



Corporate Parenting – Care Leavers Mandie Rowlands – Service Lead

Care Leavers

Department for Education; Charter for Care Leavers 2012

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter sets out promises care leavers want the central and local government to make. Promises and principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; they give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The key principles in this Charter will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance. Care leavers urge local authorities to use these principles when they make decisions about young people's lives. The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good Corporate Parents.

We Promise:

- ✓ To respect and honour your identity
- ✓ To believe in you
- ✓ To listen to you
- ✓ To inform you
- ✓ To support you
- ✓ To find you a home
- ✓ To be a lifelong champion

Care Leavers

National Context

National context

North East ADCS
Leading Children's Services

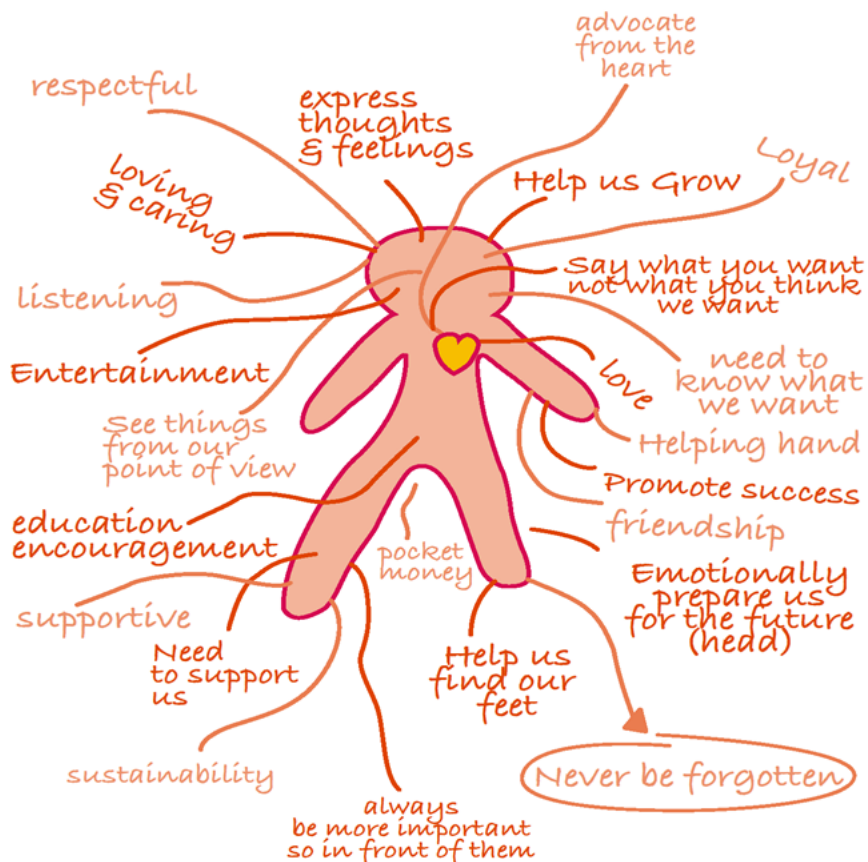
Local authorities have a duty to provide and publish a clear offer of support and financial assistance for care leavers once they leave care. The offer should reflect the needs, views and wishes of care leavers.

The report of the independent review of children's social care, published in May 2022, recommended care experience becomes a protected characteristic in equalities legislation and that 'corporate parenting' responsibilities be extended to all public bodies.

Ofsted have proposed to include a new standalone judgement on the experience and progress of care leavers as part of the local authority children's services (ILACS) inspection framework.

Perfect Corporate Parent

The Perfect Corporate Parent was developed by members of the 'Let's Take Action' Group, representing children in our care. They felt that a corporate parent should be there for them in a time of need, care for them and love them.



The Corporate Parenting Pledge

Our pledge to all children and young people in care in Stockton-on-Tees is that:

PRIVATE LIFE	"We will make sure that you are treated as an individual, and you will have a care plan to reflect this"
FAMILY CONTACT	"We will help you to maintain important relationships with your family, whenever it is possible and safe to do so"
CHOICE	"We want to help you to make healthy and safe choices. We will work alongside you to prepare you to move into independent living, when you are ready"
POCKET MONEY & MY TIME	"We will help you to enjoy your life. We will support you to enjoy leisure activities including music, the arts, hobbies, sports, and to join young people's organisations"
FRIENDS	"We will encourage you to make friends, keep in touch with old friends, and build on your relationships"
BEING HEALTHY	"We will ensure services are in places to support your emotional wellbeing. You will also get access to advice, to help you lead a healthy lifestyle"
TO BE A LIFELONG CHAMPION	"We want to help you make a positive contribution to your community, and to be prepared for a stable and secure adult life"
EDUCATION	"At your school you will have a designated teacher to make sure you get the help you need; we will encourage & support you to study at college or university"
YOUR FUTURE	"We will provide you with a Personal Advisor to support you from the age of 16 through to 25"
SUPPORT	"We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered when dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need including housing benefits & employment"

Care Leavers

Ofsted: research and publication

In January 2022, Ofsted published “Ready or not”; care leavers’, and the research found that care leavers:

- felt they left care too early
- felt isolated or alone and did not know where to get help
- are not fully introduced to their PA until 18
- did not trust or could not rely on the professionals
- are not sufficiently involved in plans about their future
- felt unsafe where they lived
- felt unprepared for budgeting and getting into debt
- did not know who to turn to when in serious difficulties

'Ready or Not: views of care leavers'

Care Leavers

Ofsted: a new judgement within ILACS on the experiences and progress of care leavers

In January 2023 Ofsted introduced a new judgement;

The experiences and progress of care leavers - will focus on the things that matter most to care leavers' lives, including their:

- relationships and access to social and recreational opportunities
- ability to influence the services they are offered
- health and emotional well-being
- learning and employment opportunities

Inspections will also consider whether local authorities are making good decisions for care leavers, and what they are doing to support them into adulthood.

Care Leavers

Stockton on Tees Local Offer for Care Leavers

The local offer is currently available on Stockton Information Directory, we are in the process of moving it to a new platform on the SBC website [Care Leavers Local Offer](#)

Consultation has taken place with Let's Take Action and the new website will provide all the help and advice a young person needs on:

- Your Team
- Your Health and wellbeing
- Your Relationships
- Your Education and training
- Your Employment
- Your Accommodation
- Your Participation in society
- Our Corporate Parenting Pledge
- Care Leaver Covenant and Connect website

Care Leavers

Care Leavers Covenant

Care Leaver Covenant Overview

In July 2016, the Government published a major policy document 'Keep on Caring' to support young people from care to independence.

A key policy commitment in the paper is a strategic pledge to introduce a Care Leaver Covenant. The Covenant is a promise made by the private, public and voluntary sectors to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently.

The aim of the Care Leaver Covenant, to which organisations commit, is to provide additional support for those leaving care; making available a different type of support and expertise from that statutorily provided by local authorities. The Five Key areas are:

- Independent Living
- Education, Employment and Training
- Safety and Security
- Mental & Physical Health
- Finance

We are working with the CLC to ensure we have a 'whole council approach' and being a corporate parent sits across the whole council. We will also ensure our local offer aligns with the key outcomes of the covenant

Care Leavers

Regional Work

Regional context

North East ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Plenty of good practice and ambition for our young people which we can build on, however... our care experienced young people have told us they want to see more consistency across the 12 local authorities in their offers to care leavers

This is a unique opportunity for us to learn from and support each other to improve the lives of care experienced people across the whole region

It is also an opportunity to engage a wider range of partner organisations who have a role to play in supporting care experienced young people

Role of the Care Leavers Board – to champion the interests of North East care leavers and to work collaboratively to actively identify opportunities to improve the experiences and outcomes of North East care leavers through a regional common core offer

Care Leavers

Local mapping exercise: findings

Care leavers are better prepared: Independent Living

Do you have a financial policy for care experienced young people -

- YES, within our procedure and guidance document

Setting Up Home grant – what is the current amount provided –

- £2,300 due to increase to £3,000

Setting Up Home – do you provide any of the following

- Home Insurance – YES as part of the grant for first year
- TV Licence – YES as part of the grant for first year
- Start Up Pack – Consultation with young people to understand what is needed
- Financial support with utilities bills – working with welfare rights to maximise grants available

When do we start planning with young people who will become care leavers

- Allocation is 15years and 6 months, planning starts around 17 years

Do young people have access to peer mentors

- Two new schemes – NO LIMITS and Stockton Mentor Scheme

Are young people involved in the recruitment of staff

- We have had 3 occasions where cared for and care experienced young people made up the interview panel

Care Leavers

Local mapping exercise: findings

North East ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Care leavers have access to education, employment and training

Do you have offers from each department in the council – “the family business” such as internships, traineeships, apprenticeships –

- YES we have 47 apprenticeship vacancies this summer that care experienced young people will support in accessing prior to general release

Does your local authority set a ring-fenced amount of jobs/apprentices/internships for care experienced young people and pay National Living Wage –

- YES we have a target set for Summer 2023 and we pay wage for age or NLW

Does your local authority frequently measure the percentage of young people in EET –

- YES this is collected as part of our Annex A

Does your LA provide an enhanced HE bursary

- YES

Do you have an agreement with DWP to ensure care experienced young people are not sanctioned

- YES

Care Leavers

Local mapping exercise: findings

North East ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Care leavers have access to better homes: Safety and Security

Do care experienced young people

- Have full council tax exemption if their home is in Stockton-on-Tees
 - YES, up to the age of 25
- Have full council tax exemption if their home is not in Stockton-on-Tees
 - NO, this is assessed on financial need
- Have full council tax exemption if their home LA is not Stockton
 - NO
- Have access to a local authority rent guarantor scheme
 - NO, this is assessed on a case by case basis

Has your LA removed intentionally homeless status for care experienced young people

- YES

Has your LA got a joint housing protocol for care experienced young people

- YES

Care Leavers

Local mapping exercise: findings

North East ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Care leavers receive access to health and wellbeing support: Mental and Physical Health

Do all care experienced young people have access to free prescriptions

- NO, this is a priority across the region

Does your LA engage with public health around a health offer

- NO

Do care experienced young people have access to free leisure

- YES, all cared for children and young people are issued with a Tees Active pass

Care Leavers

Local mapping exercise: findings

North East ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Care leavers achieve financial stability: Finance

Does your LA pay for driving lessons

- YES, we match fund up to £200 for lessons

Does your LA offer personalised budget/crisis fund for care experienced young people

- YES, we provide Independent Living Allowance for 16/17 year old, have access to vouchers and work with welfare rights

Does your LA offer birthday and festival allowances up to 25 years

- NO, only when case remains active. This is something we have included in new procedure

Does your LA have a financial policy that tops up benefits and offers incentives to get into work

- NO, we work with individuals on a case by case basis. We work with our Opportunities Team

Savings – Are there regular contributions to Junior ISA/Child Trust Funds for children

- NO

Does your LA support care experienced young people with travel costs

- YES, we have daily and weekly bus vouchers available

Care Leavers

Visit from Department for Education

Mark Riddell – National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers

Offer - 2 day visit to Local Authorities as a critical friend, paying particular attention to the implementation of duties introduced through the Children and Social Work Act, including:

- how local authorities have embedded the Corporate Parenting Duties across all of their services
- how they have used consultations with care leavers to develop an improved 'local offer', which draws in support from key partner agencies
- how local authorities have got to grips with the new requirement to offer Personal Adviser support to age 25 for those care leavers who want it

Also, the visit will look in more detail at the local authorities progress on implementing 'Keep on Caring' and the quality of support care leavers receive from us, including:

- Corporate Parenting Board – membership and key partners agencies
- The local offer for Care Leavers [Current Care Leaver Offer - Stockton](#)
- Staying Close
- Rough Sleepers
- The Care Leaver Covenant

Our corporate parenting commitment – Care Leavers

What is next?

We need a Care Leavers pledge in its own right

We need a one stop shop

We need to extend the family business

We need a statement of intent to become a partner with the Care Leavers Covenant

What else do we need to do ?