

Norfolk County Council

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2016 – 2019

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Our Vision: Children First

‘Norfolk County Council will be a consistent, caring and responsible parent to all children and young people in our care through to adulthood. We Promise to put **Children First** and to work with them and the important people in their lives to ensure they are safe, happy and well. We will always be there at the right time to support children and young people to achieve their own personal ambitions by never giving up on them’

In Norfolk, we put our **Children First**. We want the same things for the children and young people we look after as any good parent would want for their child. We want our children to be healthy and happy in childhood and when they grow up we, want them to feel valued for who they are and to feel loved. We want them to enjoy learning and to benefit from the experience. We want our children and young people to achieve their full potential and have their own goals and ambitions reached in life. We want children and young people to grow and build on strengths as adults with experiences of positive relationships and make a positive contribution to our communities. Our vision is that we will achieve this as **Children First**, where the provision of care to our children will enhance lives, opportunities and outcomes by a committed and professional workforce, providing the highest quality of care and support available.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Joyce".

James Joyce, Chair of NCC Children’s Services Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rosen".

Michael Rosen, Executive Director, Norfolk Children’s Services

This document sets out how Norfolk County Council Children's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent putting **Children First** by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving our care. With this vision and commitment we will ensure that we work with children and their families to develop and sustain safe, happy and successful lives. Achieving this goal requires the collective engagement of the local authority and its partners working together, involving children and young people in the decisions being made about them and the scrutiny and governance of the Corporate Parenting Executive Group.

We want all children to be safe, so Norfolk Children's Services will, by adopting a 'signs of safety' approach, put in place high quality interventions and support services to enable children to grow up within their birth families. We will be proactive with taking timely and responsive action and give attention to stability and permanence. We want the provision of care to enhance the lives of children and young people to achieve good outcomes. Our holistic assessments will be child centred and robust. We reflect our ambitions outlined in our Improvement Plan to provide high quality services to the right children and young people at the right time.

The strategy addresses the needs of our children and young people from birth to the age of 21 (or 25 where Children's Services continue to have statutory responsibility) who are, or who have been, looked after by Norfolk Children's Services.

Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers

In Norfolk we are proud to make a commitment that at all times we will consider **Children First**. The national term 'Looked After Child' refers to a child/young person (0 - 18) for whom the Local Authority is providing care and accommodation, either by a court order or in agreement with the child's parent or guardian. Some children with disabilities who receive a regular series of short breaks are also classified as looked after children.

In Norfolk we are proud to make a commitment that at all times we will work alongside, and be ambitious for, our care leavers.

Care leavers are young adults who have been in the care of the local authority. There are a number of definitions in relation to care leavers and these definitions fall into the categories of Eligible, Relevant, Former Relevant and Qualifying. For further information about the definitions please see the links on page 36.



Norfolk in Care Council (NiCC)



The **Norfolk in Care Council** (NiCC) represents our children and young people in and leaving care. We want all LAC and Care leavers Children to be members of the NiCC as we want the voices of all children in and leaving care to be heard and considered.

NiCC support this LAC and Care Leavers Strategy, where **The Promise** developed by the NiCC is a key priority with **Children First**.

The main objectives of the NiCC are:

1. To look at the services provided for LAC and care leavers
2. To make sure the voice of LAC and care leavers is heard and considered in all areas that affect their lives including service changes, developments and evaluations
3. To work in partnership with Children's Services management and front line staff to ensure that every LAC and care leaver gets the best possible service
4. To promote and improve the image of children in care and care leavers
5. Making sure that private companies that work with children and young people in care are aware of the issues and needs of LAC.



Fostering Advisory Partnership



We are proud of our Fostering Service, who have established a Fostering Advisory Partnership, to put **Children First**.

The **Team Around the Child** foster care charter has been re-written by the **Fostering Advisory Partnership**, to place the child in the centre of what we do and by improving their outcomes.

The Charter describes to us how a good **Team Around the Child** works and should provide a template for us to improve the service we give **Looked After Children**.

Team Around the Child

- Education: working together to champion a positive image of our children, promoting and celebrating their achievements to help them to reach their full potential and aspirations
- Working in partnership; the partnership culture will adopt the values as described in the Team Around the Child wheel. We all have skills, experience and expertise that can make a difference to the lives of the children in our care
- Decision making and planning: we recognise that in order for children to live a full family life the Team Around the Child must be able to make decisions regarding children/young people
- Continuous professional development; the whole team must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their careers. This will allow them to develop the skills and knowledge to improve their practice in order to transform the lives of children
- Contact; children and young people should have appropriate, carefully assessed and supported contact with family and friends and other people who are important to them
- Identity; the positive development of children and young people's self-image, celebrating diversity of religion, cultural practices, disabilities, language, sexuality, gender and race

- Support and communication: the Team Around the Child will participate in regular communication which will be open, honest and respectful
- Health and wellbeing; working together to provide assistance with the emotional wellbeing, behavioural, medical, sexual health and disabilities of the child or young person
- Information sharing: we know that information is vital in order to provide care that meets the child's needs

Team Around the Child
(Wheel)



Values and principles – **Children First** in Norfolk, we believe that:



- Only the right children at the right time should become LAC and those children should stay in care for the minimum amount of time consistent with their safety and well-being
 - All children and young people will have high quality Personal Education Plans, completed within statutory timescales and have access to good education that meets their education needs. This will enable children to achieve outcomes the same as their peers, in line with the strategy 'A good education for every Norfolk learner'
 - We must strive for the best outcomes and the best quality services for all children in and leaving our care
 - Permanence planning starts from the decision that a child needs to come into care and continues until the child's future is secure
-
- Permanence plans include adoption, Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), long term fostering and reunification home.
 - Health, including dental and mental health is a critical aspect of a child's development.
 - Children are entitled to be listened to and respected as individuals, they must be seen regularly, with their views and wishes taken into account and clearly recorded
 - Care plans, pathway plans, chronology and genograms will be clear and up to date on all case files
 - Priority is given to safeguarding, assessment and permanence planning
 - Children are entitled to participate, as fully as their age and understanding enables them, in decisions that affect them
 - The contribution of parents, carers and other family members are important and we must involve them in decisions about their children and recognise when they need support. This includes the need for contact, unless there are clear reasons why this is not in the best interests of children

- In our work with children we must protect and promote their cultural inheritance, religion and racial identity. We must challenge racism and discrimination and do our very best to ensure that decisions taken about children's future care are done so with the right degree of reference to cultural differences
- All children and young people leaving care should receive positive preparation and support to build resilience so that they are enabled to participate fully as active citizens once they reach adulthood. Significant attention will always be given and evidenced to preparing and implementing Pathway Plans with young people and providing support and guidance so that opportunities to engage in education, employment and training are maximised
- We must be inclusive of children and young people, with support to achieve ambition and maximise opportunities
- Young people leaving care, where eligible and assessed will have access to their entitlements; financial support and accommodation.
- These principles apply equally to disabled children and we will ensure that they are applied with specific and particular regard to the individual needs of disabled children



Key challenges and opportunities ahead

The challenges that face us while not unique to Norfolk are drawn from issues identified in inspection, audit and review, the views of children and young people and the experiences of those involved in providing and managing the services.



In October 2015, Ofsted published the report of the Inspection which had been carried out under the single inspection framework in July 2015. The report graded Norfolk Children's Services as inadequate in the area of 'Children looked after and achieving permanence' and the 'Experience and progress of care leavers'.

Whilst the grading for leadership and governance and children in need of help and protection recognised the improvements already made, the overall grading highlighted some weaknesses in provision for children in and leaving our care that needed immediate attention, these areas are identified within our improvement plan.

We recognise that important organisational and cultural changes are required in Norfolk Children's Services. These need to be achieved with rigour, pace and ambition to ensure that timely decisions are made for children and that good outcomes are achieved.

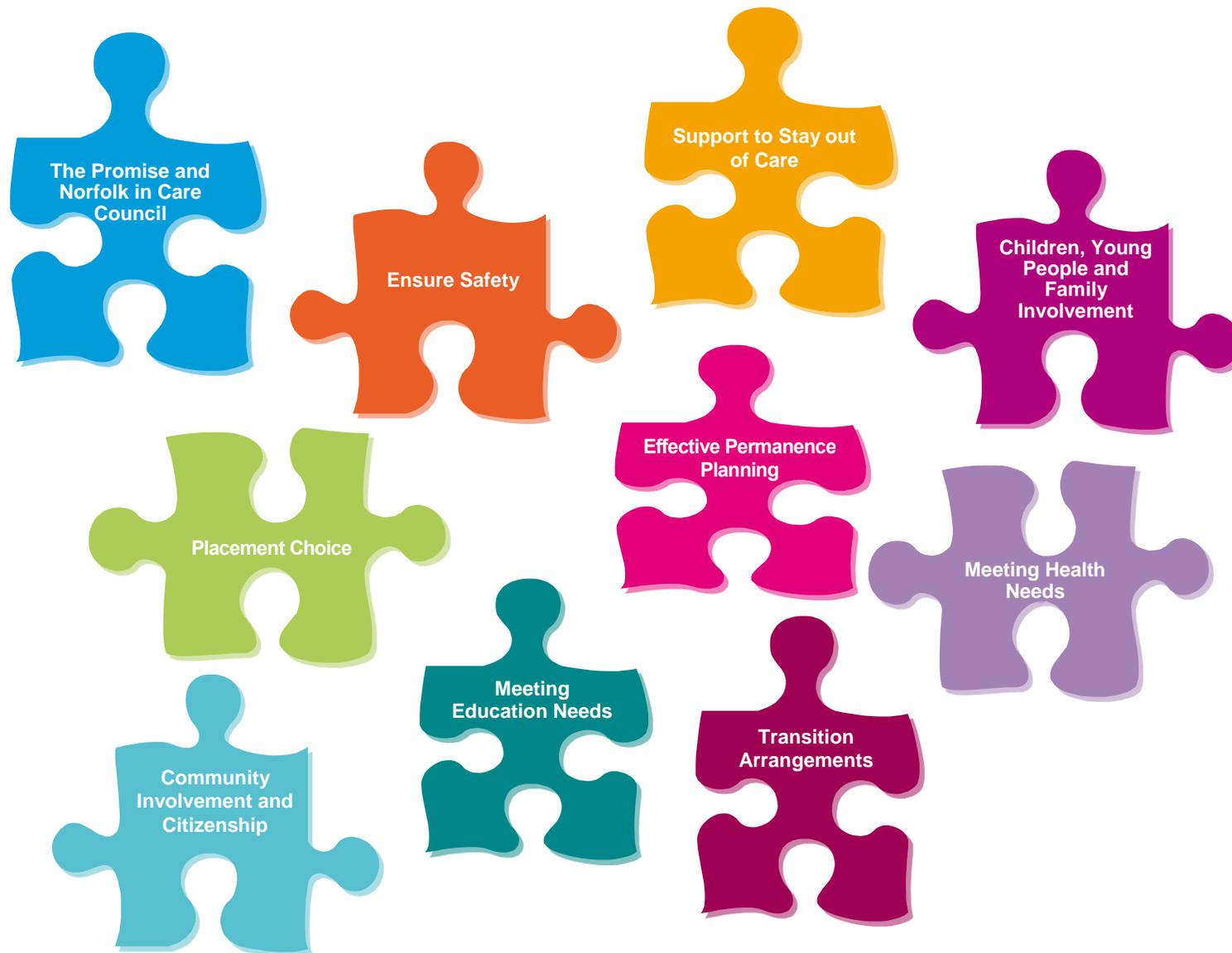
Norfolk Children's Services will continue to look at ways of attracting and recruiting a professional workforce that strives to meet the ever changing demand of services. We will develop the Norfolk Institute of Practice Excellence (NIPE) and always provide an effective induction programme and offer career pathways and opportunities that value staff development within a social work academy.

We want to ensure that this strategy embeds productive and effective partnership working with all agencies, services, parents, carers and children. The strategy will inspire opportunities and future innovation to develop practice and improve services across the County.

Strategic focus

- 1. Promote the safeguarding of children in and leaving care and specifically to reduce the risks associated with child sexual exploitation (CSE) and those who go missing.**
- 2. Support children and young people to remain within their family network and that children and young people feel part of their community.**
- 3. Ensuring we have the right children in care at the right time by robustly and regularly reviewing their care plans, applying effective pre-proceedings work or exiting them from the care system when this is appropriate and in their best interests.**
- 4. Reduce the numbers of children that need to be in care by providing early help and effective social work intervention to enable children to remain with their families.**
- 5. Ensure good quality and effective care planning with personal education plans and pathway plans which involve all significant people in children's lives, leading to good transitions for those who need continued support into adulthood.**
- 6. We will strive to improve placement sufficiency; the choice of suitable and supportive accommodation locally for all our children and care leavers, with options for Staying Put.**
- 7. We want our children in care to be physically and emotionally healthy and have access to the right health resources, including additional support where a need is identified.**
- 8. Raise achievement and engagement with education, employment and training and support children and young people in a range of extra-curricular activities.**
- 9. Children in care to have good quality placements close to home, primarily by increasing the number of local foster care placements able to meet the range of needs.**
- 10. The Promise and Norfolk Children in Care Council provide support to raise awareness, challenge and scrutinise services and the journey of children in care.**

Our priorities – *Children First*



1. Ensuring safety

LAC are some of the most vulnerable children in our community. Their experience of family life, the impact of abuse, the social exclusion that is often associated with care, placement breakdowns and long term separation from families and communities can mean that LAC are more vulnerable than most. We place the safety of LAC at the heart of the work we do with them and we understand that children who are vulnerable may be at increased risk of further harm.



In order to safeguard children in and leaving our care we will ensure that we follow the safeguarding procedures as set out in guidance and legislation. We will ensure that the safety of LAC and care leavers will have a high priority within the county council, with partner agencies and within the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board.

In assessment and planning for LAC we will be aware of the potential risks of sexual exploitation and the potential links to children missing from care. When allegations are made by children we will work with the child and their carers to ensure that children are kept safe –we will always be mindful of the need for stability and we will only disrupt a child's situation when there is no safe alternative.

In order to keep looked after children and care leavers safe we will:

- Prioritise that every child has an allocated social worker or personal advisor (over 18) who sees them regularly and alone
- Strive for stability in placement and in allocated social worker and personal advisor
- Listen to children and take seriously any concerns they express about their safety
- Ensure that all staff, carers and providers undertake training and awareness raising events relating to the risks of child sexual exploitation

- Enable the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Group to meet regularly to review CSE assessments for LAC and care leavers, to also track and monitor actions identified and taken to reduce risk and deter perpetrators
- Follow procedures and take a multi-agency approach when children and young people go missing ensuring that young people are listened to and action is taken to keep them safe
- Maintain a regular multi-agency forum to ensure awareness raising and strategies are in place regarding the particular needs of looked after children and care leavers who are at risk of sexual exploitation or of going missing
- Champion the needs of children in, and leaving care at the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board

Impact measures and success criteria:

- 100% of looked after children will have an allocated social worker
- 100% of children will be seen by their social worker or personal advisor within timescale and seen alone
- Decreased number of placement moves and support stability
- Maintain professional relationships with minimal changes to allocated workers
- Identification and numbers of children in and leaving care deemed at risk of CSE with evidence that risk is being reduced following assessment and intervention
- Numbers of missing episodes recorded and interviews conducted and correlation between the number of missing episodes and timely return interviews
- Number of staff who have undertaken CSE and missing training

2. Support to remain within the family network

Our early help, child in need and child protection work is based on a signs of safety approach which understands the importance of having integrity, being open and honest with families and having confident humility to achieve positive outcomes.

We believe that children should be cared for within their birth families and we want to ensure that we have a clear cultural and legislative framework which ensures that the practice of supporting children and young people to remain at home with families is embedded.

In order to support children to remain within their family network we will:

- Work openly, honestly and with integrity with families when we are concerned a child may be at risk of harm and wherever possible assist them to make the changes which are needed to keep a child safe
- Ensure that we use robust, thorough and high quality social work assessment to inform decision-making and that the child's voice is ascertained, heard and recorded at all times
- Prioritise the child case advisory service to offer advice, support and assist with the commissioning of services in consultation with families to assist them in meeting the needs of their children
- Use evidence based social work to support timely decisions for children by maintaining a focus on them
- Work alongside partner agencies to further develop services which support infant attachment and offer intensive interventions to parents
- Further analyse the current cohort of LAC within our sufficiency strategy and permanence monitoring arrangements and further analyse the new admissions in order to inform the development of commissioned support services

Impact measures and success criteria:

- Number of entrants coming into care
- Numbers of entrants coming into care who were previously the subject of family support, child in need or child protection plan
- Number of children who have entered care for a second or subsequent time
- Numbers of families engaged in preventative services
- Audit outcomes about long term success of prevention services

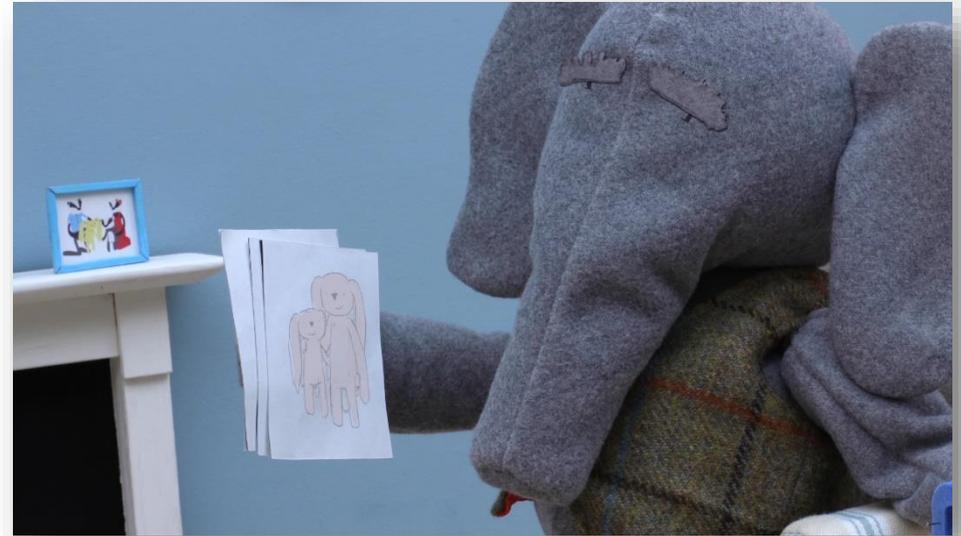


3. Effective permanence planning

We will adhere to effective care planning and justified permanence arrangements for all children and young people. Having a clear care plan in place that reflects individual developmental needs, is essential for children and young people in care. We will ensure that children do not “drift” through care, that permanence plans are identified for children and young people by their second LAC review and that, where children need long term foster placements, they are formally matched with carers.

We will effectively plan for children by:

- a. Scrutinising all new admissions into care at the Admissions to Care Panel ensuring that all alternatives have been properly explored. New admissions will only be agreed after the respective risks of admitting a child into care are weighed against those of not doing so. The expectation will be that there is clarity about the longer term plan and plan for permanence – even if that is some time in the future.
- b. Robustly and regularly reviewing care plans to ensure they remain relevant to the changing needs of children. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service is central to this and we will ensure that reviews are held in a timely manner, that they properly address both the short term and long term needs of a child, that there is an effective escalation process in place. IROs will also act as advocates for children in our care
- c. Demonstrate responsive and speedy effective case management, ensuring progress through care proceedings, with applications being made and cases presented to court in a timely way with a robustly developed care plan. Where we provide care to children using section 20 (Children Act 1989) we will do so with signed consent and monitor each case
- d. Ensuring that our work under the Public Law Outline evidences that we are using Family Group Conferencing (FGC) and a signs of safety approach in all cases with significant efforts made to support children to remain at home or with the wider family network



- e. Working within the legislative and statutory frameworks
- f. Establishing a Permanence Monitoring Group and Permanence Panel to ensure that all children have a permanence plan by the second review and ensure reunification and exit from care is timely. No child should be in care without a clear and explicit sense of why they are there, how long they are likely to be there and what their future holds

Impact measures and success criteria:

- Number of LAC with a plan for permanence by the second review
- Number of LAC with their permanence plan achieved
- Improved placement stability
- 100% of LAC reviews in time
- 100% of looked after children will have an up to date care plan
- 100% of care leavers will have an up to date needs assessment and pathway plan
- Number of cases subject to IRO escalation and resolution
- The number of weeks cases take to conclude in proceedings
- Numbers of family group conferences
- Measure of average length of time in care
- Number of children placed for adoption and length of time to place and secure adoption order
- Number of children made subject of a special guardianship order at the conclusion of proceedings
- Number of children matched with long term carers



4. Involvement of children and families



We recognise that parents and carers remain key figures in the lives of most LAC and some not, so we will work hard to improve relationships and engage the child's family network with all decision making.

We are committed to ensuring that all statutory visits to children are undertaken within timescale and clearly recorded on the child's file and that children's families are consulted about all aspects of the child's plan.

Social workers will ensure contribution to the delivery of the care plan and that children are clear about what is happening and what is planned.

We will support young people to talk to us about their opinions and we will use that information to shape our service in the future.

We will involve children and their families by:

- Visiting children on a regular basis and consulting with them about the planning for them
- Talking to and including birth families in planning for their children
- Giving each child or young person a copy of their care plan in an age appropriate format (e.g: signs of safety; words and pictures)
- Making sure that all children and young people who come in to care are provided with information regarding how to make a complaint and access their records
- Offering advocates to young people particularly when a complaint has been made or a case is in dispute
- Offering an Independent Visitor to all looked after children who do not have a significant relationship with their birth family
- Endeavouring to hold LAC reviews in an environment which feels inclusive for family members with reviews facilitated by skilled IRO's that are able to be creative in ascertaining the family's wishes for their child

- Ensuring that the child’s voice is evidenced and recorded in all LAC Reviews and the IRO will visit the child and young person in placement in between LAC reviews to ensure progress of the care plan is being achieved and reduce drift.
- Supporting young people to chair and co-chair their LAC review
- Involving the NiCC in recruitment of key children’s workforce posts and contribute to providing training programmes
- Working with the NiCC to contribute to all Reg 44 visits where they undertake statutory visits to children’s homes and we will also develop a young person inspector’s programme
- Ensuring that the NiCC co-chair and have standing membership on our Corporate Parenting Executive Group and that they are directly involved in overseeing and shaping future services



Impact measures and success criteria:

- Increase number of children and young people participating in their LAC reviews.
- Number of young people wishing to chair and co-chair their reviews.
- Number of social care workforce interviews involving NiCC.
- Number of complaints and number of young people taking up their right to advocacy.
- Evidence that plans and assessments take account of the views of children and their families and the written documents are shared with them.
- Number of children matched with an Independent Visitor and length of duration of the relationship.
- Number of Reg 44 visits undertaken with NiCC.
- NiCC young inspector programme conducted with all residential children’s homes.

5. Meeting health needs

We want all children and young people to have a good standard of health. We know that in order to be safe and well looked after children and care leavers must have their emotional and physical health needs identified and met. We will work with determination and pace to ensure that this area is given sufficient priority by us, by colleagues within health services, by carers and by children and young people themselves.

To ensure children's health needs are met we will:

- Have an informed understanding of individual health needs and demonstrate action to address and improve this
- Develop and implement the Health Passport for all young people leaving care
- Ensure that when children become looked after they have an initial health assessment which is reviewed within statutory timescales
- Facilitate and review evidence regarding emotional health and welfare placing equal priority on physical health needs
- Identify children's health needs within our assessments and plans, providing clear actions to improve outcomes
- Prioritise referrals to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service or other appropriate services
- Champion children in our individual case and strategic commissioning discussions so that children and young people will get the intervention they need when they need it
- Provide information and advice to young people regarding emotional wellbeing, mental health, sexual health, substance misuse and alcohol. Encourage LAC and care leavers to engage with recreational activities, parks and leisure facilities with a leisure card or access to museums
- Provide skills in food preparation and healthy living, as well as offering health advice with regular confidential drop-in services

Impact measures and success criteria:

- 100% of initial and review health assessments completed on time
- Health assessments and health passports assessed as good within audit
- Completion of strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQs) results and subsequent follow up
- Reduced Child Adolescent Mental Health Services waiting times and interventions
- Number of substance misuse referrals and evidence of uptake
- Increased engagement in leisure and healthy living activities
- 100% of care leavers with a health passport
- Number of young people engaged with recreational activities or leisure using leisure cards



6. Meeting education needs

We want the children in our care and leaving our care to achieve the very best. We will have high aspirations for their learning and their future education and employment beyond our care. We will encourage, support and never give up. We will expect schools to provide an aspirational and safe learning environment which meets their needs and encourages and develops their ambitions. We will expect the same from the Team Around the Child or young person.

Norfolk's Virtual School for LAC will oversee, support and challenge academic achievements and attainment in partnership with schools, carers and social workers. They will hold schools to account for the impact of the provision on pupil's progress through the education system.

We believe that active engagement in appropriate activity and access to high quality education plays an important part in the successful transition to adulthood, will secure their future economic wellbeing, contribute to breaking the cycle of poor life choices and enable our young people to make a positive contribution to our communities.

The Virtual School is committed to ensure that the Voice of the child will be reflected in our planning to effectively support all pupils.



We will ensure children's educational needs are met by:

- Expecting every school to provide a relevant, aspirational curriculum which challenges and enables children and young people to succeed
- Making sure that all our LAC attend school (or receive education) and that none are excluded permanently from Norfolk schools
- Further developing the focus of the Norfolk Virtual School for LAC in order that they robustly monitor, challenge and intervene where necessary in relation to school attendance, educational provision and outcomes
- The Virtual School for LAC providing oversight of access to appropriate learning and educational opportunities for both pre and post-statutory school age children and young people, seeking to have higher education aspirations
- Improving the quality of plans for training and employment opportunities for young people in care and leaving care
- Supporting the development of appropriate work experience and apprenticeships and enabling young people to access them

Impact measures and success criteria:

- Close the gap in the percentage of children achieving a good level of development by age 5 with all children nationally
- Close the gap in the percentage of children achieving mastery in all curriculum subjects by the age of 11 is increasing similar to the national average for all children
- Close the gap in the percentage of young people achieving the expected standard in Attainment 8 and Progress 8 with all children nationally
- Exclusions for LAC are below the national average for all children
- Participation at 16 and 17+ is better than the national average for young people in care or leaving care
- The percentage of young people in care or leaving care not in education, employment or training (NEET) is increasingly similar to the national average for all

- Children to achieve progress in line with top quartile nationally
- The percentage of young people accessing apprenticeships, further and higher education increases year on year
- All children and young people accessing education to have a good quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) initiated and reviewed within statutory timescales
- Increase the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at key stage 2 so it is in line with national averages for all pupils
- LAC and young people leaving care to progress to destinations enabling them to achieve their educational potential and fulfil aspirations

7. Effective transition arrangements

We know that transition into adulthood isn't always easy and for care leavers the transition can be more complex. We know how important it is that our young people are supported into adulthood in a seamless manner and provided with progressive and ongoing interventions. We want our care leavers to be confident and be able to access support and ensure that a majority are engaged in education, employment and training and have the opportunity to live successful adult lives.

We will support effective transitions by:

- Supporting our young people when they are entering adulthood by planning in partnership with them using a high quality needs assessment and pathway plan, which is undertaken and reviewed in a timely manner.
- Ensuring entitlements are made clear to all care leavers including those defined within the leaving care act as qualifying care leavers
- Keeping in touch and offering support to those young people eligible for a leaving care service and making sure they know how to access support from us
- Developing our life skills programme and effective preparation for independent living
- Using the Transitions Panel to support the planning for young people from the age of 16, to also ensure robust pathway plans



- Allocating a personal advisor to all eligible young people at the age of 16 who will work alongside the allocated social worker until the young person is 18. The personal advisor will remain involved until the young person reaches the age of 21 (or 25 if in higher education)
- Further developing our relationships with providers and our sufficiency analysis and planning
- Where relevant working closely with adult services to ensure a seamless service to young people
- Ensuring that all care leavers have effective Needs Assessment and pathway plan with specific analysis in relation to independent living skills and access to suitable accommodation and arrangements for future support and care planning.
- Supporting our young people leaving care by securing suitable accommodation.
- Further developing drop in facilities to be accessible for all of our young people who have left care.

Impact measures and success criteria:

- 100% of care leavers with a needs assessment and pathway plan
- 100% of pathway plans reviewed in time
- All eligible young people considered at the Transitions Panel
- Uptake of the revised life skills programme
- Feedback from care leavers engaged in NiCC
- Number of young people placed in Staying Put arrangements
- Young people living in suitable accommodation



8. Placement choice and quality

We will make sure that we have an improved range of good quality placements to meet the assessed needs of our looked after children and care leavers. In order to make sure we are placing children within the right placements at the right time we will ensure that we undertake effective assessment and matching and work openly and honestly with foster carers and placement providers.

We will commit to an effective Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan which ensures that we enable wider placement choice and suitability, working with our foster carers and commissioned agency or residential placements that can meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people in the future.

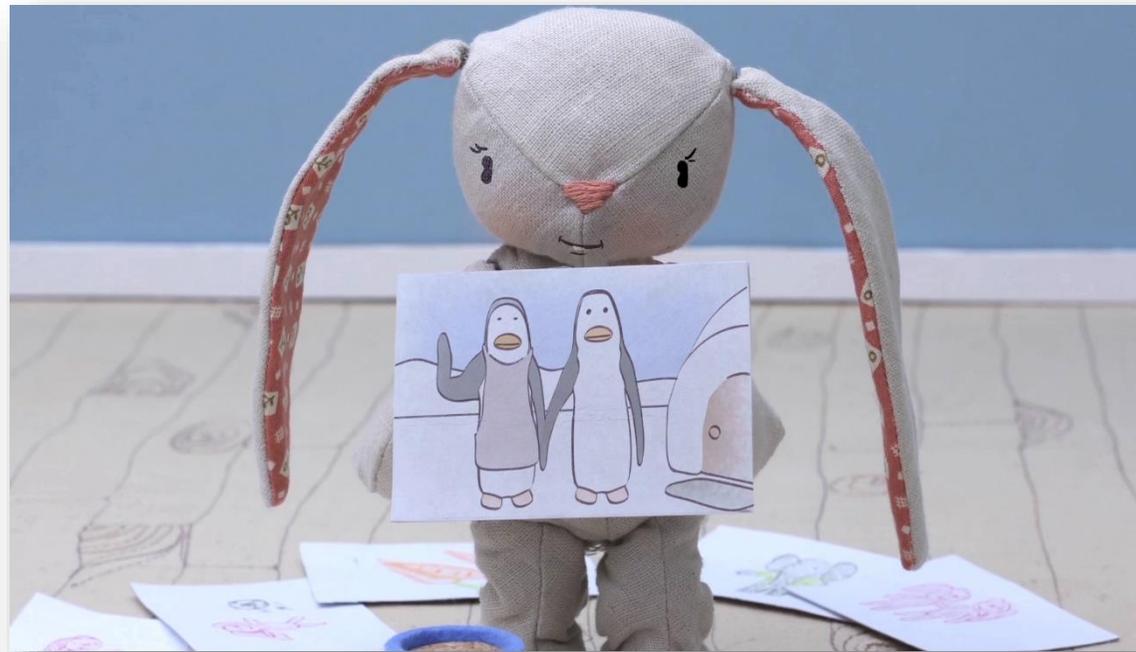
Placement choice is critical to ensuring that children's needs are met with providing stability and effective care planning.

In order to support this we will:

- Continue to embed the partnership arrangements with our in house fostering service in line with the foster carers charter
- Implement the Sufficiency Strategy to identify placement availability and take-up, future requirement and to support with placement choice
- Work with providers openly and honestly, striving for high standards and value for money
- Involve the NiCC to support Reg 44 visits to children's homes and implement a young inspectors programme
- Establish a provider network forum to monitor and review placement sufficiency
- Undertake a matching process for every placement and where a child is to be matched within a long term foster placement the assessment of this arrangement will be considered at the Permanence Panel

Impact measures and success criteria:

- Numbers of children in in-house foster care
- Percentage of children in independent fostering provision decreasing
- Percentage of children in residential care decreasing
- Increasing numbers of children placed within Norfolk and within 20 miles of their home address
- Improved placement stability
- All placements being of Good quality as judged by Ofsted



9. Community involvement and citizenship

We want to encourage children and young people to feel part of their local community and support them to be involved in a range of activities, including volunteer schemes and leisure activities. We want all our children and young people to be proud Norfolk citizens and be supported with community engagement, innovation, service delivery and improvement. We want to directly support contribution to local enterprise and business, enabling increased opportunity for work experience and apprenticeships.

We will encourage community involvement by:

- Actively supporting children and young people to participate in extra-curricular activities at school and college and will build this into their PEP and pathway plan.
- Ensuring that PEP reviews consider children's involvement in local groups and clubs and that carers are encouraged and expected to facilitate children's engagement in local activities.
- Ensuring that pathway plans evidence community engagement and contribution to programmes and initiatives.
- Ensuring that life skills programmes will reflect community engagement and positive relationships, including with family and local residents.



Impact measures and success criteria:

- Number of children engaged with extra-curricular activities
- Number of young people engaged with community projects or apprenticeships
- NiCC contribution/participation with Corporate Parenting Executive Group
- Number of young people engaged with leisure activity and holding leisure cards
- Number of social care workforce interviews involving NiCC



10. The Promise and Norfolk in Care Council (NiCC)

The Promise sets out the commitments made to children in and leaving care by those who are corporate parents for them. These commitments are endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Executive Group. We want the very best for the children and young people we are responsible for.

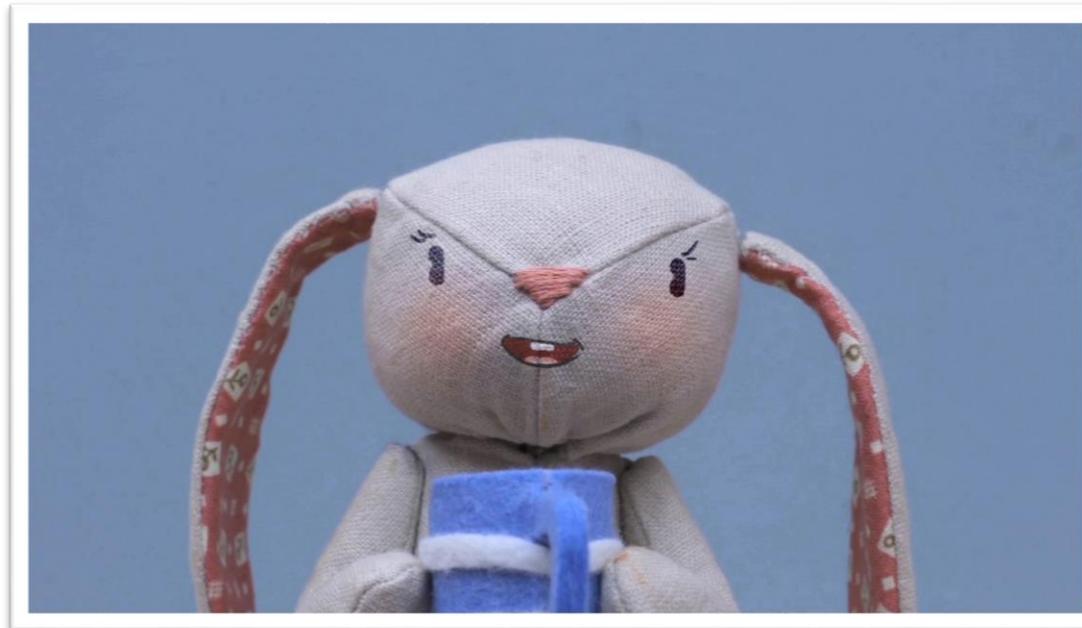
We will at all times place **Children First**.

We will prioritise our commitments to the Promise by:

- Using the promise as a guide to the way we work and delivering on the commitments outlined within this document
- Celebrating achievements and organising an annual celebration event
- Enabling the NiCC to participate in the review of services provided for LAC and care leavers
- Ensuring the NiCC have a prominent position within the governance arrangements for looked after children and care leavers – with the NiCC co-chairing of the Corporate Parenting Executive Group
- Ensuring that the voice of children and care leavers is heard and considered in all areas that affect their lives including service changes, developments and evaluations
- Embedding an expectation of partnership between the NiCC, senior managers, management and front line staff to ensure that we are keeping to our Promise
- Supporting the NiCC to pro-actively raise the awareness of our children and young people by contributing to the many initiatives regarding apprenticeships and working in partnership with agencies and community services to enable the best possible start in life and transition to adulthood
- Supporting the members of NiCC to undertake young inspectors training and be involved in preparing our children's homes for Ofsted inspection and reg 44 visits

Impact measures and success criteria:

- Increase the number of LAC who are involved in, or members of, the NiCC
- Feedback from young people via steering groups and review monitoring forms
- Number and analysis of complaints/compliments
- Monitor and evaluate the delivery of the Promise at statutory reviews and by children and young people
- Increased participation in NiCC and events raising awareness
- Develop a young inspector programme



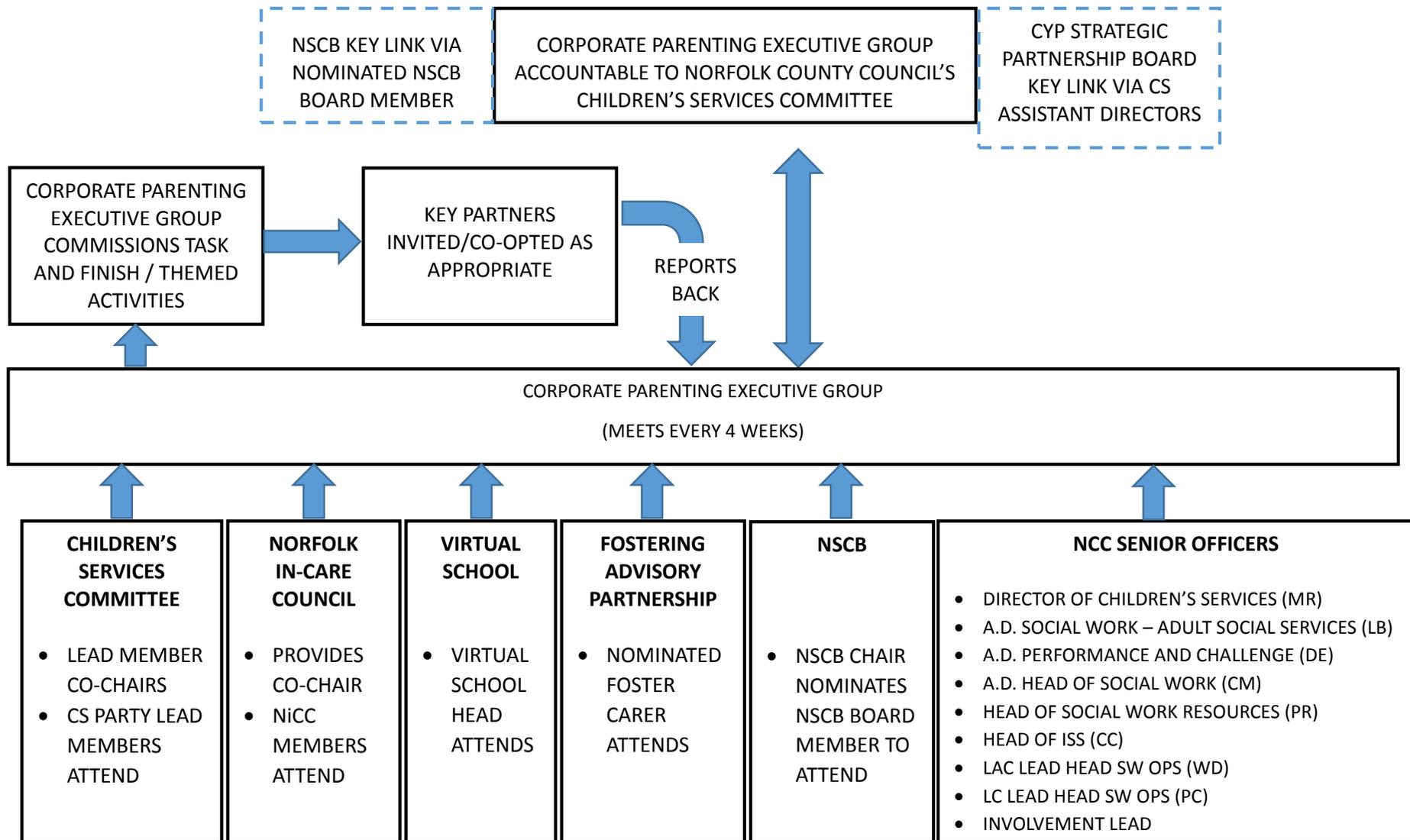
Governance

Corporate Parenting Executive Board

The Corporate Parenting Executive Group (CPEG) is co chaired by a member of the NiCC and James Joyce, Lead Member for Children's Services. The Board's membership includes NiCC, the Director of Children's Services and other senior county council staff and has representation from the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board.

The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Executive Group is to ensure that Norfolk County Council (NCC) meets its responsibilities to the children and young people in and leaving its care. Through scrutiny and challenge the CPEG will have an overview of performance and the quality of intervention for its children and young people, and will drive forward the changes and improvements necessary to ensure that NCC delivers the best outcomes for Norfolk's LAC and care leavers. We have a shared commitment to work in partnership and ensure that services are improving to achieve the best outcomes.

Accountability Routes for Norfolk's Looked After Children and Care Leavers



Associated plans and terms of reference

This Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy is supported by a range of documents; including policies, procedures and terms of reference which help inform our work and ensure our focus on the outcomes of our looked after children and care leavers. These further documents which are not exhaustive can be found for reference on the Norfolk County Council i-net.

We have developed new **terms of reference** for our various panels; **Admissions to Care Panel**, **Permanence Panel**, **Transitions Panel and Childrens Advisory Service**. Our **Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference** and **Sufficiency Strategy** and Action Plan provide strategic oversight for our **Promise**.

The **Fostering Advisory Partnership Charter**, **Statement of Purpose for Fostering Service** and **Statement of Purpose for Adoption Service and Staying Put** guidance also supports our commitment to ensure that **Children and Young People are First**.

Further information about the definition of eligible children:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf

Further information about the definition of relevant, former relevant and qualifying children:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397649/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf

Link to [Childrens Social Care](#)