

Date:

Friday 13 February 2026 at 10.00 am

Venue:

Council Chamber, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton on Tees, TS17 6BJ

Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair)

Cllr Carol Clark (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Clare Besford, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Jack Miller

Agenda

1. **Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 10)
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes** (Pages 11 - 14)
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 10 October 2026
5. **Adoption Tees Valley**
6. **Family Placement Service - Performance Overview** (Pages 15 - 22)
7. **Building on Progress** (Pages 23 - 26)
8. **No Limits Hub Update - Verbal**
9. **Forward Plan** (Pages 27 - 28)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please.

Contact: Senior Democratic Services Officer, Michael Henderson on email rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk

Key – Declarable interests are :-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance

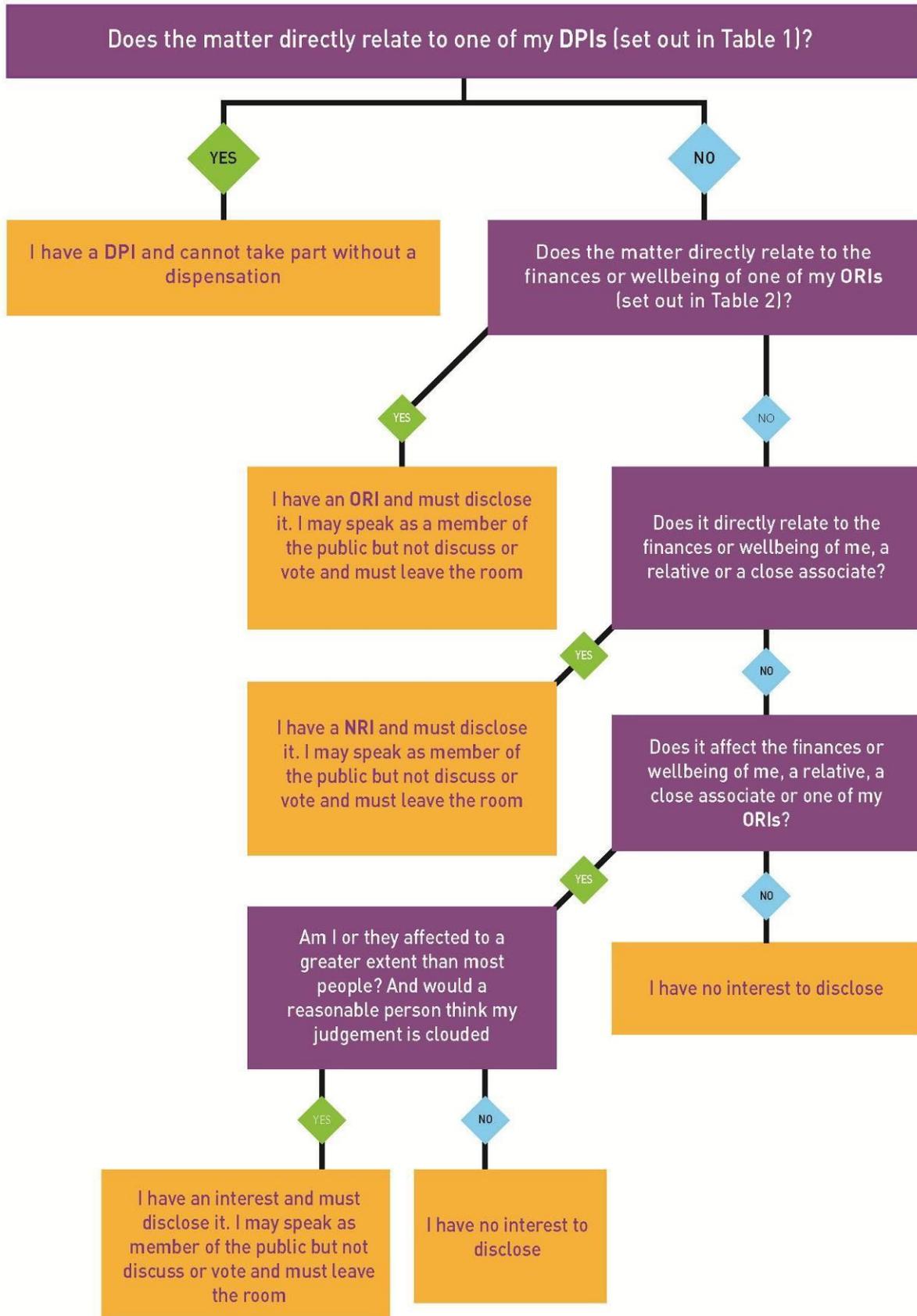


Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the South Entrance, indicated on the map below.



In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately start to leave their workspace by the nearest available signed Exit route.

The emergency exits are located via the doors on either side of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
 - do not stop to collect your belongings
 - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
 - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

5. await further instructions.

- **do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear”** which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

Toilets

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

Water Cooler

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when invited to speak by the Chair, to ensure you can be heard by the Committee and those in attendance at the meeting.

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Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Friday, 10 October 2025.

Present: Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair), Cllr Clare Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Jane Smith, Michael Henderson, Debbie Farrow, Janet Wilson, Kellie Wigley,

Also in attendance: Lee Brown,

Apologies: Cllr Jack Miller

CPB /25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

CPB /25 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 April 2025, and 13 June 2025 were approved as a correct record.

CPB /25 **Virtual School Interim Report (June 2025)**

The Board considered the Virtual School Interim Report, which provided an update on educational outcomes and activity for children in care and care experienced young people. The report highlighted current performance across attendance, attainment and exclusions, together with ongoing work to support post-16 education, employment and training.

Key points

- Continued focus on improving attendance and reducing exclusions for children in care.
- Ongoing challenges in educational outcomes for some cohorts, reflecting increasing complexity of need.
- Close working between the Virtual School, social care and education providers to support stability and achievement.

RESOLVED that the Virtual School Interim Report be noted.

CPB /25 **Department for Education National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers – Feedback**

The Board received an update on feedback from the Department for Education National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers following a recent visit to the Care Experienced Service.

Key points drawn from the update:

- The Adviser recognised strong leadership, ambition and commitment to improving outcomes for care leavers.

- Significant progress had been made since the previous visit, including strengthened partnership working, development of the local offer, and improved opportunities for education, employment and training.

Areas highlighted for further development included caseload pressures, housing capacity and transition arrangements into adult services

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

**CPB/
25**

Lifelong Learning Update

An update on lifelong learning activity for care experienced young people was provided to the Board.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

**CPB/
25**

Forward Plan

Members discussed and agreed the Forward Plan.

**CPB
/24**

CPB

/24

CPB
/24

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

DATE 13th February 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Family Placement Service – Performance Overview

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the work of the Family Placement Service for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 December 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate Parenting Board is requested to:

CONTEXT

1. The Family Placement Service is responsible for preparing, assessing, supervising, supporting, and training both prospective and approved foster carers and kinship carers. The service also supports the Regional Recruitment Hub, Foster with North East, with the marketing and recruitment of foster carers and has responsibility for recruiting and assessing Supported Lodgings Hosts.
2. The service is organized into three specialist teams, working closely together, and in partnership with other internal and external services, to ensure that foster carers are well trained, supported and able to provide safe, stable and nurturing homes for children and young people, both in care and within kinship arrangements.
3. Leading the start of the fostering journey, the Recruitment and Assessment Team focuses on marketing activity to attract new foster carers for children, and Supported Lodgings Hosts for young people aged 16+, the preparation, training and assessment of foster carers, kinship carers, and special guardians. The two post approval teams then go on to provide ongoing training, support, and supervision, the first for mainstream foster carers and the second for kinship carers.

PERFORMANCE

4. During the reporting period, the Family Placement Service has maintained a strong overall level of performance despite operating within the context of sustained placement sufficiency pressures, increasing complexity of need and workforce capacity challenges.
5. Overall compliance with statutory requirements has remained robust. Foster care reviews have consistently been completed within statutory timescales, with only

isolated delays attributable to oversight rather than systemic issues. Safer caring policies and home safety checks have remained up to date, with any outstanding requirements linked to carers who were temporarily on hold or not actively fostering. Unannounced visits have also been consistently completed, with no visits outstanding at the end of reporting periods.

6. Assessment performance has been mixed. There have been 19 fostering enquiries during the period, however, only 6 progressed to a fostering assessment. Reasons for enquiries not progressing include the enquirer withdrawing due to having short term family commitments, having a conflict of interest as a result of their employment, general work or family commitments or simply cancelling the initial visit without providing a reason. The fostering service also ruled out some enquiries due to issues including poor home conditions, dangerous dogs, recent Children's Services involvement with their own children and new partner relationships. Three of the enquiries which progressed to assessment were also withdrawn; 2 by the applicant due to personal circumstances and 1 on the advice of the fostering service due to concerns around the safety of a family pet. There have been 3 mainstream foster carers approved during the period; 2 of the assessments were completed within timescale but the 3rd (a transfer from an IFA) was delayed by the applicants, who were going through an appeal process with their fostering agency. Despite introduction of the Regional Recruitment Hub, the number of mainstream approvals has remained low (1 less than the same period for 2024), reflecting reduced enquiry levels and the complexity of applicants coming forward. 13 foster carers have resigned during the period, therefore, sufficiency of mainstream foster carers continues to decline. 6 carers retired, 1 transferred to another local authority and 6 resigned for personal reasons including changes in employment, caring responsibilities within their family and the needs of young people who had remained living in the foster home in a staying put arrangement.
7. Performance in relation to connected and kinship care assessments has been significantly impacted by volume and complexity. Across the reporting period there has been a sustained increase in referrals for connected carer viability and full fostering assessments, often driven by court timescales and placement pressures. During the Sept to December 2024 period there were 19 referrals for a full fostering assessment, however, for the corresponding period in 2025, this had increased by 100% to 38. While many assessments have been completed within timescale, an increasing proportion (61%) have exceeded statutory timescales due to factors including delays in statutory checks (DBS, medicals, and CAF/CASS information) and the complexity of family circumstances. Staffing capacity has also had a significant impact as the team have had 2 FTE vacancies for an extended period of time and 1 FTE member of the team on long term sick. Positively, the vacant roles have been recruited to with anticipated start dates of 1 March 2026 and some temporary capacity was successfully achieved mid-December.
8. Despite these pressures, the service has continued to prioritise safeguarding and regulatory compliance, ensuring that where assessments exceeded timescales, risks were identified, monitored and managed appropriately through supervision, Head of Service and Service Lead management oversight and panel processes. All connected care arrangements, which become unregulated are also subject to 6 weekly oversight within Care Planning Panels to ensure they remain safe and appropriate.
9. 19 children have been made subject to special guardianship orders to their former foster carer during this reporting period. Whilst the majority of these were achieved during initial care proceedings, 4 of these children had been looked after for a

significant period of time and it is positive to note that their foster carers were confident to seek parental responsibility and provide children with permanence.

10. There are currently 103 children in matched long term foster placements. The service is currently family finding for 8 children who require long term placements; of those 8, 3 potential matches are being explored. 12 children have been matched long term at Fostering Panel during this period.

CHALLENGES

11. Placement sufficiency has remained the most significant challenge throughout the reporting period. Demand for placements has consistently exceeded available capacity, particularly for long-term fostering, older children and young people, sibling groups and step down from residential care. This is a challenge for both inhouse and independent fostering services resulting in children, at times, waiting a long time for an appropriate home or going to live with carers who have not always had the skills or capacity to meet their needs.
12. Assessment capacity has been a further challenge. The Recruitment and Assessment Team has experienced sustained pressure due to high volumes of connected and kinship care assessments, staffing vacancies and sickness. This has resulted in a growing number of unallocated assessments and increased risk of assessments exceeding statutory timescales.
13. The increased use of exemptions and variations to terms of approval, while necessary to maintain placement sufficiency, has also increased pressure on carers and heightened risk within the system of carer burnout, placement disruption as well as less opportunity to match children both to the skills of the foster family and the needs of the other children in the household.
14. Maintaining a fully staffed service has also presented a challenge; the Recruitment and Assessment Team has had 2 FTE vacant posts and the Kinship Team 2, 22 hour posts for several months. This has corresponded with a significant increase in referrals for kinship assessments and an increase in transfers of kinship carers into the post approval team leading to unallocated assessments and an increase in unregulated family placements due to statutory timescales not being met. Work is being undertaken to consider each child on an individual basis and to review the appropriateness of connected foster carer arrangements and conversion to special guardianship when appropriate to do so.

OPPORTUNITIES

15. The implementation of the revised fostering offer from September 2025 provides a significant opportunity to improve recruitment, retention and assessment performance by better recognising carers' skills and experience and aligning expectations, training and remuneration. The improved offer for carers introduced additional banding for carers, increased weekly fees, opportunities for an annual appreciation payment for foster carers subject to regular attendance at training and evidence of a positive year of fostering and an enhanced training package, including Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy training. The increased banding is aligned with the Local Authority's plan to recruit foster carers for those children and young people who have been identified as in appropriately currently living in residential care (due to lack of available foster placements or, in some cases, where more intensive support has been required

to allow step down into family-based care arrangements). This will address both financial and sufficiency pressures relating to residential care and ensure that children and young people are in the most suitable care arrangements to meet their individual needs .

16. The development of a dedicated Kinship Team presents an opportunity to improve support for kinship foster carers, giving carers the confidence to apply for special guardianship for the children in their care and to provide them with legal permanence. A full-time Kinship Support Worker has been recruited to the team, which will allow the opportunity for both planned and crisis support and strengthen placement stability. Additionally, the increased financial support offer for kinship carers, along with the opportunity to have ongoing support from a supervising social worker and access to regular training and support events has very much strengthened the offer for those carers.
17. Further refinement of targeted recruitment, including profiling of children and focused campaigns for step down from residential care, offers the potential to increase placement options for children and young people.

GOOD PRACTICE

18. The service has demonstrated a strong culture of safeguarding and regulatory compliance. Foster care reviews have consistently met statutory requirements, and safer caring arrangements are embedded in supervision and review processes.
19. Despite significant pressure, assessments that have exceeded timescales have been subject to clear management oversight, with risks identified and mitigated appropriately.
20. The quality of assessment work remains a strength, with audits identifying good analysis, clear understanding of children's needs and positive relationships between social workers and carers.
21. The Mockingbird model continues to support assessment and post-approval stability by providing peer support, practical assistance and early intervention where placements or carers are under pressure. During this reporting period a 4th constellation has been launched and the scheme has been further expanded following the renewed fostering offer to develop a 5th constellation (not yet established).
22. Regular peer and formal support events have been held to promote retention of foster carers. During this reporting period foster carers and children have had the opportunity to attend a summer party, Christmas movie event, family training in respect of e-safety and foster carers own children have been supported through events during the summer and October school holiday. Additionally, the service facilitates monthly support groups for mainstream and kinship carers as well as a monthly therapeutic support group co-facilitated with CAMHS.
23. The first Foster Carer Conference was held in October 2025 with the theme of Trauma Informed Care. Over 90 foster carers attended the event, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
24. The Family Placement Team facilitate quarterly Make a Match events with the independent fostering agencies, profiling children and young people both in foster care and residential care, who require long term placements. Feedback from the IFA's has

been very positive, noting that Stockton is the only local authority currently taking such an approach. To date long term foster placements have been identified for 2 children stepping down from residential and 1 child, who has significant disabilities, living with a short-term foster carer. Two potential matches are currently being explored from the December event.

25. Individual profiling of children is being progressed for those children and young people who need long term foster placements, when more traditional methods of family finding have been unsuccessful. Two children have been profiled to date; although no direct match was achieved, a significant increase in general enquiries for fostering was noted by the regional fostering hub. Work is now underway to identify those children in residential care who would benefit from step down and a targeted campaign will be progressed.

NEXT STEPS

26. The following next steps have been identified:

i. Placement Sufficiency

Actions:

- Fully implement and embed the revised fostering offer (fees, banding, training and support)
- Continuing targeted recruitment activity, including profiling of children and step-down campaigns
- Joint recruitment initiatives with Foster with North East and Tees Valley partners
- Promote Fostering Friendly Employer accreditation and internal staff recruitment

ii. Profiling of Children Needing Placements

Actions:

- Maintain monthly profiling meetings to identify children with:
 - Placement searches exceeding 3 months
 - Children living in residential placements, who would benefit from family care
- Develop high-quality, strengths-based individual profiles for targeted use
- Social media and digital campaigns
- Use learning from previous profiling activity to refine messaging and targeting
- Track enquiries generated from profiling to evidence impact and inform future campaigns
- Prioritise profiling for children identified as suitable for step-down from residential care

iii. Step-Down from Residential Care

Actions:

- Identify children suitable for step-down
- Align targeted recruitment with the revised fostering offer to attract carers able to meet higher levels of need
- Use Make a Match events with IFAs and in-house carers to explore step-down options
- Strengthening joint planning between children's social workers and family placement staff
- Provide enhanced support packages, training and therapeutic input to carers stepping children down from residential care
- Monitor outcomes for children successfully stepping down to inform future practice

iv. Assessment Capacity and Timeliness

Actions:

- Embed newly recruited staff and stabilise workforce capacity
- Continue to encourage and monitor timely referrals for assessments
- Work closely with children's social workers in respect of viability assessments to identify situations where alternative legal arrangements are required and to ensure that prospective carers have the information to make informed decisions
- Maintain 6-weekly panel oversight of unregulated connected care arrangements
- Use learning from delays to improve assessment pathways

v. Kinship Care and Permanency (SGOs)

Actions:

- Fully embed the dedicated Kinship Team and Kinship Support Worker role
- Proactively support carers to consider SGOs where appropriate
- Develop robust SGO support plans and transition arrangements
- Increase staff confidence and applications to the ASGSF

vi. Retention, Support and Placement Stability

Actions:

- Maintain and expand foster and kinship carer support groups
- Continue therapeutic support groups in partnership with CAMHS
- Ensure every carer has an up-to-date support plan
- Use stability and disruption meetings proactively
- Continuing expansion of the Mockingbird model

vii. Training and Development

Actions:

- Deliver a comprehensive, accessible training programme aligned to children's needs
- Make the Foster Carer Conference an annual event

Name of Contact Officer: Judith Henderson, Family Placement Registered Manager

Email Address: judith.henderson@stockton.gov.uk

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

DATE 13th February 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD : BUILDING ON PROGRESS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Corporate Parenting Board is asked to endorse proposals that strengthen its focus, structure and ways of working, following recent progress in embedding lived experience and broadening partner engagement. To support more consistent oversight and drive delivery against the agreed strategic priorities, the proposals include a focused development session, maintaining the current meeting model while strengthening feedback loops from young people led sessions, establishing themed sub-groups aligned to the Corporate Parenting Commitments, and introducing improved performance reporting. Members are also invited to provide feedback on meeting arrangements to address recurring attendance challenges and ensure effective leadership engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate Parenting Board is requested to:

- Endorse the proposal to strengthen the Board's focus, structure and ways of working
- Agree to the delivery of an externally facilitated review session
- Support the continued use of alternating business-focused and young people=led meetings
- Provide feedback on meeting arrangements to inform future scheduling
- Approve the establishment of strategic priority sub-groups, aligned with the Corporate Parenting Commitments, and strengthened reporting arrangements

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1. The Corporate Parenting Board plays a central role in ensuring that the Council and its partners fulfil their collective responsibilities to children in our care and care leavers. As set out in the Council Constitution, the Board's purpose is to provide strategic oversight, celebrate the achievement of children and young people, improve outcomes through sharing good practice, experience and approaches and ensure that the Council and its partners are ambitious, aspirational and responsible corporate parents. It provides a forum for challenge, accountability and co-production, ensuring that decisions made and priorities agreed are informed by the lived experience of children and young people.
2. During Autumn/Winter 2023-24, the Board undertook a self-assessment and a series of development sessions to strengthen focus and effectiveness. This work included

corporate parenting training, delivered by the Local Government Association and offered to all elected members, and culminated in the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities and the 'Stockton-on-Tees commitments to all children in our care and care leavers'. These commitments set out the values and behaviours that underpin our approach to corporate parenting and guide the Board's work

3. Since then, the Board has broadened partner organisation attendance, improved engagement with a wider range of SBC services and created more opportunities for young people to share their experiences and contribute to discussions. The introduction of alternating business and young people-led meetings has been a significant step in embedding lived experience within the Board's work.
4. As the Board continues to evolve, there is an opportunity to build on the progress made by refining the structure and focus of the bi-monthly business meetings. This will ensure that the Board remains aligned to best practice and is able to gain strong oversight of outcomes for children in our care and care leavers.
5. Regionally and nationally, high-performing Corporate Parenting Boards have strengthened their arrangements by:
 - Ensuring meeting agendas are closely aligned with strategic priorities
 - Establishing focused sub-groups, aligned with strategic priorities, to drive progress and accountability
 - Involving care-experienced young people as co-chairs or vice-chairs
 - Embedding young people-led panels and/or advisory groups
6. Adopting a similar approach locally could build on the Board's existing strengths whilst improving clarity and focus within business meetings and strengthening the link between strategic priorities and delivery.

PROPOSAL

7. Building on this learning, the following is proposed:
8. Board Development Session

A development session will bring together CPB members, senior officers, partners and care-experienced young people to undertake a self-assessment/stock take reflecting on what is working well, revisiting and reaffirming the agreed strategic priorities and finalising how business meetings and themed sub-groups can best support the Board to drive forward with its ambition and aspirations for children in our care and care leavers. It is intended that the Local Government Association will facilitate the development session.

9. Maintaining and Strengthening the Existing Meeting Structure

The current model of alternating between business-focused and young people-led meetings has been a positive development and reinforces the Board's commitment to co-production and lived experience. However, there is a need to strengthen the planning and preparation for young people-led sessions, ensuring clear feedback loops and tangible outcomes. The mechanism for this will be co-produced with young people but could include for example a "You Said, We Did" tracker which captures issues raised and the Board's response or a bi-monthly 'Impact of Young People's

Voice’ report. This enables the business-focused meetings to be aligned to performance, strategic priorities and accountability.

10. Establishing Strategic Priorities Sub-Groups

Using the strategic priorities previously identified by the Board, a set of focused sub-groups will be developed which will be comprised of cross-departmental council officers and partners, and co-chaired by care experienced young people. These groups will report back progress against an annual delivery plan.

Strategic Priority	Key areas of work
Safe and stable homes	Housing pathways, tenancy support, emergency accommodation, bond scheme
Education, employment and training	Attainment, NEET reduction, apprenticeships, work placements, training, employment pathways, skills development
Connections and community	Life story work, Lifelong Links, cultural identity, celebration of achievement
Being heard	Young people-led meetings, feedback loops, co-chairing opportunities, development of Lived Experience panel
Healthy lives	Trauma-informed practice, access to mental health support, emotional resilience support, universal health service access

11. Strengthened Reporting and Oversight

To maintain a strong focus on improving outcomes, it is proposed that quarterly performance updates on key indicators including placement stability, education, employment and training and access to health services are presented to the Board. An annual impact report is also proposed which summarises progress, challenges and priorities for the year ahead.

12. Meeting arrangements

It has been identified that the existing date and time create recurring clashes with other significant statutory and strategic commitments. In particular:

- The Chair has an ongoing clash with a key Combined Authority meeting which has on occasion limited her ability to attend the Board.
- The Director of Children’s Services has a recurring clash with the national Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) strategic meeting, resulting in frequent use of substitute representation.

While appropriate vice-chairing and substitution arrangements are in place, there is a recognised risk that inconsistent attendance by key senior leaders may impact the Board’s effectiveness, leadership visibility, and collective accountability. It is also acknowledged that external scrutiny, including inspection, would reasonably expect regular direct engagement from the Chair and the Director of Children’s Services, given their central roles in corporate parenting.

In addition, some officers and partner organisations have reported similar challenges due to competing commitments. Members and partners are therefore invited to share their views on the current meeting arrangements and any availability constraints that they may have. Feedback received will be used to inform the forthcoming Corporate

Parenting Board development day, where options to strengthen attendance, leadership engagement, and overall board effectiveness will be considered. Comments should be provided at the meeting, or to Michael Henderson (Democratic Services Officer).

13. The above proposals are intended to support the Board to work with greater clarity, consistency and shared purpose. By refining the structure and focus of meetings, introducing themed sub-groups and improving how young people's feedback is captured and acted upon, the Board will be better placed to maintain effective oversight of its strategic priorities. These changes seek to build on the progress already made, reinforce a culture of collective responsibility and ensure that meeting arrangements enable full participation.

NEXT STEPS

14. With agreement from the Board, the following actions are proposed:

- Schedule and deliver the development session
- Confirm the meeting structure and revise the annual forward plan
- Review meeting dates and times following member feedback
- Establish sub-group membership and terms of reference
- Develop the performance reporting framework

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications from this proposal

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As corporate parents, Local Authorities have a legal duty to actively listen to, engage with and respond to the voices of care experienced children and young people as set out in legislation and national policy including the Children Act 1989, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Human Rights Act 1988 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The proposal is considered to be low risk as it supports the Local Authority to meet its statutory duties for care experienced children and young people.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

Consultation has taken place with care experienced children and young people to develop this proposal.

Name of Contact Officer: Jane Smith, Head of Service – Children's Strategy and Commissioning

Debbie Farrow, Head of Service – Children in Our Care and Care Leavers

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Corporate Parenting Board

Forward Plan

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
13 February 2026 10.00am	Date and time of future meetings (Michael Henderson) CPB Self-Assessment (Majella MaCarthy) Adoption Tees Valley – (Louise Addison)
19 March 2026 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting
10 April 2026 10.00am	
27 May 2026 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting
12 June 2026 10.00am	Virtual School Update (Janet Wilson)
13 July 2026 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting
14 August 2026 10.00am	Adoption Tees Valley – (Louise Addison)
24th September 2026 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting
9th October 2026 10.00am	
19 November 2026 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
11 December 2026 10.00am	Virtual School Update (Janet Wilson)
21 January 2027 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting
12 February 2027 10.00am	Adoption Tees Valley – (Louise Addison)
18 March 2027 6.00pm	No Limits Hub Meeting

Standing Items:

- Adoption Tees Valley – (**Louise Addison**) (Usually February and August each Year)
- Corporate Parenting Performance Update (To be determined)
- Virtual School Update (**Janet Wilson**) (Usually June and December each year)
- Lifelong Links Programme (**Kellie Wigley**) (When necessary/appropriate)