

Children in Our Care Strategic Action Plan

Draft – 07.02.19

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February 2019



Our Vision.....

“We believe that children and young people for whom we are corporate parents are talented, resourceful, articulate and have huge potential. Many will lead successful adult lives. However, we also recognise that often, as a result of their early life experiences, some will be at greater risk of poor outcomes as they grow up.”

“Our aim is to create a home and community environment that provides every child and young person with a safe, happy, healthy, secure and loving childhood, nurturing their aspirations and enabling them to meet their full potential”

(Our family: Our strategy for children in and leaving care, 2018 – 2021)



We promise that children and young people will be involved in their care and treated as individuals.

Priority 1

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Support the role of the Children in Care Council (CICC), Let's Take Action group and Positive Activities group. This will include implementing the outcomes of the current Inspiring Voices project to increase the awareness of CIOC.		Let's take action group and Positive activities group.	Dave Willingham	Monthly meetings	More detailed action plan – Appendix A
			Inspiring voices group	Jackie Ward/Jo Lee/Kim Staff	Meet every 3 months.	Inspiring voices role to meet with reps from LTA and monitor and support the progress of actions given to/ from LTA group.
			Children's Fostering and Carer's Team	Jo Lee	Ongoing	Members of CICC and leaders invited to fostering preparation training to talk to new foster carers about fostering from their perspective (ongoing as part of prep training programme for f/c's)
			Residential Services	Jo Lee	Ongoing	The young people living in our residential establishments are well represented in the CICC. They are

						supported to represent the voices of our CIOC.
2.	Ensure all CIOC know their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and their role and that there are face to face meetings between reviews wherever possible.		IRO's – during reviews and visits to children. Role explained in the Childrens Guide.	Kim Staff / Julie Aylesbury	Ongoing	A newly formed sub-group from the Big Committee is to review all CIOC review documents to ensure they are 'young people' friendly.
3.	Provide opportunities for children and young people to feed their views about their care including through technology such as 'Mind of My Own'		Social workers Carers IRO's Children's Placement Teams	Kim Staff Jackie Ward Jo Lee	Ongoing March 19 Ongoing	Leaving Care survey in place (for Young people 18 plus who have just left care) undertaken by representatives of the Lets Take Action group. My Experience in Your Care Surveys – all children who have left our care. MOMO has been rolled out to all our CIOC in internal and external placements. Staff are trained in supporting young people to utilise the software and promote their feelings of the care they are receiving.

4.	Ensure that there are a range of additional ways to be involved and to give views including through school based activities.		VS – Primary Secondary Hubs Let's Take Action group Early Help	Linda Russell- Bond Janet Wilson Virtual School (VS) Dave Willingham	Primary – termly meetings. Secondary – twice per year Ongoing	“Refer also to separate more detailed action plan” Early Help use a range of tools and methods to engage young people and collect their views.
5.	Ensure that reviews, meetings and plans are clear about the Voice of the Child, make sense and are understood as documents by children and young people.		Social workers and IRO's completing looked after review reports/ documents and plans IRO's when conducting reviews. Review and redesign the children in care looked after review process.	Kim Staff Julie Aylesbury Jackie Ward Kim Staff	October 2019	A newly formed sub- group from the Big Committee is to revisit all Review documents to ensure they are 'young people' friendly. CIOC documents have recently been reviewed and included the opinions of young people in the design.

			VS Educational setting	Linda Russell- Bond Janet Wilson Virtual School (VS)	Pupil Voice completed as part of termly PEP	
			Residential Services	Jo Lee	Ongoing	All young people living within our internal Children's homes actively participate (where they are able) in developing their own care plans thus ensuring their voice is a thread throughout. All SBC homes have been highly praised by Ofsted for 'creative child centred thinking and involvement'.
6.	Ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity for an advocate if they want one.		Social workers /IRO's highlight the need through their work with the children. NYAS contract in place to provide advocates.	Jo Lee	Ongoing	

We promise that children and young people will have productive relationships: family, friends and community life.

Priority 2

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Continue to support the training and development of foster carers to ensure they have the right skills and confidence to create a stable family home for children and young people in our care.		<p>CAMHS contract Looked After Children includes delivery of training events to carers</p> <p>Children's Fostering and Carer's Team</p>	<p>CAMHS – Alma Burns Social Care – Jackie Ward</p> <p>Jo Lee</p>	Current and ongoing	<p>CAMHS contract currently under review.</p> <p>Involvement of Looked After Young People in recruitment of foster carers (Information Session Video), preparation training (attendance at training and use of video footage in training sessions)</p> <p>Regular workshops for foster carers in respect of relevant issues in caring for CioC</p> <p>Inclusion of foster carers in wider workforce training.</p>

2.	Continue to support the training and development of residential care staff to enable them to provide the best care possible in a safe and nurturing environment.		<p>CAMHS contract Looked After Children includes delivery of training events to carers</p> <p>Workforce development, Residential Services.</p>	<p>CAMHS – Alma Burns Social Care – Jackie Ward</p> <p>Kim Staff/Jo Lee</p>	2019	<p>CAMHS contract currently under review.</p> <p>Annual Workforce training schedule inclusive of bespoke packages of training specific to home/child's needs.</p>
3.	Recognise the particular issues children and young people in our care face around the development of safe and trusting relationships and the specific help which might be needed to support personal resilience.		<p>Social workers and carers when planning and caring for children will identify need and include in the care plan.</p> <p>Social workers and carers whilst working directly with the children.</p> <p>Creative activities project 'More stuff like this please' to support increased self-esteem and confidence.</p>	<p>Jo Lee/Alma Burns</p>	Ongoing	<p>Rolling programme of Nurturing Attachment training for residential</p>

						staff, foster carers & supported lodgings providers.
4.	Ensure that there are opportunities to become involved in community activity, including leisure, sport and cultural activities and opportunities for volunteering.		<p>Social workers and carers when planning, caring for and working with children.</p> <p>'More stuff like this please' project. Early Help partners.</p> <p>Free use of leisure facilities.</p> <p>Libraries and Information, Learning and Skills, Events, Sports Development, Museums and Heritage.</p> <p>Children's Placement Teams</p>	<p>Dave Willingham</p> <p>Mark Freeman Craig Taylor Tara Connor Neil Russell Sara Fortune</p> <p>Jo Lee</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>A programme of delivery of activities within community buildings and street based. Apprentice post developed to help develop opportunities Family Action provide. Ongoing volunteering activities.</p> <p>Across the Culture and Leisure Service, there are many opportunities for Children in Our Care to engage with culture and leisure through regular activities and occasional targeted projects.</p> <p>Leisure cards for SBC foster carers and residential teams.</p>

						Regular distribution of information to fc's in respect of CICC & Positive activities Group and encouragement to fc's to engage children & yp
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We promise that children and young people will have suitable accommodation and support to meet their needs.

Priority 3

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Ensure that there is a comprehensive and up to date assessment of needs in place.		<p>Social workers complete looked after review reports every 6 months at least which incorporates the up to date information about the child's developmental progress and family situation.</p> <p>Development of new documentation which identifies needs and desired outcomes for the child.</p>	Jackie Ward		New documentation due to be implemented
2.	Ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of children in our care.		<p>Sufficiency strategy</p> <p>Children in our care project-considering how to reduce numbers of</p>	<p>Jo Lee</p> <p>Rhona Bollands/Miriam Sigsworth</p>		

			children in our care Children's Placement Teams	Jo Lee	Feb/March 2019 Ongoing	Fostering Recruitment Strategy to increase in-house foster care and review foster carer offer Support and assessment of connected foster carers Provision of financial support to enable connected carers to care for children within their birth family (childcare, adaptations and extensions)
3.	Ensure a range of accommodation options are available including support to families where this may avoid the need for children to come into our care.		Children's Placement Teams	Jo Lee	2019	We have seen the development of our innovative edge of care service Our Place become live during 2018. Referrals to the service remain consistently high with the service currently supporting over 40 families deemed as risk of becoming CioC.

						<p>We are also in the process of reviewing the functioning of our in-house children's homes in order to deliver on the coming home, going home work stream. Specifically, to create capacity for short term to medium term placements for complex teenagers where the ultimate aim is to return home.</p>
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[We promise that children and young people will be safe.](#)

Priority 4

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Ensure advice, guidance and support especially around online safety and risky behaviour is in place.		Libraries and Information Service, Learning and Skills, Customer Services	Mark Freeman Craig Taylor	Ongoing	Libraries offer opportunities for children and young people to acquire information literacy skills in a safe environment with guidance on online safety. Learning and Skills offer opportunities to develop employment and learning through schemes such as Youth Employment initiative and family learning.
			Social workers and carers in individual care plans.			
			Training to carers Early Help	Dave Willingham	Ongoing	Early Help provide a range of advice and guidance support, including EET, online and home safety, relationships etc.

			Children's Placement Teams	Jo Lee	During 2019 (May/June) Updated every 3 years June 2019 July 2019 Ongoing July 2019	Workshops for foster carers around e-safety Mandatory First Aid training for foster carers and residential teams Workshop around updates in the care of young babies for f/c's Workshop around VEMT for f/c's A range of training is available delivering key themes including PREVENT, information security, safeguarding in a digital world. We are also in the process of sourcing bespoke training in criminal exploitation and county lines.
2.	Continue to review individual plans to ensure there is a focus on actions to keep children and young people safe.		Social workers and carers in individual care plans. Libraries and Information, Learning and Skills, Events,	Mark Freeman Craig Taylor Tara Connor Neil Russell	Ongoing	All Culture, Leisure and Events teams are aware of the need for

			Sports Development, Museums and Heritage, Customer Services	Sara Fortune Lorraine Dixon		safeguarding and incorporate actions and policies to ensure the safety of the children and young people in our care at all times.
3.	Prioritise the needs of children and young people in care in the work of the preventions youth work teams.		Early Help	Dave Willingham	Ongoing	CIOC are prioritised in all areas of Early Help.
4.	Monitor all children missing from care episodes, ensure that there are suitable plans in place and that we will listen to the reasons for going missing and take action to reduce risks.		Social workers and carers in individual care plans Early Help/ Social Care Children's Placement Teams, VEMT Practitioners Group (VPG)	Dave Willingham/ Mel Douglas Jo Lee	Ongoing July 2019 Ongoing	Established systems and protocols for Active and Non-Active Missing From Home in place reviewed regularly. Workshop around VEMT for f/c's Re-enforced partnership working between all supported accommodation, residential homes (internal and external) to reduce and respond to

					Ongoing	incidents of children going missing. Deputy Resource Team Manager is a member of the VPG in order to provide and share information.
5.	Reduce anti-social behaviour, through a focus on relationships and restorative approaches and sanctions if appropriate.		Early Help/ Police/ ASB Team	Dave Willingham	Restorative practice training to be complete by July 2019.	Restorative practices have been used within Early Help, Police and ASB Teams for some time and are continuing to be developed.
			Residential Services	Jo Lee	Ongoing	Developed partnership working with CAMHS to provide direct and indirect therapeutic support. Focused training sessions in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACE • Attachment and child Development for Residential Workers • Sensory Processing Difficulties • Anxiety, Low Mood and Depression
					30.01.19 to 06.02.19	Weeklong Stay Safe Project has been used which uses collaborative working

						between Youth Directions, surveillance Team and Our Place. This has used a targeted approach to disrupting anti-social behaviour in the centre of Stockton and educating young people in associated consequences.
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[We promise that children and young people will be healthy.](#)

Priority 5

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Ensure all health assessments/dental assessments are undertaken in timescales and that action is taken to address health concerns and issues identified.		Social workers and carers in individual care plans. Monitoring activity. Children's Placement Teams	Jackie Ward Jo Lee	Ongoing	Support for our CIOC to attend all health appointments and regular liaison with LAC health services.
2.	Prioritise children and young people in care in our work on managing potentially harmful behaviour; smoking, alcohol and substance misuse.		Libraries and Information Services, Learning and Skills, Sports Development, Customer Services Involvement of looked after nurse on an individual basis.	Mark Freeman Craig Taylor Neil Russell	Ongoing	Culture, Leisure and Events teams provide both direct access to quality information and guidance but also programmes and activities to support people who are at risk of developing harmful behaviours. Local offer for care leavers will have links to information advice guidance and support.

			<p>Social workers and carers in individual care plans</p> <p>Early Help</p> <p>Schools/educational settings</p> <p>Children's Placement Teams</p>	<p>Dave Willingham</p> <p>Schools/educational settings</p> <p>Jo Lee</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>As part of school curriculum.</p> <p>2019</p>	<p>Early Help deliver a range of risk taking behaviour training and support to children and young people.</p> <p>Workshop for f/c's and supported lodgings in respect of young people and drug and alcohol misuse</p> <p>Partnership working with preventions Teams and health services.</p>
3.	Ensure that all children and young people in care have access to information, advice and support on sexual health.		<p>Involvement of looked after nurse on an individual basis</p> <p>Social workers and carers in individual care plans</p> <p>Libraries and Information</p>	<p>Mark Freeman</p> <p>Craig Taylor</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Local offer for care leavers will have links to information advice guidance and support.</p> <p>Libraries and Information Services</p>

			Services, Learning and Skills, Customer Services	Lorraine Dixon		deliver Public Health Information Resource which supports practitioners and health workers in providing quality, relevant information and resources. Learning and Skills provide opportunities to engage on learning experiences with a health and wellbeing background. Customer Services provide frontline advice and signposting to Council and external partners.
			Schools/educational settings	Schools	As part of school curriculum.	
			Children's Placement Teams	Jo Lee	2019	LAC nurses and link workers promote sexual advice within children's services. C-Card programme rolled out in our residential provision.
4.	Prioritise the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people in our care – using strengths and		Annual SDQ undertaken with carers and screened by looked			

	difficulties questionnaire and other tools to measure progress.		<p>after children nurse and advice given to social workers from nurse.</p> <p>CAMHS – looked after children contract</p> <p>Health Social Care VS Educational Settings</p> <p>Children’s Fostering and Carer’s Team</p>	<p>Alma Burns Jackie Ward</p> <p>Jo Lee</p>	<p>Educational settings complete SDQ and if necessary other tools eg Boxall Profile to assess and inform action. EP are used to observe /assess as part of early identification.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Rolling programme of Nurturing Attachment training for foster carers, supported lodgings providers and residential staff (CAMHS)</p>
5.	Review the emotional wellbeing and mental health services provided to children in our care.		CAMHS contract under review	Jackie Ward Sarah Allen	2019	CAMHS fully involved with residential services

6.	Work with GP's to support their skills and awareness of the needs of children and young people in our care.					
7.	Prioritise access to all commissioned services – initially focusing on therapeutic services such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.					

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We promise that children and young people will get the best education and skills.

Priority 6

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Continue to prioritise the needs of children and young people in our care through our co-ordinated school admissions process and seek where possible, to have continuity of educational placements.		In line with statutory guidance, the Virtual School Head should be consulted before any changes in educational provision are discussed/agreed.	VS Social Care Admission Team Resources Team	On going	This will ensure that in all cases the appropriate and timely provision is put in place in line with academic and personal needs e.g. EHCP
2.	Continue to deliver a high quality Virtual School (VS) and ensure that there is a well-trained designated teacher to support in every school.		VSH	VS Schools and educational settings	Annual Training takes place for all new DTs. Support is all given by an online course. Termly training is provided to all DTs by VS. Additional Training can be sourced from VS e.g. Attachment Training or commissioned from other services.	Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers in schools notes that all schools should ensure that DTs are trained to undertake the role. It is recommended that this is a person on the Senior Team.
3.	Continue to focus on improving the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs).		VSH Social care Educational settings	Social Care VS Educational settings	Quality assurance of all PEPs takes place throughout the year. All PEPs are judged – Green, Amber, Red. Where a PEP is submitted as Red the school is required to resubmit following the	

					support and guidance offered Monthly report are sent to social care status of PEPS. Emails are sent automatically to all social workers and DTs.	
4.	Focus on improving the attendance of children and young people in care.		Social workers VS EIS Attendance Team	Social Care VS EIS	Half termly Attendance and Wellbeing meetings monitor progress and inform action for improvement. Weekly monitoring/Termly PEP meeting inform action for improvement	Schools undertake training to support pupils with Attachment Difficulties and Developmental Trauma so they are empowered to support pupils appropriately, keep them safe, implement a Behaviour Regulation Policy and avoid exclusions.
5.	Ensure that every child and young person in our care is following an aspirational, academic and appropriate curriculum which will lead to strong outcomes. Any alternative provision will be registered and of sufficient quality.		Social workers VS Schools and settings EIS Specialist CYPIOC Participation Officers	VS Youth Direction	Termly PEP meeting inform action for improvement. School must inform EIS of any Alternative Provision undertaken which must be recorded on pupils' PEP. Vs carries out termly tracking to inform precise intervention or challenge to schools. As noted in Action 1, the VS is consulted on all possible changes to a child/YP's education placement.	

6.	Support young people to access further and higher education and to develop their skills.		<p>Learning and Skills, Libraries and Information Services</p> <p>Leaving Care service and provision of financial support and emotional support.</p> <p>EET forum</p> <p>Early Help</p> <p>School as part of Termly PEP</p>	<p>Craig Taylor Mark Freeman</p> <p>Jackie Ward</p> <p>Jackie Ward/Dave Willingham</p> <p>Dave Willingham</p> <p>Schools Vs</p>	<p>Meets monthly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Termly PEP meeting monitor action, and progress.</p>	<p>Learning and Skills provide opportunities for young people to be socially mobile and acquire life skills: Libraries and Information provide quality information and resources to enable young people to develop themselves through self-direction.</p> <p>Review of financial support available for care leavers to be completed by April 19.</p> <p>Early Help offer a range of level 6 qualified advice, guidance and support for young people to help them achieve and sustain education employment and training.</p>
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			Specialist Participation Officer	Social Care Youth Direction	Participation officer provide timely support	
7.	Ensure there is high quality support to young people around career choices.		Leaving Care service in conjunction with Youth direction. Pathway plans Early Help School VS Youth Direction Foster carers LA Services	Jackie Ward Dave Willingham VS Dave Willingham	Ongoing Monitored as part of termly PEP meeting. Opportunities for work shadowing/experience is offered by all LA services in a timely manner.	Early Help offer level 6 qualified advisers to all CIOC. Ensure all CYPIOC are taken to Post 16 Open Evenings.
8.	Ensure that children in our care with special educational needs can access the right provision.		Social Care Health Educational settings SEN VS	Social Care Health Educational settings SEN VS	Ongoing Early identification/ intervention support. Reports required for referrals are completed in a timely manner. EP observations/assessments must be carried out in a timely manner to avoid delay to any decision taking	All services understand the Local Offer for SEN

We promise that children and young people will be supported in the transition to adulthood and as care leavers.

Priority 7

CIOC Strategic Action Plan						
		Action	Who/where	Agency leads	Timescales	Comments/progress
1.	Publish a new Care Leavers Offer.		Local Offer available on Stockton Information Directory Information packs for care leavers	Jackie Ward	December 18	Local Offer now published Consultation with young people has taken place. Development plan in place. Refer to Local offer development proposals.
2.	Ensure that appropriate guidance and advice is in place through dedicated personal advisor support.		Personal Advisors are identified for children in care from age 16 yrs. PA will start to build relationship with young person and then become their primary worker when they leave care. Service now extended to all young people up to age 25yrs.	Jackie Ward		Local Offer now published.

3.	Ensure children and young people will have an up to date and comprehensive pathway plan.		Pathway plans in place and reviewed every 6 months.	Jackie Ward		
4.	Ensure that there are a range of accommodation options including staying put and supported lodgings.			Jo Lee		
5.	Support care leavers into employment, education and training (EET).		<p>Pathway plan EET forum Grand-mentors scheme.</p> <p>Developing and creating opportunities for apprenticeships/ work tasters/ shadowing within council departments and outside organisations.</p> <p>Early Help</p>	<p>Jackie Ward/Dave Willingham</p> <p>Dave Willingham</p>	<p>EET forum meet monthly</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Early Help offer a range of level 6 qualified advice, guidance and support for young people to help them achieve and sustain education employment and training.</p>

			EGDS Project 2 Work Project	Roland Todd	Until funding committed	Secured circa £85k from the Middlesbrough and Teesside Philanthropic Foundation to create a minimum of 16 apprenticeship opportunities for CIOC. Funding provides a wage incentive equivalent to 50% of salary for 12 months. To date, ten care leavers have been supported.
6.	Commit to the longer term tracking of care leavers.		Care leavers offered a service up to age 25 years.	Jackie Ward		
7.	Continue to identify and support care leavers who are parents.		PA's in conjunction with other services.	Jackie Ward		
8.	Reduce the pressures on care leavers by exempting them from paying council tax until they are 25 years old.		Council tax exemption in place.			