



Children in Our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG)

Update Report for Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) August 2022

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Section 1: Items Discussed

1. CIOC and Care Leavers action plan – progress

Priority 2. Improve outcomes and life chances, with a focus on:

2.2 Closing the educational gap between children in our care and those that are not

We continue to develop the role of the Virtual School (VS) with one area of focus being on increasing capacity to encourage improved interventions, support and challenge. As a result of increased resources, we have now successfully increased our numbers of caseworkers who are now subsequently offering more focussed 1-1 support for CIOC and care leavers. A VS development plan has now been developed and implemented with communications documents devised and in place.

Training for all Social Workers is planned to be rolled out for September 2022 – To improve the understanding of the role of the VS, the importance of PEP's and how these fit into the child's care plan, the work being undertaken with schools to support children to improve attainment and prevent exclusion.

Work continues to improve our understanding of what trauma informed practice is, by developing clearer analysis of demand and need, data and intelligence.

AATI introductory sessions have been offered to all schools. It is planned that a document will be produced for September 2022 detailing where we are in our AATI journey. This document will sit alongside a further document detailing our vision and the implementation of our AATI next steps and will be shared with schools and partners.

Bespoke support for schools is ongoing from the VS, by working collaboratively, offering early interventions to improve academic progress and prevent exclusions, looking at alternative sanctions.

We have now introduced two 'good practice' hubs, where good practice is shared across all of our schools as a learning tool. It is planned that an additional four hubs will be developed working in partnership with the VS.

The 'Compassionate Stockton' TIPP's (Trauma informed programmes and Practices) network has now been developed with a working party set up to provide direction for this network.

Two Family Thrive Programmes for Stockton Carers have been rolled out with the evaluation of these courses evidencing how helpful and informative this training was for carers. These programmes will continue to run termly in the academic year 2022-23. Carers are to be identified via the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) process.

SDQ's have been completed as part of the spring term PEP. A development plan of how the VS can use this tool to support CIOC in their education has been devised.

We continue to improve opportunities for Care Leavers to access further/higher education. We have increased resources in this area and as a result have successfully recruited to a number of additional posts – three senior progression advisors and a welfare officer.

The Welfare Officer has been appointed as part of the post 16 pupil premium plus grant and will support the VS in understanding how they can work more closely with colleagues and improve the support of CIOC and Care Leavers. A working group has also now been set up to work on managing the transition from PEP to Pathway plan ensuring that support is seamless. As part of this improved seamless journey, the PEP is now completed through the entire year 13 for all CIOC and Care Leavers.

Work continues to focus on improving our exclusion rates for CIOC and Care Leavers, with particular focus on the use of data to inform those pupils at risk. Analysis of exclusion data is more effectively used to ensure that where possible those in danger of exclusion are identified earlier, prior to the sanction being implemented and support and challenge given to the school in question. This analysis now helps to identify that those who are at risk of

exclusion are offered planned interventions as early as possible. The data is also helping to identify any themes, trends or 'common' issues. It is planned that a review of provision across Stockton is undertaken to identify if the needs of this group of children can be met in a more positive way with improved outcomes for CIOC and Care Leavers.

Moving forward, another piece of work is being planned to analyse the exclusion data to widen our understanding of the link between those CIOC excluded from school who also go missing from home or care. A report is due to be shared in October 2022 based on the findings.

Priority 4. Develop and communicate our vision, embed our approach and intent.

4.3 Identify clear Corporate Parenting roles and opportunities including our 'No Limits' programme

Our 'Just Giving' page has now been developed and is on the intranet web page to fully explain 'the staff giving scheme'. This was developed with full consultation with our 'Let's Take Action' group. This group of young people will continue to be involved and consulted with the content of this scheme as we move forward and develop it further. It is planned that this scheme will have an improved comms approach including Members and Officers being made aware as part of any induction and wider sharing at senior development sessions such as 'Setting the Standards' with regular updates in publications such as KYiT.

A charitable status has now been developed with monies held by the Tees Community Foundation (TVCF). Work continues to develop a payroll deduction scheme for SBC employees. A task and finish group is in the process of designing a digital form for employees to sign up to. Pathways are under development to enable monies to move from employees to TVCF. A further digital form is also being designed to enable Care Leavers to request funding.

Priority 5. Improve outcomes for Care Experienced young people (Care Leavers) by focusing on:

5.6 Further develop our procedures to prevent and reduce homelessness for 16–17-year-old Care Leavers

On the 9 June 2022, we welcomed a further visit from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which was a planned visit following the one completed in July 2021. The purpose was to review our progress in relation to 16–17-year-old homelessness, with external scrutiny providing useful learning and reflection.

The Home Office representative is a Youth Homelessness Advisor, and her aim was not to inspect, but to review policy and procedures, working practices, etc. and see what is working well in the borough and how we can improve services for our homelessness 16/17-year-olds and care leavers.

Below is a summary of the feedback:

To improve:

- More information would be beneficial on our website regarding what support is available for our homeless care leavers and young people. Work has begun on developing the website further.
- Some of our homeless detail needed to be updated to reflect recent changes in legislation. Work has been picked up around this area
- Some ideas were shared in relation to our current protocol to further improve our response to homelessness in respect of 16/17 homeless young people. Our accommodation team have begun work around this area.
- It was felt that our 'Duty to Refer' numbers could be increased, and we plan to increase awareness amongst children's services staff initially to ensure these are being completed when necessary

- More work was identified around our data recording as this was found too not be entirely accurate. For example, some young people had been recorded as Care Leavers when they were actually care experienced young people. This data was incorrect as some young people had been recorded as care leavers when they are actually care experienced – this has since been addressed.
- It was suggested that we could use our mapping and analysis of data more effectively and this is a piece of work that is now being planned with both housing and our own performance team.
- It was suggested that we may wish to consider a supported housing scheme for non-care leavers aged 18-25. This is something that we are currently reflecting on.

Positives:

- The Increase in capacity, following our children’s review, within our Accommodation and Placement Support Team, was seen as a strength as was moving our Supported Lodgings across to be part of this team. The increased numbers of link workers with the additional Accommodation Officer post were also highlighted as real positives.
- The new Personal Advisor role, along with other specialisms being brought into the service were considered a positive move.
- It was recognized that there was a lot of preventative work going on which was effective, although this did need to be better publicized
- Our plans for our new Stockton Multi Agency Response Team (SMART) to include Housing as a partner was considered a real strength and something that should greatly benefit our homeless 16/17-year-olds.
- The Home Office representative was particularly excited by our Care Leavers offer and was keen to see the impact of this on care Leavers.
- Our Care Leaver protocol was considered excellent.
- It was felt that there were good monitoring arrangements of services in place

The Home Office Representative also spoke to some of our Care leavers and young people residing at Parkfield Hall and described their feedback overall as being good.

Whilst there continues to be further work to be undertaken to improve our services for our homeless 16/17 year old’s the external scrutiny provided was extremely helpful in that it allowed for time to reflect and consider what is working well and what we can do to further develop our offer in order to improve outcomes for this group of vulnerable young people.

4. Ofsted consultation: ILACS and the experience and progress of Care Leavers

The CIOCSG was sighted on a recent consultation launched by OFSTED around introducing a separate judgement on ‘The experiences and progress of Care Leavers’ within the wider inspection of Local Authority Children’s services (ILACS) framework.

Following research undertaken by OFSTED it was felt that the previous process of embedding OFSTED’s evaluation of the experiences and progress of Care Leavers within the wider ‘Children in care and Care leavers’ judgement had not maximised the profile of Care Leavers to the extent that OFSTED had intended.

Like children in care, Care Leavers are a significant cohort. In England there are more than 80,000 children in care with almost 45,000 Care Leavers aged between 17-21 years, with Local Authorities in England also having responsibilities towards approximately 30,000 Care Leavers up to the age of 25 years.

The aim of the proposals being put forward by OFSTED is to ensure that they give Care Leavers a clearer profile in their evaluation of the effectiveness of Local Authority children's services. Our responses to the consultation will inform updated arrangements which OFSTED aim to introduce from January 2023. The consultation itself runs from 20 June-29 July 2022. A report from the consultation will be published in December 2022.

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