality of case recording is not consistently good, lacks detail and does not evidence the work undertaken with care leavers.
- Care leavers are supported by a stable team of social workers and personal advisers in the Next Steps care leavers' service.
- Caseloads for Next Steps workers are manageable, enabling workers to offer support and guidance to care leavers.
- Supervision of social work and personal advisers is undertaken regularly, but recording of supervision is not reflective and does not focus on the quality of practice.
- Management oversight, including challenge from independent reviewing officers, is weak. It is not clearly recorded in young people's records and is not effective in progressing their plans.
- Care leavers are increasingly involved in developing their pathway plans, and their opinions are considered carefully.
- The percentage of care leavers who are now in touch with the Next Steps service has increased from 30% in May 2015 to 82% in June 2016.
- Care leavers are supported well to develop skills for independence.

- Despite care leavers increasingly being supported well, there are significant gaps and delays in care leavers receiving information about their medical histories and being given their health passports.
- Care leavers receive appropriate support to access education and college. However, personal education plans are not consistently provided or updated.
- While there is still room for improvement, the percentage of care leavers not in education, employment and training (NEET) has significantly decreased from 85% in May 2015 to 57% in June 2016. This includes six care leavers now in higher education and eight care leavers accessing apprenticeships.
- Care leavers are consistently provided with information about their rights and entitlements. This includes their being provided with key documents, such as national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports.
- Care leavers are represented within the change council and have contributed to the commissioning of services through this forum. They act as young inspectors in reviewing the quality of housing provision and in developing a DVD to showcase the range of housing options available.

Evaluation of progress

Based on the evidence gathered during the visit, we identified areas of strength, areas where improvement is being made and some areas where we considered that the progress has not yet met the expectations set out in the local authority's action plan.

The new leadership arrangements for children's services in Sunderland in respect of services for care leavers demonstrate a strong and appropriate focus. Leaders are committed to developing a performance culture at all levels of service delivery. Improvements are clearly seen in the outcomes for care leavers. Improved performance monitoring and quality assurance processes are key factors in securing this improvement. Findings from quality assurance processes are used to shape training and packages of support for staff. The development of practice standards, policies and new frameworks for pathway planning and assessments underpin these developments and support further improvement and consistency of practice.

Workers in the Next Steps service report a change in culture, with clear direction and openness, which is engendering confidence within the staff team. The Next Steps service has been relocated close to the city centre, which enables care leavers to meet their allocated workers more easily and is resulting in better support for them. Improved contact and support for care leavers is further enhanced through increased stability of the workforce, with just one vacancy in the Next Steps team, due to the promotion of one of the workers. Sickness levels across the workforce are low.

Pathway planning has been a priority for the 'Next Steps' service, to ensure that care leavers' needs are identified and action taken to provide support. In November 2015,

only 69% of care leavers had a pathway plan. This had increased to 89% by June 2016. However, as acknowledged by senior managers and identified by inspectors, the quality of pathway plans is not yet good enough. Needs assessments are not always undertaken, chronologies are not used consistently or effectively, plans are not specific with regard to actions required and are not always updated to reflect changes in circumstances. In addition, personal education plans are not always in place or up to date, and the quality of case recording is inconsistent, often lacking sufficient detail.

Supervision and management oversight is not consistently effective in progressing actions or identifying weaknesses in the quality of practice with care leavers. The recording of supervision does not demonstrate reflective practice in casework. Managers, including independent reviewing officers, do not sufficiently challenge the quality of planning and recording. Inspectors identified that the appropriateness in the timing of transition of young people to the Next Steps team had not always been well considered.

The health needs of care leavers are addressed within the pathway planning process. However, care leavers do not always receive their medical histories or health passports to ensure that they have this important information for their future, despite senior managers raising this with health partners.

There is evidence of effective involvement of care leavers in shaping services and influencing their own plans for the future. This includes involvement in the change council, which represents the voices of children and young people who are in care in Sunderland. Care leavers speak very positively about the changes that have taken place since the Ofsted inspection in May and June 2015. Care leavers consistently report that they receive good support, are aware of their legal entitlements and are involved in pathway planning. This was seen through the support provided to access education and employment opportunities and in the data, which shows an increase in care leavers in education, employment and training and a decrease in those who are NEET. One care leaver reported that the help and support received from her worker is 'amazing'. Care leavers have access to the 'mind of my own' app to help them to keep in touch with workers and to express their views, as well as a helpful folder which includes information about money, staying put, complaints and an A-Z of services.

In addition to the increased support for care leavers from their allocated workers, a key aspect of improvement for care leavers has been their access to better housing options. Increasing use and promotion of staying put arrangements and supported lodgings help to ensure that care leavers have a better range of options. At the time of the monitoring visit, just one care leaver was homeless and the local authority was responding quickly and appropriately to address the situation. The young people's tracked cases, sampled audits and discussions all showed that care leavers feel safe where they are living. The local authority has reflected the views of care leavers as

part of the commissioning of services, including the development of new housing provision. Young inspectors have reviewed all of the accommodation available and provided a star rating. Care leavers have been involved in the development of a DVD to showcase the different housing choices available.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona J Millns

Her Majesty's Inspector

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

PROVISIONAL DATA OUTCOMES FOR KEY STAGE 2 AND KEY STAGE 4

Report of the Virtual Headteacher

Key Stage 2

The cohort included 13 children of whom 2 had a statement or EHCP, and 1 was at action plus on the Special Needs Code of Practice. Only 2 children changed schools during their primary education.

When these children were in Year 5 they had two years to cope with a new curriculum that was more challenging for them. The marking of the tests also changed. Pupils had to achieve a score of 100 or more to achieve the expected standard. Overall scores ranged from 80 to 113. Those pupils scoring below 100 did not achieve the standard expected for their age; whilst those scoring above 100 exceeded the expected standard. 2 children scored 99, but had to be classed as below the standard. Because of the changes to the marking and scoring system, there is no comparative data from previous years.

	Numbers achieving the expected standard	Numbers exceeding the expected standard	Numbers below the expected standard
Reading	6 (46%)	5 (38%)	7 (54%)
Writing	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	6 (46%)
Maths	6 (46%)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)
Grammar, spelling, punctuation	7 (54%)	4 (31%)	6 (46%)

Key Stage 4

The number of pupils eligible to sit GCSEs in this cohort was 40, of whom 36 had been in care for at least 12 months. 5 (12%) of the 41 had an EHC Plan or Statement of Special Needs. In addition 17 (41%) had been identified as having special needs on the Code of

The percentage of Sunderland pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*- C:

Sunderland LAC	Sunderland All Pupils 2016	National all pupils 2016
19% (7 pupils)	60%	66%

The percentage of Sunderland pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs including English and Maths at grades A*- C:

Sunderland LAC	Sunderland All Pupils 2016	National all pupils 2015
14% (5 pupils)	55%	57%

The percentage of Sunderland pupils who achieved A*-C in English Language or English Literature:

Sunderland LAC	Sunderland All Pupils 2016	National All Pupils 2016
17% (6pupils)	70%	Not available

The percentage of Sunderland pupils who achieved A*-C in Maths:

Sunderland LAC	Sunderland All Pupils 2016	National All Pupils 2016
23% (8 pupils)	66%	Not available

The percentage of children who attained a minimum of 5 A*-Gs

Sunderland LAC	Sunderland All Pupils 2016	National All Pupils 2016
53% (19 pupils)	Not available	Not available

Attainment Headlines:

- The proportion of LAC achieving 5 GCEs at A*-C, including English and Maths was below national averages but an increase on the previous year
- The proportion of LAC gaining at least 5 GCEs at A*-G have attained a larger number of GCSEs than previous years, with 6 pupils gaining 9 GCSEs and 3 pupils gaining 8.
- 31 pupils (86%) achieved a qualification in Maths
- 31 pupils (86%) also achieved some qualification in English

The percentage of Sunderland pupils making the expected progress in English*:

Sunderland LAC	National All Pupils 2014
55% (20 pupils)	72.1%

The percentage of Sunderland pupils making the expected progress in Maths*:

Sunderland LAC	National All Pupils 2014
47% (17 pupils)	66.4%

**Progress data is based on schools' judgements or prior attainment where available.*

- The percentage making expected progress in English, from their target set, was 17.1% below the national average for all pupils nationally (2014)
- The percentage making expected progress in Maths, from their target set, was 26.4% below all pupils nationally (2014)
-

Trends at Key Stage 4

Looked After Children: Key Stage 4 Results 2016							
		Academic outcomes			Pupil Context:		
Academic Year	Cohort Size	5+ A*-C (incl Eng&Maths)	5+ A*-C	5+ A*-G	Statement / EHC Plan	Action/ Action Plus	Overall SEN
2016	36	14%	19%	47%	25%	31%	56%
2015	43	5%	7.5%	47%	12%	41%	53%
2014	42	20%	25%	80%	17%	50%	67%
2013	25	20%	20%	40%	40%	48%	88%

- 8 pupils (23%) came into care late in Year 9, at the start of their GCSE years.
- 1 pupil (5.5%) received no qualifications owing to her moving placements several times during the course of key stage 4 and her lack of engagement.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Report of the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on health LAC activity to Sunderland Corporate Parenting Board.

2. MALAP Health Sub –group

The MALAP Health Sub-group (MHSG) consists of multi-agency professionals: Designated professionals LAC, LAC Service Manager, Independent Reviewing Officer, Fostering Manager, LA Information Manager, Young People Engagement Officer, Children's Home Manager, Service Manager CYPS and a Psychologist from NTW.

2.1 The group meets bi-monthly to review and take forward LAC health activity via the MALAP Health Sub-group action plan which was developed by the Designated Nurse LAC. The last MHSG met on 6th September.

2.2 The health action plan is addressing the following areas of activity (appendix 1):

- Inspection of health premises by young people
- Monitor compliance data for health assessments
- Quality assurance process for health assessments of children placed externally
- Audit cycle for health assessments
- Annual audit of young people's experiences of the LAC health service to inform future provision
- Monitoring compliance of health passports improvement plan
- Review LAC CYPS data including referral to treatment.

2.3 The Designated Doctor for LAC has produced an information leaflet for Foster Carers outlining the role of Sunderland LAC health team, based at the Children's Centre and the expectations of Foster Carers in bringing children and young people to their health appointments. The leaflet has been approved by the Foster Care Forum and is awaiting sign off from the Leaflets Committee at City Hospitals Sunderland in October. The plan is for the

leaflets to be given to each new Foster Carer for each new LAC at their IHA and will include the predicted appointment for next RHA. The aim is to produce additional leaflets for children and young people about the health assessments.

3. Inspection of health premises

- 3.1** The creation of an adolescent waiting room at the Children's Centre is awaiting inspection by a group of LAC. It is anticipated that this will open late October. This will allow age appropriate health promotion information to be displayed for young people.

4. Compliance data for health assessments Quarter 1 2016/17

- 4.1** Local Authorities are responsible for making sure a health assessment of physical, emotional and mental health needs is carried out for every child they look after. Initial Health assessments (IHAs) must happen within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after. In order for the health team to ensure compliance with statutory timescales it is imperative they are advised of the child becoming looked after and consent for health assessments received in a timely manner.

- 4.2** The review health assessment must happen at least every six months before a child's 5th birthday and at least once every 12 months after the child's 5th birthday.

- 4.3** Initial health assessments (IHA) compliance for quarter 1 was **29%**
Compliance figures are low due to the following reasons:

- 47 late notifications from the Local Authority
- 5 appointments were sent out of timescales by the LAC health team.

- 4.4** An escalation procedure is in place with the Local Authority to address late notifications. The issue of some appointments having been sent out late from the LAC health team has been addressed and efficiencies within the team are expected to improve when the LAC nurse takes up her post at the beginning of October.

- 4.5** Review health assessments compliance for quarter 1 including out of area children was **61%**

Compliance figures are low due to several factors:

- 19 children/young people did not attend
- 6 were unable to attend
- 12 not seen within timescales in the placement area
- Clinics were cancelled.

- 4.6** Children placed out of area (25 mile radius) remain out with the control of the Sunderland LAC health team; assessments are requested in a timely way but sometimes are completed out of timescales. In addition to sending out requests in a timely manner the LAC health team can also make additional

requests by phoning the LAC team in the area in which the child is placed but can't influence the timing of the assessments.

4.7 In quarter one 12 children/young people requiring health assessments were placed out of area. In an attempt to improve compliance the LAC health team send out of area requests for health assessments 3 months in advance.

4.8 Very few clinics are cancelled but when they have been this is due to a LAC Doctor having to prioritise adoption medicals. An adoption medical clinic has now been set up to avoid this problem in the future.

4.9 During quarter one there were no LAC from other local authorities who required health assessments.

5. Audit

5.1 Children and young people who are placed out of area have their health assessments undertaken by the LAC health team in the area in which the child is placed. The external trust invoice Sunderland CCG for payment on completion of the health assessment. In line with Payments by Result (PBR) an audit tool is used to look at the quality of the health assessment, if the assessment is of poor quality payment can be withheld. During quarter one 7 Sunderland LAC had their health assessments completed externally; the quality of the health assessments were good and invoices have been raised.

6.0 Annual Engagement Survey

6.1 The annual engagement survey of children and young people's satisfaction and understanding of LAC health provision will start in November.

7.0 Health Passports

7.1 The Ofsted "deep dive" which was undertaken on 4th and 5th August into LAC and Care Leavers identified a compliance rate of 53% for the issuing of health Passports.

7.2 Sunderland CCG has requested CHS develop and implement an improvement plan in order to improve compliance; this will be monitored via the CCG Named and Designated Assurance Group and MHSG

7.3 Preliminary discussions have taken place to explore the feasibility of developing a Health Passport app. The LAC Specialist Nurse will be taking up her appointment on 3rd October and will be instrumental in facilitating the exit health interviews and issuing Health Passports

8.0 CYPS data

8.1 Data provided to SCCG by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) highlights that in June 9 LAC were referred to CYPS and 86 are currently in treatment which is 15% of the LAC population. Further meetings

will be taking place with NTW as more detailed information is required in respect of data.

9.0 Recommendations

- The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the content of the report.
- The LAC health team will continue to support the Local Authority with the Improvement plan in respect of LAC.
- MHSG monitor LAC action plan.
- The LAC health team will work towards improving compliance with health passports.
- Designated LAC professionals to work with NTW to improve the data reporting in respect of LAC.

Anne M Brock

Anne Brock

Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse and Designated Nurse LAC

Dr Kim Barrett

Kim Barrett
Designated Doctor LAC

MALAP Health Sub Group Action Plan 2016/17



**Sunderland
Clinical Commissioning Group**

No	Actions	Outcome	Lead	Timescale	Progress/evidence	RAG rating
1	To undertake annual survey with young people of the LAC health service in order to gain feedback of their experiences to inform future service provision	User friendly services for children and young people	AB	31/01/17	Audit will take place during November 2016 28/09/16 – 1 st planning meeting for engagement survey with CCG Engagement Officer	Amber
2	Young people to review health clinic accommodation at Durham Road annually.	Clinic provision to be suitable for LAC across the age span	AB	30/10/16	Date arranged for October	Amber
3	Monitor compliance of Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) and Review Health Assessments (RHAs) quarterly.	All LAC to have health assessments undertaken within statutory timescales	KB	quarterly	Compliance data for quarter one IHA 29% RHA 61%	Green
4	Consent for IHAs	Consent to be obtained in order that IHAs can be undertaken within 20/7 timescale. Effective escalation process to be in place	SL	31/08/16	Lack of consent for IHAs remains an issue – this to be escalated to October MALAP	RED

MALAP Health Sub Group Action Plan 2016/17

5	Quarterly audit cycle of IHAs, RHAs and Exit health interviews.	CCG to be assured of the quality and timeliness of health assessments	KB	31/12/16	Audit completed June 2016	Amber
6	CHS to implement an improvement plan for assurance that all young people who have an exit health interview receive a health passport. At time of Ofsted 'deep dive' of LAC and care leavers compliance data 53%	100% of young people receive a health passport at the exit health interview.	KB	01/11/16		Amber
7	Quality assure health assessments of Sunderland children placed externally	Sunderland children placed externally to have high quality health assessments prior to payments being released.	KB	30/08/16	First audit undertaken July 2016 Health assessments of satisfactory quality. Rag rating audit tool has been developed since first audit undertaken.	Green
8	LAC health assessments/health plan to be available for LAR	To have fully informed LAR assessment	RP	31/12/16		Amber
9	CYPs data to be made available regarding how many children/young people are referred to the service and seen within required timescales; to include waiting times from assessment to treatment.	Assurances that children are seen and commence treatment in a timely manner	AB	30/08/16	Meeting with Head of CYPS NTW and Consultant Psychologist. Information sent quarterly to Commissioning Team – currently 86 LAC accessing CYPS	Green

MALAP Health Sub Group Action Plan 2016/17

					(15% LAC population).	
10	Foster carer training to be provided by LAC health team	Foster Carers to understand the health needs of LAC	KB/LA C Nurse	31/03/17	LAC Nurse appointed and will take up her position in October 2016. Once established in role she will take forward foster carer training. NTW deliver package of training to Foster Carers	Amber

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

ANNUAL REPORT OF FOSTERING PANEL

Report of the Strategic Service Manager

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform board members about the work of the Fostering Panel over the period from April 2015 to April 2016.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Fostering Regulations 2013, Part 5, sets out the requirements of all fostering agencies with regard to the role, responsibilities and memberships of Panels. In summary, the role of the Fostering Panel is to consider the full approval variation of approval and termination of approval of anyone either seeking to be approved as or currently approved as Foster Carers, who wish to care for children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This includes family and friends, otherwise known as 'Connected Carers' who have had children placed with them under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning and Care Review (England) Regulations 2010. In addition, Fostering Panels also have a duty to consider the annual review of foster carers.

3. Main Points

- 3.1 **The current Independent Chair of the two fostering panels assumed her role in July 2015**

Foster Carer Review

- 3.2 The first annual review of foster carers is presented to Panel and the backlog has now reduced significantly. There continues to be a challenge for Panel in respect of the quality of the information that is collated within the review reports and a number of annual reviews have had to be deferred. Between April 1st 2015 and March 2016 there were 21 first annual reviews presented to the Panel, of which 12 were deferred. Common themes leading to deferment have been:
- Approved foster carers not having completed the required mandatory training and the Training Support and development Standards (TSDS) portfolio. The TSDS should be completed within 12 months of approval unless a relative has been approved as a Connected Carer, in which case it is 18 months.

- Recommendations from annual reviews have not been actioned in the required timescales and remain outstanding when the review is presented to Panel.
- 3.3 The Panel Advisors have escalated these concerns to the Independent reviewing Service. Panel are yet to see any marked improvement and continue to question why the ongoing approval of a carer is recommended when Fostering Standards are not met.

Agency Decision Maker

- 3.4 There is an Interim Head of Service for Looked After Children in post who assumes the role of Agency Decision Maker. Following Ofsted inspection last year and in order to address some of the concerns raised by Ofsted, the Agency Decision Maker now meets with the Chair of the Fostering Panel on a quarterly basis to discuss matters arising from Panel business. This has proved to be a useful forum to not only explore particular challenges but also to consider a way forward to strengthen Panel arrangements. As a consequence, Practitioners and Managers now appear to understand the expectations of Panel. Where these are not met then an agenda item could potentially be deferred. It is important that the information presented to Panel is sufficient to be able to reach an informed recommendation. The Agency Decision Maker also adds an extra element of quality assurance.

Delegated Authority

- 3.5 Delegated Authority is now in place and training has been provided to carers and staff with respect to this. The matter of Delegated Authority remains a challenge as it is often the case when prospective 'Connected Carers' attend Panel they have received documentation that informs them of the decisions they can make on behalf of the child. The absence of Delegated Authority does not prohibit someone from being approved as a 'Connected Carer.' The guidance and required documentation about Delegated Authority has been re-issued to staff and the Independent Reviewing Service have added Delegated Authority to their required checklist at Childrens Reviews and Foster Carer Reviews.

Recruitment

- 3.6 CREO have been assisting in developing the new foster carer recruitment campaign which is about to be launched. We have a number of looked after young people attending Information Sessions for prospective Foster Carers. They have come up with a question for Panel Members to ask applicants: "What would you do if you were struggling in your role as a Foster Carer?" This question is now asked of all applicants. The young people have also been involved in the fostering campaign posters.

Panel Members Profile

- 3.7 Panel Members Profile is currently being developed. This will provide applicants with details of the membership of Panel and the purpose and function of Panel and hopefully alleviate some anxieties for people attending the Fostering Panel.

Elected Member

- 3.8 There is no longer a requirement under the Fostering Regulations to have an elected member on Panel; however it is noted that such membership is beneficial, given that elected members are representatives of the 'Corporate Parent.' Cllr Iain Kay currently sits on one of the Fostering Panels.

Training for Panel Members

- 3.9 Panel Members received training from BAAF during September 2015 and a further training event is scheduled for later this year to focus upon 'Allegations Management.' Panel Members have also attended Regulation 24 Training which was cascaded across the teams following the outcome of the Ofsted inspection.

Appraisals

- 3.10 Yearly appraisals have taken place with Panel Members who are positive about being asked to express their opinions and views.

Terms of Reference

- 3.11 The Constitution and Terms of Reference of Panel has been revised and was implemented in December 2015.

Checklist

- 3.12 A Quality Assurance Checklist is now in place to ensure that any documents / reports that are presented to the Panel are of a high quality.

De-Registration

- 3.13 Panel now routinely consider the outcome of Deregistration Management Meetings, where Foster Carers have been under investigations. There has been a significant improvement in this area of work. We have had 43 De-Registrations of Foster Carers – this is a high level and reflects that Connected Carers have secured a Legal Order to end the Looked After status of the children they are caring for. In addition when Foster Carers approval ends a De-Registration Report must be taken to Fostering Panel.

Fostering Officers

- 3.14 Foster Carers continue to be supported by their Fostering Officers and receive supervision from them on a regular basis. Their training and development is also considered at these sessions. There is mandatory training in the first year (Training Support and Development Standards). There is an expectation that Foster Carers keep a portfolio of training they have completed and this is considered at their annual review.

Panel Advisor

- 3.15 Each Panel has a dedicated Panel Advisor whose role is to advise Panel on regulations, guidance, policies and procedures. This role is assumed by the two Team Managers of the Fostering Service.

Business Meetings

- 3.16 These should take place twice a year. There has been some difficulty fulfilling this requirement due to Panel Members availability to attend and competing demands. A Business Meeting was held last year which enabled the Agency Decision Maker to give members an overview of the Revised Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Fostering Panel. A future meeting is scheduled to take place on 19th December 2016.

Connected Carers

- 3.17 The biggest challenge for the Fostering Panel has been a major increase in the number of Connected Carers. We currently have 34 Connected Carers and 37 regulation 24 assessments taking place. There has been a variation in the quality of these assessments and Panel has routinely queried why assessments have not been completed within the required timescale of 16 weeks (a further 8 weeks can be granted under Regulation 25). Panel have deferred items due to the non-attendance of the Child's Social Worker at Panel and because of gaps in written information. Panel have also questioned whether the extension of 8 weeks under Regulation 25 has been submitted and then approved by the Agency Decision Maker, as this is not always clear.

4. Future Developments

- 4.1 Performance Information. There is a need for further discussion regarding IT systems in order that the accuracy of the Fostering Service can be collated and performance management information obtained to assist with service requirements and development. We are currently looking at a new computer system which should significantly improve our collation of data.
- 4.2 Panel Members remain keen to invite a previously Looked After young person to be a Panel Member. This needs to be progressed within the next two months.

- 4.3 A review of the Annual Foster Carer Review template is to take place and the Panel Members profile is to be developed. The Foster Carers recruitment campaign will be launched and a review of the fee structure for Foster Carers will take place.
- 4.4 Consideration is to be given to Foster Carers attending Panel following their first Annual Review and to increase the membership of the 'central list' further.
- 4.5 The Panel to continue working towards holding two Business Meetings annually and all Panel Members are to be issued with an I-Pad which will enable panel papers to be accessed via a secure portal. This should also speed up the process of members receiving 'panel packs' and simultaneously reducing the cost to the Local Authority, as it currently can cost up to £25.00 for each pack of panel papers to be sent to individual Panel Members via Recorded Delivery.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note the content of this report.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 October 2016

CORPORATE PARENTING TRAINING

Report of the Senior Organisational Development Consultant

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To give an understanding to session planning in relation to the Corporate Parenting training for Councillors.

2. Introduction/Background

- 2.1 We have a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children. We should do our utmost to make sure that children in our care get a good start in life. **(Dobson 1998)**
- 2.2 However, whilst every elected member is, by definition, a corporate parent, not all elected members will have the same knowledge and involvement.

3. Main Body of the Report

- 3.1 Our aim for the training is to create a stepped program with sessions based on the needs and outcomes from the feedback we receive during and after our opening workshops.
- 3.2 The first part of the program is to give participants an understanding of the Young Persons journey through our service areas in Sunderland. The first session will have speakers from each area giving an overview of the journey, and the difficulties that may be encountered along the way. **(see appendix 1)**
- 3.3 We will hear from our young people who have experienced a 'journey' and councillors will be able to hear from them and also have the opportunity to ask questions related to this.
- 3.4 From this we will develop further sessions from the feedback of the councillors to add to specific development areas, creating a structured plan for further workshops looking at the areas in support of service and personal development.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to attend introductory sessions to listen to the journey of the Children and Young People through our service areas in Sunderland.

Workshop dates – 24th October, Sandhill Centre, 5.30pm – 7.30pm
10th November, Sandhill Centre, 5.30pm – 7.30pm

- 4.2 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to attend the awareness sessions developed from the feedback received and supplemented with the specific development areas we feel need to be included in the development of the corporate parent.

Corporate Parenting Workshop 1

Dates: Monday 24th October 5:30-7:30pm

Thursday 10th November 5:30-7:30pm

Time	Activity	Lead Staff	Materials/ Young People
17.30-17:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduction- Aims and Objectives- Legal Context- Overview of the session	Martin Birch Dave Laverick	
17:45 – 17:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Child's Journey	Gavin Taylor	
17:55- 18:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Fostering Service	Sheila Lough	
18:05-18:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Permanence and Adoption	Sheila Lough	
18:15-18:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Care Leavers	Lucy Pearson/ Lynne Kell	
18:25-18:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Virtual School	Dawn Shearsmith	
18:35- 18:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Residential Care	Sharon Willis	
18:45 -18:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- IRO Service	Gavin Taylor	
18:55- 19:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children in Care Council	Jane Wheeler	Change Council Young People
19:10 -19:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Next Steps- Questions- Close	David Laverick	

- Each member of lead staff will need to prepare a short 6 minute presentation explaining their service area to corporate parents.

