

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**PEOPLE'S CABINET MEMBER**

**REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY  
2011-2013 AND FUTURE STRATEGY 2013-2015**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform cabinet member of the review and revised Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-15.

**2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy sets out how we, as a Council and as a partnership, work to achieve our shared ambitions for children and young people in our care. The strategy details the support and plans to enable children in care and care leavers to achieve positive outcomes. It details the priority actions for 2013/14 and underpins the work with children in care and care leavers to enable them to live in stable, safe placements, realise their aspirations and continue to achieve success.
- 2.2 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy has been reviewed and updated, it reflects on the achievements of the last two years and the actions for 2013-15. It includes the priority action plan and performance outcomes for children in care and care leavers. This builds on previous action plans and is in line with the council's priorities.
- 2.3 The Council has committed and continues to commit financial, elected member and officer support to Children in Care in North Lincolnshire represented by their investment.

**3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-15 builds on the Children in Care Strategy 2011-13, it reflects on the developments and improvements during this period and the key priorities to achieving continued success.

The strategy has been reviewed and updated and is structured on the following areas:

- How Corporate Parenting Works in North Lincolnshire
  - A review of our work with children and young people in care: 2011-13 (appendix)
  - How we will support our children and young people in care: 2013 – 15
  - Our corporate parenting pledge for 2013 – 2015
  - The children in care council
  - Partnership priorities for 2013 and beyond
  - Priority action plan for Children in Care 2013-2015
  - Children in care performance
  - Write up of the launch of the corporate parenting pledge event 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013
- 3.2 To support this strategy, the plans outlined within the Placement Sufficiency Strategy were based on an analysis of the looked after population contained within the children's JSNA and intelligence from comprehensive monthly and quarterly performance information.
- 3.3 To achieve the key aims in relation to placement sufficiency, the Council made a commitment to:
- Increase staffing capacity in our fostering and adoption services with the aim of increasing the number of and availability of foster families and adopters.
  - Reduce our mainstream homes to one home and replace this with a purpose built campus (currently under construction).
  - Increase the level and choice of accommodation for care leavers and post-16 young people.
  - Explore the use of social enterprises to further extend our provision.
  - Reduce the need for CiC to be placed in external provision

## 4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy has supported the achievement of positive outcomes for children and young people:
- The age profile of Children in Care (CiC) continues to demonstrate that early and effective intervention is making a difference. Of those children who entered care between April 2011 and December 2012, 54% were aged 0-4 (compared to statistical neighbour comparator of 50%).
  - This has enabled increased success in achieving timely permanence for children within a family environment. The % of children ceasing to be looked after who were adopted in 2012/13 was 19% (up from 6.6% in 2007). This compares favourably with the latest statistical neighbour comparator of 18%. The % of children leaving care with a legal plan of

permanence (including adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders) in 2012/13 was 47.3%, this is substantially higher than the national average.

- School attendance for children in care continues to be good and often excellent (11% of CIC with 100% attendance). Attendance of 98% of Children in Care is above 95%, and in line with peers. The proportion of children in care achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs with English and Maths during 2012/13 was 15%, which is one child less than the previous year, but those young people achieving 5 A\* – C GCSEs generally has increased to 31%.
- Criminal behaviour by children in care has reduced substantially over the last 5 years (from 16.8% in 2006) to 6.5% in 2012/13 – compared to an England average latest figure of 6.9% in 2011/12.

4.2 To support these achievements, it is important that children and young people are able to live in safe, stable placements. The Placement Sufficiency Strategy has achieved a number of its key targets:

- The number of adoptive carers recruited has doubled over the past year and there is a robust recruitment strategy in place to increase further the number of carers recruited during 2013/14. The Council has taken the lead within the regional Adoption Consortium and the development of a business model to increase the collaboration between authorities thereby increasing placement choice and availability.
- The number of North Lincolnshire Foster carers has increased substantially with the number of new carers approved increasing from 9 in 2010-11 to 22 during 2011-12. 21 were recruited in 2012 –13, we have set a target of 30 for 2013 -14. This represents 43 new carers in the last two years. There is a robust recruitment campaign in place and to focus on carers for older and harder to place young people.
- We have developed a range of placement options for young people as they move through the care system and young people who are assessed as needing on-going support in their accommodation. This includes:
  - The Children's Home
  - Supported lodgings
  - Pasture – 6 supported flats for young mothers and their children
  - Supported Accommodation with NL Homes
  - Arrangements to provide accommodation with Private Landlords
  - Supported shared houses

4.3 The updated Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy and updated Placement Sufficiency Strategy include the key priorities for 2013 – 2015 (see action plans attached within the strategies).

The key priorities include:

- Continue to believe in permanence for the child, first within the context of their own family or alternative family as the preferred option.
- Intervene early and effectively in line with the Family Justice Review conclusions and new Public law Outline and ensure timely process.
- Building on and continuing the increase in foster placements, targeting those who provide placements for harder to place young people including alternatives to remands and external placements, mothers and babies, children with complex needs and disabilities.
- Open the new Children's Campus and as an integral part of the landscape of accommodation
- Continue to build on the range of Supported Accommodation to increase choice and further enable children to "stay put".
- Deliver a Social Enterprise model of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market
- Continue to increase the speed of the adoption recruitment process and the number of available adopters.
- Build on the existing practice and develop a new integrated, consistent model of service user feedback embedded in practice with a management oversight and reporting process (Child and Family Feedback Form and process).
- Recognise the achievements of our children throughout the year by finding opportunities when we can celebrate the educational successes of children in our virtual school.
- Raise the profile of the Corporate Parents Champions Group, developing further action plans with all partners.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy is in line with the agreed budgets and reflects the commitment of the council and its partners to prioritise services to children in care and care leavers. Whilst there are no additional resource implications contained within the strategy, partners have re-affirmed commitment to prioritising children in care and care leavers in the delivery of services through the revised Corporate Parenting Pledge.

5.2 Effective partnership working and increased placement choice provides the most cost effective services to children in care, it enables effective matching resulting in fewer placement disruptions and helps children and young people achieve positive outcomes reducing the need for additional services.

**6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the development of both strategies. Any issues raised were included in the action plans developed within the services.

**7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers were consulted as part of the development of the strategies and have been consulted throughout in the development of services and re-provision of accommodation by relevant services in delivering the strategies.

The strategy contains details of consultation taken place with children and young people who are in or have left care in North Lincolnshire. Contributions to the strategy include partners from, health, education and other partners. It is also informed by consultation with carers and professionals working with children in care and care leavers.

7.3 Consultation with staff has taken place within agreed protocols as part of the review and development of services to achieve the aims of the strategies.

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That Cabinet Member welcomes the positive review of the strategies and supports the revised Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-2015.

**DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE**

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Date: October 2013

**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-2015

North Lincolnshire Council Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2011-2013

North Lincolnshire Council Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2013-2015



***CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE  
LEAVERS PARTNERSHIP  
STRATEGY***

***2013-15***

**SAFE CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS, SUPPORTED FAMILIES  
AND CARERS, TRANSFORMED LIVES**

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# Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013 - 2015

## Welcome and Introduction - the Council's Vision and Commitment to Corporate Parenting

North Lincolnshire are very pleased to introduce the North Lincolnshire Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-2015. This strategy sets out how we, as a Council and as a partnership, will work to achieve our shared ambitions for children and young people in our care and care leavers.

The key to making sure that we will deliver on all of our priorities is to ensure that we listen to and act upon messages from all of the children and young people in our care and the people who have responsibility for caring for them every day. The challenge that we are setting ourselves is to build on our progress in the participation and involvement of children and young people and ensure 'consultation and partnership' in all we do. This means continuing to ensure that children in our care are partners in planning for the things that affect them. Our success in doing this will be demonstrated at every level through the services we deliver, plans that we make and outcomes for children and young people.

This document sets out how we will achieve this ambition. It provides an overview on the 2011-13 Children in Care Strategy and sets out our priorities for 2013-15. The Strategy is published alongside our refreshed Corporate Parenting Pledge for 2013.

## Who is this Strategy for?

Children in Care and Care Leavers require the support and encouragement of all partners to provide opportunities to develop their skills, celebrate their achievements and enable them to achieve positive outcomes. The Local Authority and our partners have a corporate parenting responsibility for children in care and care leavers. This strategy is for all Local Authority workers, partner agencies and their staff to support the delivery of effective services to children in care and care leavers.

## Where are we now?

2012 was a very successful year for Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire, with Ofsted identifying services for Looked after Children as being Outstanding with a further inspection of Fostering Services also judged to be Outstanding. Young people benefitted from opportunities in gaining employment (work opportunities within the council), additional help with their education reflected in their educational attainment and success, living in safe, stable family placements and the opportunity to contribute to the development and delivery of services.

In relation to Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire, children and young people have said:

***"Corporate Parents are people from many different vocations and backgrounds like councillors, managers, directors of children's services and foster carers"***

***"Corporate Parents take an active interest in what you are doing in your education, leisure activities and your everyday life and hobbies and they can support you with that as well."***

***"They have helped me with extra French tuition and I got a grade higher in my resits".***

***"They helped us to set up a netball team at the Pods and we can socialise and get fit"***

***"We go on trips to places like Flamingo Land".***

Some of the comments the Ofsted inspectors made were:

- “Care plans for looked after children are comprehensive and underpinned by a thorough needs assessment and analysis”.
- “The local authority’s record on achieving permanency for children and young people is very good”
- “The involvement of children and young people is outstanding and embedded throughout all strategic planning and individual planning”
- “The outcomes for children and young people in foster care are excellent. Placement stability is very good with very few unplanned endings. Children and young people are healthy and enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities that promote their social and emotional development. They enjoy very good relationships with their carers and report that they are looked after very well”.
- “Children and young people (in foster care) make very good progress in education from their starting point on coming into care. Attendance levels are extremely high, which maximises their opportunity to achieve. Young people are very well supported in transition to adulthood. The overwhelming majority of young people progress into further education, employment or training. The number of young people going on to higher education is increasing year on year”.

### What do we want to achieve?

We want to achieve improved outcomes for all our children in and or who have left care. The Strategy reflects our commitment to outstanding corporate parenting where it is our responsibility to ensure that we are as ambitious for the children and young people in care as we are for our own, that we listen to them, champion their rights and enable them to have access to a stable home, a first class education, provide opportunities for further learning and employment, experience good health, have swift access to services they require and most importantly to enjoy life safe from harm.

### The Priority Areas

The North Lincolnshire Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) identified children in care and care leavers as priority groups for support. The plan identifies six key priorities and the actions, plans, priorities and progress for children in care and care leavers reflects these priorities. The priorities are:

- **Raising Aspirations** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person wants to be the best they can be to achieve their potential.
- **Ensuring children and young people feel safe and are safe** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person is safe in their home, their school and in their community.
- **Giving children the ‘best start’** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child has the best start in life and parents are support to create strong families.
- **Close the gaps** in outcomes between vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people and their peers – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children, young people and families receive the support they need so they are not disadvantaged
- **Celebrating and engaging children and young people** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children and young people are valued as part of the community and their achievements are recognised and celebrated
- **One Vision, One Workforce** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where services are child centred, focused on improving outcomes and are integrated at the front line.

The Priority Action Plan contained within Appendix One of this document will be reviewed regularly by the Strategy group and Corporate Parenting Board. Progress and updates will be provided to the Children's Trust Board.

As Lead Member and Director for People respectively, we have a specific role and responsibility for our children and young people in care. We have ensured that they have continued to have a meaningful voice and that the Council and our partners deliver effectively as Corporate Parents. We have seen children and young people make progress, gain life experiences, enjoy positive experiences, take part in new and challenging activities and take on roles and responsibilities that shape their world and contribute towards that of others.

North Lincolnshire Council has invested in family based care, supported accommodation, permanence through adoption and a range of support services which includes a commitment to build a new £1.4million Children's Campus.

We have placed children at the heart of our corporate parenting activity. For example, children and young people meet regularly in a 'creative conversation' with the Lead Member and Director of People.

Our intention is to build on the partnership and collaboration with young people established in North Lincolnshire. Examples of this include children and young people preparing the agenda, supported by a dedicated officer and driving events such as the Children in Care Round Table events that were held as part of the work to agree this Strategy.

Although much has been achieved we still have much to do if we are to continue to give all the children in our care the best possible start in life and chance of success.

**Cllr. Rob Waltham**  
**People's Directorate Cabinet Member and**  
**Chair of the Children's Trust Board**  
**Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board**

**Denise Hyde**  
**Director of People's Service**

## Overview:

This document reaffirms our shared commitment to children and young people in care in North Lincolnshire. It sets out our ambitions and our priorities in working with, and on behalf of, children and young people in care and care leavers. This strategy sits alongside the **North Lincolnshire Council Placement Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan** which details how the Council meets its statutory requirement to ensure North Lincolnshire Council has sufficiency of placements for children in care and care leavers.

## Definitions

Children and young people who are in the care of, or are provided with accommodation by, the local authority are "*looked after*" by the local authority up to the age of 18. Looked after children are also referred to as 'Children in Care'.

We support children to remain looked after until 18, when young cease to be looked after (following 13 weeks in care or longer) the local authority continues to have responsibility under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, to provide advice, guidance and assistance (including financial) until they are 21, (25 if they are in higher education). The Children and Young Person's Act 2008 further reinforces these duties and extend the age from 21 to 25.

References throughout this document to Children in Care will mean both groups of children and young people.

## Partnership Values

The North Lincolnshire Children and Young People's Plan outlines our values for all children and young people.

Each child and young person:

- is unique and we must respect that uniqueness
- has the right to feel safe and be safe
- should have the opportunity and support to discover their strengths
- should have the opportunity and support to reach their full potential in a complex multicultural context
- should have the opportunity to contribute positively to their local community
- has the right to services and support that are available, accessible and acceptable
- has the right to a stable family life
  - has the right to be consulted on plans, interventions and services that affect them
  - each individual's circumstances, background and culture should be recognised, respected and valued

We want our children in care to have equal opportunities and therefore recognise they must be a priority and that we must consider their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, and other diverse needs to ensure that they have an equal chance to succeed.

The Corporate Parenting Board informs the Children's Trust Board (CTB) to ensure that the priorities meet the needs of children in care so that they experience improved outcomes.

## Principles of our work with Children in Care:

- Our priority is to enable children and young people to live with their parents and families within their community, where it is safe to do so.
- Where this priority cannot be achieved, we will work to ensure that they have permanence and stability within an alternative family.
- Where children and young people are not able to live within a family we will ensure they have stable placements within a children's home or within independent living.

- We will support them to keep links with their community and wherever possible keep the continuity of their education and social lives.
- Adults who work with our children and young people will be safe to do so and provide a consistent relationship with the child wherever possible.
- We will continue to support and help children and young people as they become young adults.
- We will work to ensure our children and young people have equal chances and succeed along with their peers.

## **Early Help**

To effectively support children and their families, provide children with the opportunity to live in a permanent safe family setting and ensure that identification and interventions are effective, North Lincolnshire Council has developed its Early Help Safeguarding Strategy. This is set within the context of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-18 and Local Safeguarding Board Business plan. The proposed Early Help Safeguarding Strategy and associated guidance to access services is required by the new Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and will be monitored by the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

The proposed Early Help Safeguarding Strategy is built upon the North Lincolnshire's Single Organisational model and has the ambition of developing a workforce where staff from across agencies have the core skills and abilities to engage with children and families, build relationships, use strengths based interventions, solution focused approaches and motivate positive change. At the same time ensuring we have the right services and the right evidence based programmes to meet the identified needs within North Lincolnshire.

## **Older Young People**

Young people who have progressed through the care system face a complex range of risk factors. Messages from research in relation to older young people inform us that young people are often more vulnerable in risk taking behaviour as they grow and develop into adulthood. They are also subject to a number of risk factors including the environment in which they live, the community, their personal needs and wishes, their peers and associates and risky adults who may target young people. Therefore a key priority is to ensure that the help provided to older young people is effective in managing risk.

## **Our Corporate Parenting Pledge for 2013 – 2015**

The Council, the Lead Member and partners on the Corporate Parenting Group take a clear strategic lead to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities towards our children and young people in care and children and young people experience better outcomes.

The Corporate Parenting Pledge 2013-15 was developed with members of the Children in Care Council to set out the responsibilities of Corporate Parents for Children in Care. The pledge is central to improving corporate parenting, and:

- tells children and young people what they can expect from North Lincolnshire Council and partners as a child in care
- encourages best practice
- promotes better outcomes
- reinforces the corporate parenting responsibilities

The pledge was launched on 24th April 2013, at an event which was jointly planned with children and young people. Senior members of North Lincolnshire Council, Police, Health, Education, Fire Service and partner agencies attended to sign the pledge. Representatives of the Children in Care Council approved the content of the pledge by also signing the document. For more information on the Corporate Parenting Pledge Event 2013, see appendix 3.

The Corporate Parenting Pledge 2013-15 is set out below:

### **CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE TO CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS**

As Corporate Parents, we promise to:

- Ask your views, listen to what you say and act on it
- Support you and give you the information you need to lead a healthy lifestyle
- Support you to feel safe
- Support you to have contact with your family and friends
- Make sure services and support are available to help you to be the best you can be
- Have ambitions for you and support you to achieve your goals
- Have high expectations of you and expect you to act sensibly
- Support you to access the education and training you need and help you develop your skills and achieve your aspirations
- Work with you to support other children and young people who may have had similar experiences
- Provide opportunities for training and work experience and support you to find employment
- Support you and your children while you gain life experience and become independent from us
- Provide an open door for support and advice, whatever your age
- Celebrate your successes and achievements
- Help you be involved in the community

## **Partnership and Collaboration with children in care and care leavers**

The key to making sure that we will deliver on all of the above priorities is to ensure that we listen to and act upon messages from all of the children and young people in our care. We strive to achieve genuine partnership with children and young people. This means placing children at the centre and providing opportunities for them to be genuine partners in planning for things that affect them. This is demonstrated at every level through the plans that we make and the records that we keep.

As corporate parents we will listen to and take into account the wishes and feelings of every child and young person in our care. This happens informally on a day-to-day basis and formally, for example as part of child in care reviews.

As a learning organisation we ensure systems are in place to capture comments made by individuals and apply these in a more general way so that innovation and effective practice is shared and embedded in the work of all staff.

We will continue to build on engaging children and young people so that their voice is integral to our practice.

### **The Children in Care Council**

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is an integral part of the involvement of children in and leaving care in the development of services, ensuring their voices are heard and that children and young people have a real say in the issues that affect their lives.

Over the last 5 years, the CiCC has been fully involved in reviewing services, it meets regularly with with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, the Director of People, independent Reviewing Officers, the Advocacy Officer, Officers from Recruitment and Marketing; and with the young people they represent. The CiCC has consulted with other children and young people on a number of issues, including:

- How children can best be involved in reviews
- Quality of information given to children when entering care
- The design of documents, procedures and forms to be more child focused
- Missing from care processes and procedures
- Employability
- Rewards and Points scheme for Care Leavers
- Worked with health colleagues on the design of health leaflets

### **The Care Leavers Charter**

**The Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers** also contributes to the Care Leavers Charter.

This charter was proposed by Edward Timpson, Parliamentary Undersecretary for Children and Families in 2012. North Lincolnshire Council have adopted the charter and are committed to improving outcomes for Care Leavers as reflected in the charter.

We reviewed Edward Timpson's Care Leavers Charter with the young people who agreed with the proposals in the published document and that it should remain as it is and sit alongside the Corporate Parenting Pledge. The Charter is Appendix 4.

## How Corporate Parenting Works in North Lincolnshire

### A Model of Effective Corporate Parenting

North Lincolnshire has a well-established model of Corporate Parenting that was recognised by Ofsted as outstanding practice who said:

*...all looked after children are able to participate in quarterly 'Creative Conversations' with the corporate parenting panel. These meetings provide a very effective means for the corporate parenting panel to consult with children and young people on a range of key issues and receive feedback on the quality of services.*

The North Lincolnshire model includes well-defined decision making processes in the council with clear links to the Children in Care Council. The Council regularly reviews how we deliver these functions and that there are tangible outcomes through active and regular feedback from the children and young people.

Delivery of the pledge is monitored through the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Strategy Group and the (see below).

**The Corporate Parenting Board.** is chaired by the Lead Member, The Director for People and a small number of officers to enable children and young people to be at the centre of the activity and board meeting.

**The Children in Care Strategy Group**, is chaired by the Director for People and is a multi-agency senior/responsible officer group that can plan, review, monitor and develop all aspects of our work in relation to our statutory and aspirational work with Children in Care.

In delivering Corporate Parenting, North Lincolnshire also utilises the framework proposed in the National Children's Bureau publication 'Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice' which is endorsed by the government as an effective model of Corporate Parenting.

## **The Corporate Parenting Board and the Pledge**

The role of the Corporate Parenting Board is to take a clear strategic lead in ensuring better outcomes for children in care.

It has a significant impact in raising the profile of children in care in the council and with partners and continues to build a strong council and cross agency commitment to children in care. It demonstrates a clear focus on leadership and innovation in the corporate parenting role and ensures service pledges are implemented.

The Children in Care Strategy Group takes a lead on performance on behalf of the board.

The Corporate Parenting Board will:

- Oversee progress on this Strategy, making sure that all services provide support and take action to honour the pledges made to children and young people
- Oversee the impact the partner agency and Service Area Pledges have on children in care and care leavers
- Engage with children in care and care leavers to ensure that there is meaningful communication and partnership in delivering the pledge

The Children in Care Strategy Group will:

- Oversee the Children in Care Priority Action Plan, monitor progress and agree actions as appropriate
- Develop exception and summary reports for presentation to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- Report on performance and activity

The Corporate Parenting Champions Group will:

- Ensure implementation and update of the individual pledges and overall pledge
- Provide opportunity for wider discussions and sharing experiences in carrying out the pledges
- Report on outcomes and activity in the implementation of pledges

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Children in Care Strategy Group will review the actions taken to delivery our pledges at every meeting. Individual Directors and Partners will develop an action plan to deliver their ambitions. Information on progress and achievements will be provided by this group to the Corporate Parenting Board.

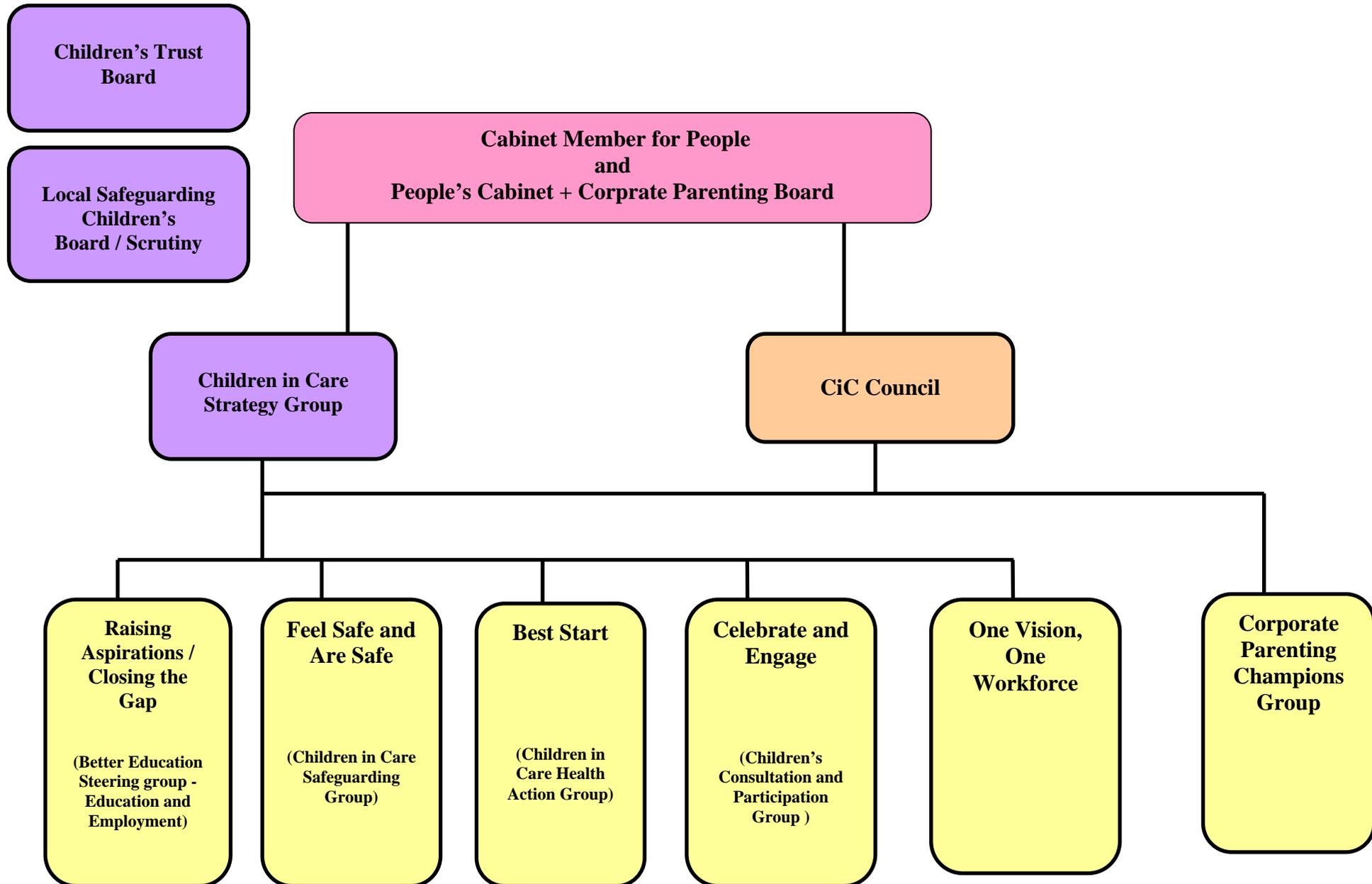
## **Collaboration and Partnership Groups**

There are a number of established and Collaboration and Partnership groups within children in care and wider services. The diagram below illustrates these, and how the information received from them links to strategic planning for children in care and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board centres around the Creative Conversation and is led by children and young people. The information, ideas and issues from this group feed into the other key groups to ensure that the voice of children in care and care leavers is central to planning, decisions

and strategies, this includes the Children in Care Strategy Group, Quarterly Performance Review, Corporate Parenting Champions Group and reports to the Children's Trust Board and People's Cabinet meetings.

The chart below illustrates the children in care partnership and accountability arrangements:



## Aspirations and Actions for 2013 - 2015

It is important that we continue to build on the success in delivering services for children in care and care leavers. To do this, we have reviewed the Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2011- 2013 and assessed progress on the actions and developments identified in its Partnership Action Plan (see separate report **Review of Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2011-2013**). This review informs the developments and actions contained within the Priority Partnership Action Plan 2013-2015 (Appendix 1).

### Partnership Priorities for 2013

Building on the review of the Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2011- 2013, we have developed further priorities and actions to continue to improve and develop services and ensure that children continue to be at the centre of the services we deliver.

Collectively, we want North Lincolnshire to be a place where children and young people in care are safe, where families are supported and where life chances are transformed. The priorities and actions below reflect these aspirations and are within the following wider partnership and council strategic framework:

- **Children and Young People's Plan**
- **Children's Services Plan 2013**
- **Children in Care Partnership Action Plan**

**Priority Actions for 2013** - see the Children in Care Priority Action Plan for detailed actions under each priority – key priorities include:

- Continue to work to maintain children at home with their families, where this is not possible seek timely permanent alternatives
- Develop the use of the Family Group Meeting Model to enable children to live safely within their families
- Ensure compliance with the revised PLO framework
- Develop an Independent Review Service for CIN to ensure no delay
- Work with partners to further develop a robust response to older young people at risk including shared models of intervention and approaches within an agreed framework.
- Ensure all children have provision that enables them to undertake recognised qualifications to the best of their ability. Support young people in care to be in training and/or in employment.
- Developing further schemes for older young people and as alternatives to external placement's and or secure remand placements including:
  - Paid fostering scheme
  - Supported placements for older young people including Supported Lodgings
  - Activity based provision
  - Parent and baby family based provision
- Open the new Children's Campus as an integral part of the landscape of accommodation
- Continue to build on the range of accommodation and placements to increase choice and further enable children to "stay put".
- Deliver a Social Enterprise model of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market
- Continue to increase the speed of the adoption recruitment process and the number of available adopters.

- Build on the existing practice and develop a new integrated, consistent model of service user feedback embedded in practice with a management oversight and reporting process (Child and Family Feedback Form and process).
- Recognise the achievements of our children throughout the year by finding opportunities when we can celebrate the educational successes of children in our virtual school.
- Raise the profile of the Corporate Parents Champions Group, developing further action plans with all partners.
- Develop advocacy to further safeguard against abuse and exploitation

**Partnership Priorities:** The actions above reflect the six strategic priorities shared by partner agencies, as expressed in the Children and Young People's Plan.

- 1) Raising Aspirations** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children in care want to be the best they can be to achieve their potential
- Ensure children in our care have an equal chance to succeed by setting plans that recognising their uniqueness and supports them to fulfil their potential
  - Provide first class education and support
  - Support children through life transitions and into early adulthood
  - Encourage opportunities for young people in and leaving care to be in training and/or in employment

### **Progress so far**

Children and young people are supported in their education to achieve their potential and have high aspirations. They are encouraged and supported to have high expectations and plan for the future including progression to university, training and successful careers. Young people are supported in their transitions to adulthood and all young people have consistent named workers, Pathway Plans and ongoing encouragement and support.

There is an established children in care educational support team overseen by the virtual Head for Children in Care that includes Education Psychology, Education Welfare, alternative provision, health, Social Work Services and educational support services.

Achievement at Key Stage 2, in English, has improved over the period from 25% in the Academic Year 2010/11 to 33% in 2011/12. For Maths at Key Stage 2 the results were not as good going from 50% in 2010/11 to 44% in the Academic Year 2011/12. With such small cohorts within our authority the difference of 10% represents 1 young person.

The proportion of children in care achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs with English and Maths during 2012/13 was 15%, which is one child less than the previous year, but those young people achieving 5 A\* – C GCSEs generally has increased to 31%.

### **What we are going to do next (priority actions)**

Build on existing models to set ambitious targets for children's educational progress, ensuring all children are able to undertake recognised qualifications to the best of their ability with further opportunities to be in training and/or employment.

- 2) Ensuring children and young people feel safe and are safe** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child in care is safe in their home, their school and in their community
- Provide sufficient and safe accommodation
  - Strive where possible to provide accommodation near to the child's family
  - Recruit staff who are safe and equipped to work with children in care
  - Provide independent advocacy and access to trusted adults
  - Achieve legal permanency for children in a timely manner

## **Progress so far**

It is important that children and young people are able to live in safe, stable placements. Investment in the services has meant that the number of North Lincolnshire Foster carers has increased substantially with the number of new carers approved increasing from 9 in 2010-11 to 22 during 2011-12 21 were recruited in 2012 –13, we have set a target of 30 for 2013 -14. This represents 43 new carers in the last two years. The number of adoptive carers recruited has also doubled over the past year. The Council has taken the lead within the regional Adoption Consortium and the development of a business model to increase the collaboration between authorities thereby increasing placement choice and availability.

We have developed a range of placement options for young people as they move through the care system and young people who are assessed as needing on-going support in their accommodation. This includes:

- The Children's Home
- Supported lodgings
- Pasture – 6 supported flats for young mothers and their children
- Supported Accommodation with NL Homes
- Arrangements to provide accommodation with Private Landlords
- Supported shared houses

The stability of placements for children remains good with 9.7% experiencing 3 placements in 12 months (a slight improvement on the previous year). Long term stability remains a challenge, has improved by 5% on the previous year and is broadly in line with statistical neighbours result for 2011/12 (2012/13 not yet published).

Children placed more than 20 miles from home is currently at 6.9% compared to the national average of 13.8%

## **What we are going to do next (priority actions)**

There is a continuing need to focus on ensuring stability for those in the older age ranges and increase placement choice and stability over a prolonged period. This will require robust support and specialist intervention with some children to maintain them in their current placement.

The on-going investment in and development of accommodation options and placement choice for all children remains a priority with a focus on those children who are harder to place and the development of local placements. This includes the recruitment, training and support of Foster Carers for harder to place children, supported accommodation providers for older young people and adoptive carers within the regional business model.

Further develop monitoring processes to ensure all cases are tracked and services meet the challenges of the Family Justice System Review; meaning reduced court timescales, an emphasis on pre-court assessment and analysis and strengthening the role of Social Workers in proceedings.

Utilise Family Group Meetings to help children live safely within their families

### **3) Giving children the 'best start' – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child in care has the best start in life and parents are support to create strong families**

- Effective early identification and robust prevention services to maintain children at home, with their parents and in their communities.
- Undertake timely child centred assessments and where this is not possible secure permanent and stable alternative care
- Ensure access to comprehensive and high quality Health Care.

## **Progress so far**

North Lincolnshire had 165 Children in Care on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. We have maintained consistently low numbers of Children in Care (approximately 17% lower than nationally) demonstrating the success of supporting children who are 'on the edge' of care remaining with their families. The number of children entering care has reduced substantially since 2011 – during 2012/13, 66 children entered care compared with 76 the previous year and 105 in 2010/11.

The age profile of Children in Care (CiC) continues to demonstrate that early and effective intervention is making a difference. Of those children who entered care between April 2011 and December 2012, 54% were aged 0-4 (compared to statistical neighbour comparator of 50%). The trend of an improving age profile of the care population with children entering care younger in comparison with previous years and the England average has continued. This demonstrated good practice in identifying children early and making timely decisions to safeguard children through statutory interventions. Decision making through the Placement Panel continues to oversee and analyses the child's assessed needs and ensures management oversight and decision making

This early identification and intervention has enabled increased success in achieving good outcomes for children through timely permanence within a family environment – the number of children leaving care who achieve permanence increased to 48%.

The % of children ceasing to be looked after who were adopted in 2012/13 was 19% (up from 6.6% in 2007). This compares favourably with the latest statistical neighbour comparator of 18%. The % of children leaving care with a legal plan of permanence (including adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders) in 2012/13 was 47.3%, this is substantially higher than the national average.

North Lincolnshire continues to exceed the threshold set for the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family which was set at 639 days from 2010/11 to 2012/13, The 2008-12 3 year North Lincolnshire average was 612 days. It was below the England average of 636 days and Statistical Neighbour (SN) average of 622 days.

North Lincolnshire achieved 70% of children waiting less than 21 months to be adopted for the 2009-12 3 year average. This performance is better than the England average of 56% and SN average of 55%. North Lincolnshire was ranked 1 out of 15 in the region.

## **What we are going to do next (priority actions)**

Further develop health services to children in care ensuring there is a robust quality assurance framework to ensure health assessments meet the highest standards and ensure there is sufficient capacity of dedicated health services to Children in Care to meet the needs of the care population and complete the required medical assessments.

Ensure specifications and service agreements are in place with the GP Commissioning Group as they become stakeholders to ensure children in care and care leavers are prioritised.

Contribute to implementing and developing partnership assessment protocols to ensure that partners contribute to holistic, child centred assessments of children's needs.

Work within the principles of the Early Help Safeguarding Strategy.

**4) Close the gaps in outcomes between children in care and their peers** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children in care receive the support they need so they are not disadvantaged

- Provide additional support in school, further and higher education and employment to give children in care an equal chance to succeed
- Provide additional information, advice, guidance work experience and job opportunities.
- Encourage participation in positive activities and reduce negative consequences of risky/anti-social behaviour

**Progress so far**

Criminal behaviour by children in care has reduced substantially over the last 5 years (from 16.8% in 2006) to 6.5% in 2012/13 – compared to an England average latest figure of 6.9% in 2011/12. This shows that the strategy aimed at reducing offending continues to be successful and services continue to work together to target those children and young people most at risk of offending.

Stability in their education is also a factor in reducing offending behaviour and the attendance at school has also increased year on year with 98% of the overall LAC population achieving 95% attendance (11% of CIC with 100% attendance). To ensure continued high standards in this, a dedicated attendance monitoring officer has been put in place with responsibility to support and monitor attendance.

**What we are going to do next (priority actions)**

Ensure that educational progress is effectively monitored and actions taken to enable children to attend their provision, achieve their potential and undertake recognised qualifications for all children including those placed out of area. Ensuring all provision and support is used consistently including the Pupil Premium.

Ensure all plans are outcome focused

To provide an on-going robust training and support programme for designated teachers, carers, social work and educational support staff.

Recognise and celebrate the achievements and successes of our children

Ensure young people have the training and support they need as they make the transition to adulthood.

**5) Celebrating and engaging children and young people** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children in care are valued as part of the community and their achievements are recognised and celebrated and where children and young people in care have a 'voice' that is listened to and acted upon.

- Provide children with opportunities to have their say and influence their plans that affect them
- Support the CiCC to improve services for children in care
- Celebrate achievements and success

**Progress so far**

North Lincolnshire has a well-established Children in Care Council that is recognised across the region as a successful model of meaningful engagement of children in care and care leavers. The CiCC meets on a regular basis with the Lead member for children, senior officers and partners utilising the 'Creative Conversation' model. Children in Care and Care Leavers are consulted in a number of ways including:

- Quarterly Questions - this is where all children and young people are asked a set of questions each quarter
- Exit interviews when children and young people leave placements
- Independent advocacy
- Supporting Children in Care and Care Leavers to contribute to their plans
- Children's meetings
- The Children in Care Council
- Involvement in the recruitment process of staff

We continue to hold all children in care reviews on time, taking children's views into account on 100% of occasions.

Events are held to celebrate the attainment and success of children in care and care leavers and are attended by children, carers, workers, elected members, officers and partners. Children in Care and Care Leavers are also supported to stage shows, make films, and undertake arts, sports and other activities that give the opportunity to celebrate their talents and successes.

### **What we are going to do next (priority actions)**

Revise and re-launch the Corporate Parenting Pledge and ensure all partners deliver their own pledge with measurable outcomes that are monitored and reviewed.

Develop new models of user feedback that are consistent, service wide and embedded in practice.

Provide further opportunities to celebrate the successes of children in care through events, information and engagement activities.

### **6) One Vision, One Workforce** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where services are child centred, focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in care and are integrated at the front line

- Utilise a single model of solution-focused interventions to work with children and improve outcomes
- Continue to use safer recruitment processes, whistle blowing, codes of conduct and LADO to ensure adults are safe to work with children in care
- Support the workforce to deliver on the principles for children and young people
- Develop and implement a Social Enterprise model for older young people

### **Progress so far**

The council has reviewed Social Work Services and redesigned the service based on the child's journey. Services were developed in a 'Pod' structure giving the opportunity utilise experienced workers in managing and developing other workers in the service, developing and improving services to children and providing continuity of worker.

We have ensured that opportunities are available to share good practice, learn from each other and develop new ways of working through partnership activities and events. These have included North Lincolnshire hosting 'Round Table' partnership events including; in July 2012 hosting an Adoption round table event that focused on the publication of the government's adoption action plan and enabled sharing of knowledge, examples of good practice and development of ideas across all agencies involved in achieving permanence for children.

The event was chaired by His Honour Judge Dowse and attended by partners from the police, SWS, legal services, the courts, Cafcass and other professionals. An action plan was compiled from the event and informed services and developments in achieving timely permanence as set out within the adoption score card. A further event is taking place in the autumn 2013.

In April 2013 a Children in Care Round Table event was hosted that focused on the development of services to children in care, achieving positive outcomes and partnership working.

North Lincolnshire Council continues to be the lead authority within the Yorkshire and Humber adoption consortium and is the provider authority responsible for managing its business and activities. This continues to be successful in greater collaboration in the recruitment of carers between authorities, improved information sharing and initiatives such as joint training, sharing of good practice across the region and developing new approaches in achieving adoption in a timely manner.

### **What we are going to do next (priority actions)**

Deliver a Social Enterprise model of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless.

Hold the Adoption Round Table event as an annual event.

## **Children's Services Priorities for 2013.**

In order to deliver the Partnership Priorities outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan, Children's Services have identified key Priorities within Children's Services. These are set out within the **Children's Services Plan 2013**. They include a strong emphasis upon work to support children and young people in care. The key priorities are:

1. Increase Placement Choice
2. Secure improved permanence through adoption and guardianship
3. Embed the early help offer
4. Development of integrated working (including The Families Initiative)
5. Celebrate and engage children and young people
6. Manage change and develop staff to respond to the changing needs of the care population
7. Meet the new requirement to manage remands and custody
8. Continuous service evaluation and inspection readiness
9. Ensure children are safe
10. Improve the education and employment of children in care

The Children in Care Priority Action Plan below details the actions to realise these priorities for children in care and care leavers:

## APPENDIX ONE - PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS 2013 – 2015

Children's Service Partnership Priority	Action Focus	Milestones / target	Lead/Linked Indicators	Lead/Lead Group
<b>Raising Aspirations</b>				
Education and employment of CiC	Set ambitious yet achievable targets for the Y6 and Y11 Cohort of 2014 and rigorously monitor the progress against targets, providing both support and challenge for the schools.	September 2013	KS2 targets:	Virtual Head Teacher
Education and employment of CiC	Ensure all children have provision that enables them to undertake recognised qualifications to the best of their ability	Raising aspirations	Education and employment of CiC	Virtual Head Teacher
Education and Employment of CiC	Encourage opportunities for young people in care to be in training and/or in employment:	Raise aspirations	Education and Employment of children in care	Assistant Director Education

Children's Service Partnership Priority	Action Focus	Milestones / target	Lead/Linked Indicators	Lead/Lead Group
Ensuring children and young people feel safe and are safe				
Sufficiency	<p>Build and provide a Children's Campus to offer new and purposely designed children's home</p> <p>Increase the number of NL Foster carers for older / difficult to place children</p> <p>Continue to build on the range of Supported Accommodation to increase choice and further enable children to "stay put".</p> <p>Continue a regular programme of recruitment activities to increase number of foster carers and supported lodgings providers to meet the projected needs for local authority accommodation and to develop a business model to contract out surplus beds/places.</p>	<p>Dec 2013</p> <p>30 in 2013/2014</p> <p>8 new supported lodgings by April 2014</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>Regulated service judged good or better through inspection - Stability</p> <p>Older young people remain in the same placements</p> <p>Reduction in the % of young people who leave care aged 16/17</p> <p>Improved stability of placements – reduction in the % of children with 3 or more placements and increase in % in long-term stable placements (2 yrs +)</p>	PSW Regulatory and Support Services
Sufficiency	To increase the speed of the adoption recruitment process and the number of available adopters, using current staff and independent social workers	June 2013	20 in 2013/ 2014	PSW – Support and Regulatory Services
Sufficiency	Develop the use of the Family Group Meeting Model to enable children to live safely within their families	January 2014	The age profile and number of children entering care	PSW – Case Management
Sufficiency	<p>Ensure compliance with the revised PLO framework through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme of training for Social Workers and other staff</li> <li>• Develop tracking and monitoring systems for cases in proceedings</li> <li>• Develop revised templates for court</li> </ul>	October 2013	<p>PLO timescales - % of court cases completed within 26 weeks</p> <p>% children in care who progress to legal permanence</p> <p>Adoption scorecard indicators</p>	PSW – Case Management

	<p>reports including statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the early identification and assessment of extended family members</li> <li>• Attend the Family Justice Regional Board and performance sub-group</li> </ul>			
Safeguarding	<p>Further develop monitoring processes to case track CIN and CP cases to ensure there is no delay</p> <p>Develop an Independent Review Service for CIN</p> <p>Further develop Performance specific reports and a quality assurance/tracking pathway for adoption</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p>	<p>100% of referral decisions made within 24 hours</p> <p>% of Core Assessments within reasonable time frame</p> <p>Increase in % CiN reviews on time and reviewed independently</p> <p>Adoption Score Card shows incremental improvement</p>	PSW Case Management
Safeguarding	<p>Ensure robust process and feedback is in place to minimise risk, harm and exploitation:</p> <p>Reg 33/34 visits, complaints, restraints, missing, CP visits, CH meetings, reports from IV.</p>	April 2013	<p>Children Feel safe</p> <p>% Reduction in numbers of negative events</p>	Head of Vulnerable children
Safeguarding	Monitor and review children placed away from home	April 2013	Children feel safe	Head of Vulnerable children
Safeguarding	Develop increased advocacy for CIN and CIC to ensure a strong voice from the beginning of their journey	January 2014	Children feel able to contribute and feel safe	PSW Safeguarding Practice
Sufficiency	<p>Work with partners to further develop a robust response to older young people at risk including shared models of intervention and approaches within an agreed framework.</p> <p>Adapt assertive outreach and additional resources to prevent remand and custodial</p>	<p>April 2014</p> <p>September 2014</p>	<p>Reduction in the number of young people subject to Remand and custody</p> <p>Reduce first time offending and re-offending</p> <p>Reduced Remands and custodial sentences</p>	<p>PSW Case Management</p> <p>PSW Regulatory and Support</p>

	sentences.			
Sufficiency	Increase the availability of short break carers to support children in existing placements and improve placement stability and prevent older children entering care through the use of short-breaks to support CiN plans	September 2013	Improved placement stability (short-term and long-term percentages) Reduction in the number of older children entering care	PSW Regulatory and Support
Sufficiency	Introduce a fee based carer scheme to provide highly skilled foster carers and improve placement choice for the hardest to place children, including those who are involved in the criminal justice system.	June 2013	Increased placement stability(as above) Reduction in the need to use external placements - % placed externally Reduction in Remands to custody	PSW Regulatory and Support

Children's Service Partnership Priority	Action Focus	Milestones / target	Lead/Linked Indicators	Lead/Lead Group
Giving children the 'best start'				
Health Action Group	Develop and report on an enhanced quality assurance model to ensure health assessments meet the highest standards.	July 2013	All children in care have health plans in place that are assessed to be of high quality Reduced % teenage pregnancy amongst care leavers Reduced substance use Improved emotional well-being	Designated Nurse for CiC
Health Action Group	Review the capacity of dedicated health services to Children in Care to ensure there is sufficient dedicated doctor capacity to complete adoption and other medical assessments.	January 2014	Timeliness of adoption processes to minimise delay Improved Adoption Scorecard indicators	CCG – Health Commissioning
Health Action Group	Revise service specifications with the new GP Commissioning Group as they become stakeholders to ensure children in care and care leavers are a priority, specifications are robust and services to LAC/CL continue to be prioritised.	July 2013	Services are in place to prioritise the needs of children in care and care leavers Reduced % teenage pregnancy amongst care leavers Reduced % young people who use substances <b>Improved emotional well-being (SDQ scores)</b> Parenting training taken up by % of care leavers	CCG – Health Commissioning

Close the gaps between children in care and their peers

<b>Children's Service Partnership Priority</b>	<b>Action Focus</b>	<b>Milestones / target</b>	<b>Lead/Linked Indicators</b>	<b>Lead/Lead Group</b>
Education and employment of CiC	To ensure that the work of the Provision Monitoring Officer of monitoring more robustly the progress and attainment of SEN pupils in out of county settings results in improved outcomes.	October 2013	As the above indicators Progression of 2 levels from assessed starting point	Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care
Education and employment of CiC	Improve our systems for monitoring the attendance, exclusions and attainment data of pupils in out of county provisions with the use of Welfare Call and take immediate actions if there are emerging issues.	May 2013	Monitoring in place for all children including those placed out of county  School attendance is high for children in all types of educational provision (% attendance)	Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care
Education and employment of CiC	Continue to explore outstanding practices for the use of the Pupil Premium to make a difference to the educational achievement and attainment of CiC and publish our findings on a national level	September 2013	Recognition of high quality models and provision, sharing positive practice, staff development and training  Attainment levels, attendance and progress as detailed above	Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care
Education and employment of CiC	To develop further the knowledge of attachment theory and its impact on educational achievement and providing joint training to support further the work of designated teachers and social workers	November 2013	The numbers of relevant staff have undertaken the training including designated teachers and educational support staff  Reduced exclusions and disruptions of educational placements	Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care
Education and employment of CiC	To provide an induction training programme for newly designated teachers on the roles and responsibilities of the post	December 2013	All newly designated teachers have undertaken induction training that includes the key issues relating to children in care.	Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care

Education and employment of CiC	Recognise the achievements of our children throughout the year by finding opportunities when we can celebrate the educational successes of children in our virtual school	October 2013	Hold events to celebrate the achievement of children in care and care leavers.  The support of lead officers and partners in attending events and activities to celebrate the success of children in care and care leavers	PSW – Case Management  Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care
Education and employment of CiC	Supporting the training and development programme for foster carers by providing training on educational issues such as; school transitions, study skills and embedding the Letter Box project	October 2013	The percentage of Foster carers who have attended relevant training  Support to educational placements reflected in attendance and attainment as detailed above	Assistant Director – Education  Virtual Head Teacher Children in Care
Sufficiency	Implement the revised independence training and support package for care leavers and homeless young people	<b>July 2013</b>	Young people live in stable placements – reduction in placement moves amongst older children living independently  Take up of opportunities for training, employment and life skills programmes Young people in suitable accommodation and Education, Training and Employment	PSW Regulatory and Support Services
Celebrate and Engage	Develop outcome focused case planning formats to reflect a focus on outcomes for children  Develop and deliver training on outcome focused approaches to case planning	April 2013  April 2014	All staff will understand and implement outcome-focused plans for children	PSW Safeguarding Practice

<b>Children’s Service Partnership Priority</b>	<b>Action Focus</b>	<b>Milestones / target</b>	<b>Lead/Linked Indicators</b>	<b>Lead/Lead Group</b>
Celebrating and engaging children and young people				
Celebrating and engaging children and young people	Revise and re-launch the Corporate Parenting Pledge Ensure all partners have clear, measurable actions and plans to deliver their Corporate Parenting Pledge.	Celebrate and engage	Revise and revitalise CPG activity	Revise and re-launch the Corporate Parenting Pledge
Celebrate and engage children and young people	Develop a new integrated, consistent model of service user feedback embedded in practice with a management oversight and reporting process (Child	Celebrate and engage	Celebrate and engage children and young people	PSW Safeguarding Practice

	and Family Feedback Form)			
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One vision, one workforce				
<b>Children's Service Partnership Priority</b>	<b>Action Focus</b>	<b>Milestones / target</b>	<b>Lead/Linked Indicators</b>	<b>Lead/Lead Group</b>
One vision, one workforce				
Sufficiency	Deliver a Social Enterprise model of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market	March 2014	Progress of development of the Social Enterprise	PSW Regulatory and Support service
One vision, one workforce	Hold the Adoption and Children in Care 'Round Table' events on an annual basis	Sept 2014	Adoption Scorecard indicators	PSW - Case Management

## **APPENDIX TWO**

# **Launch of the Revised Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers**

## **24 April 2013**

***From the summary feedback of the event written for children and young people:***

### **Who was there?**

**Children in Care Council and Young People**

**Corporate Parents and Invited Officers**

Cllr Rob Waltham, Cllr Tony Gosling, Denise Hyde, Peter Williams, Mike Wedgewood, Frances Cunning, Caroline Briggs, Rachel Benstead, Janice Moran, Paul McCourt, DI Steve Hall, Amy Gilbert, Pat Chennells and invited officers from agencies and directorates across the Council.

### **Know your Corporate Parents**

As a child or young person in care you have a number of 'corporate parents'. These are people who are responsible for your welfare, want to help you make the most of your life and are interested in hearing your views.

But, do you know who's who?

Would you know who to contact if you wanted to ask a specific question?

To help with this we have pulled together a photo gallery of key corporate parents, including contact details, (attached at the back). Please feel free to get in touch with any of them to tell them your views about your life, the help you get and what you think about things.

## **Focus**

Originally the overarching pledge was signed up to by multi-agency partners in February 2011 at the Civic Centre.

The current overarching pledges, which lists all the things young people would like, was taken to the Children in Care Council, the Bizz and GPK groups for consultation. The document was updated and the final version approved by the Children's Trust and Children in Care Strategy Group and signed off by Cllr Rob Waltham.

The focus of this corporate parenting event was to re-launch the Corporate Parenting Pledge for services and agencies to sign up to their continued commitment to fulfil their corporate parenting responsibilities (overleaf).

## On the Evening

Prior to the event officially starting there was opportunity for children and young people to arrive and get immersed in art and craft with activity stations in the main hall.

The event was opened by young people themselves who introduced the Corporate Parenting DVD. This film captured interviews with the young people on what they want from their Corporate Parents and activities they enjoy doing. Paul Cowling, Service Manager – Social Work Case Management, and Annemarie Carlberg, Service Manager – Family Placement, also features talking about examples of Corporate Parenting in practice and performance information relating to children in care and care leavers (which was very positive!).



**Councillor Rob Waltham,  
Lead Member for People**



# Signatories to the Pledge

Each Dignitary and Corporate Parent in turn was invited to the stage to sign the pledge on behalf of their service/agency.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Name</b>
Cabinet Member for People North Lincolnshire Council	Cllr Rob Waltham
Shadow Member North Lincolnshire Council	Cllr Tony Gosling
Chief Executive North Lincolnshire Council	Simon Driver
People Directorate North Lincolnshire Council	Denise Hyde
Places Directorate North Lincolnshire Council	Peter Williams
Policy & Resources Directorate North Lincolnshire Council	Mike Wedgewood
Public Health North Lincolnshire Council	Frances Cunning
North Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Trust	Jill Turner
North Lincolnshire CCG	Caroline Briggs
North Lindsey College	Rachel Benstead
John Leggott College	Janice Moran
Humberside Fire & Rescue	Paul McCourt
Humberside Police	SI David Hall
Humberside Probation Trust	Amy Gilbert
Voluntary Sector	Pat Chennells
Foster Carers	Eric Johnson
North Lincolnshire Virtual School	Sue Bond



**Signing of the Pledge**  
**Above Left:** Janice Moran from John Leggott College. **Above:** Mike Wedgwood, Director of Policy and Resources from North Lincolnshire Council. **Left:** Simon Driver, Chief Executive of North Lincolnshire Council. **Below:** SI David Hall from Humberside Police

# Winners of the Creative Writing Competition & Art Show

This event proved a wonderful opportunity to showcase the excellent skills and abilities the children and young people have for writing and producing art. A creative writing competition and art show was run with entries open to all children in care and care leavers.

On the evening all their work was presented in the main hall for people to view.



Outstanding art pieces were selected by a judging panel and all winners were given a £20 high street voucher. A panel from 20:21 Visual Arts Centre also selected outstanding work and these young people were given additional prizes provided by 20:21 for use at their arts centre.

## Outstanding Art Piece:

- Kasey
- Lewis
- James

## 20:21 Visual Arts Centre Selection:

- Imogen
- Adam
- Kian

## Creative Writing Competition Winners and Runners Up

A panel of judges read through all written pieces of work submitted for the creative writing competition. Winners and runners up were selected and given high street vouchers.

### 5 and Under

<b>1st</b>	Kyran	A carefully structured story and some interesting words used. The judges were pleased the story had a happy ending.
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### 6-12 years old

<b>1st</b>	Shannon	A fine sense of menace developed in this story with a sophisticated use of language. Excellent!
<b>1st</b>	Karl	Well structured with outstanding use of language which reflects the original writing. The build up of atmosphere is excellent.
<b>Runner Up</b>	Matthew and Karl	A lovely narrative in the style of a super hero story. We loved the author's sense of humour which came across very strongly!
<b>Runner Up</b>	Kaitlyn	A good sense of rhyme and rhythm and a powerful message about the joys of music
<b>Runner Up</b>	Ellie	The structure of this story is tightly controlled and its sense of scariness builds effectively.

### 13+ years old

<b>1st</b>	Nicole	A powerful and thought provoking verse which is very moving. We were impressed with the sustained use of the personification
<b>1st</b>	Amber	A complex and mature piece of writing which the judges found very moving. Lovely imagery and a real empathy with the plight of Tess of the D'urbervilles
<b>Runner Up</b>	Emma May	A well constructed and sustained narrative. Some lovely descriptive passages
<b>Runner Up</b>	Emma	A poem which explores the heartbreak of young love. A fine reflective verse with a surprising conclusion
<b>Runner Up</b>	Callum	Lively, proactive verses with complex rhyming sequence successfully employed. A great sense of fun in these writings.

### Other Awards:

All people who entered the creative writing competition and who submitted art pieces were given a certificate for recognition of their work.

Nicole was presented with a trophy, this was awarded for her Coast to Coast Cycle Challenge from John O'Groats to Lands End.

Rachel was awarded a £20 WHSmiths vouchers for a piece of dual media work she submitted (picture story)

The young people who were compere's for the evening were thanked and given a box of chocolates

Nicole prepared the food for the evening and was also given a box of chocolates



Denise Hyde closed the event and the evening came to a climax with the release of balloons from the ceiling.



## Corporate parenting pledge to children in care and care leavers

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER OUTCOMES**

- Ask your views, listen to what you say and act on it
- Support you and give you the information you need to lead a healthy lifestyle
- Support you to feel safe
- Support you to have contact with your family and friends
- Make sure services and support are available to help you to be the best you can be
- Have ambitions for you and support you to achieve your goals
- Have high expectations of you and expect you to act sensibly
- Support you to access the education and training you need and help you develop your skills and achieve your aspirations
- Work with you to support other children and young people who may have had similar experiences
- Provide opportunities for training and work experience to support you to find employment
- Support you and your children while you gain life experience and become independent from us
- Provide an open door for support and advice, whenever you need it
- Celebrate your successes and achievements
- Help you be involved in the community

REPRESENTING	NAME	SIGNATURE
The Conservative Party	Rob Walkham	<i>Rob Walkham</i>
The Labour Group NLC	Tony Corling	<i>Tony Corling</i>
Staff of North Lincolnshire Council	Simon Driver	<i>Simon Driver</i>
Directorate People Services	Denise Hule	<i>Denise Hule</i>
PLACES DIRECTORATE	PETER WILLIAMS	<i>Peter Williams</i>
POLICY & RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	MIKE WEAVERWOOD	<i>Mike Weaverwood</i>
PUBLIC HEALTH	Frances Turner	<i>Frances Turner</i>
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CCG	Caroline Brisco	<i>Caroline Brisco</i>
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COLLEGE	Rachel Benstead	<i>Rachel Benstead</i>
Voluntary sector	Pat Chennells	<i>Pat Chennells</i>
HUMBERSIDE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE	GM. PAUL M'GUIN	<i>Paul McGuin</i>
HUMBERSIDE POLICE	SUPT. DAVID HALL	<i>David Hall</i>
FOSTER CARERS	ERIC JOHNSON	<i>Eric Johnson</i>
HUMBERSIDE PROBATION TRUST	AMY GILBERT	<i>Amy Gilbert</i>
NORTHERN LINCOLNSHIRE & GOOLE HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	GILL TURNER	<i>Gill Turner</i>
North Lincolnshire Virtual School	Sue Bond	<i>Sue Bond</i>
JOHN LEGGOTT COLLEGE	JANICE MORAN	<i>Janice Moran</i>

Todd

*[Signature]*

On behalf of children in care in North Lincolnshire we accept the pledge above



North Lincolnshire Council also represents schools and colleges



NHS North Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group



Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire

## APPENDIX THREE



Department  
for Education



# Charter for Care Leavers

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**

- We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.

#### **To believe in you**

- We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

#### **To listen to you**

- We will take time to listen to you, respect, and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you,

negotiate with you, and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why. We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it.

### **To inform you**

- We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

### **To support you**

- We will provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and we will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support.

### **To find you a home**

- We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before. We will work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home.

### **To be a lifelong champion**

- 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, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget

**about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.**

# **Review of Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2011- 2013**

## **Introduction**

The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2011-2013 has been reviewed and updated, it reflects on the achievements of the last 2 years and the actions for 2013-15. It includes our Partnership Priority Action Plans and identifies how together we will improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers. This builds on previous action plans and is in line with the Council's priorities.

The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2011 – 2013 set out how we, as a Council and as a partnership, work to achieve our shared ambitions for children and young people in our care. The strategy detailed the support and plans to enable children in care and care leavers to achieve positive outcomes. It details the priority actions that underpinned the work we did with children in care and care leavers to enable them to live in stable, safe placements, realise their aspirations and continue to achieve success.

This review of the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy reflects on the developments and improvements during this period and the key priorities to achieving continued success.

## **Safeguarding and Looked After Inspection – May 2012**

The excellent progress made through the Children in Care Strategy and the impact of services delivered in securing better outcomes for children were recognised by Ofsted (Safeguarding and Looked After Children, 2012), where services to children in care were judged to be Outstanding.

Highlights of the inspection include:

- The proportion of children placed in foster carer has increased over the last 3 years, whilst the number placed in external residential provision has reduced.
- Most children looked after in North Lincolnshire are in foster care placements and the rate is higher than the national average.
- The post 16 team provide an excellent range of services to young people post 16 years and to those who have left care.
- All looked after children are allocated a qualified social worker and most also receive additional assistance through family support workers and this is excellent.
- Audits and the excellent risk analysis tool used throughout looked after children's services are outstanding and provide a highly effective base to identify and take forward learning in the organisation
- Investment in a new 'Children's Campus' for looked after children, demonstrating the significant commitment by the council to improving services for vulnerable children.
- Excellent systems to track, monitor and evaluate cases to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded in their placements.

This continuing strong performance has been supported by a wide range of Corporate Parenting activity.

## **Vision, Priorities and Values**

The aim of the strategy was for our children in care to have an equal chance and therefore recognise they must be a priority and that we have to consider their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, and other diverse needs to ensure that they have an equal chance.

The Children's Trust Board (CTB) commissioned the Children In Care Partnership Group to ensure that the priorities for all children were applied to, and that these were made specific for, Children in Care to ensure that they experienced improved outcomes. The Children in Care Partnership has reported to both the CTB and the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG).

Our efforts focused on six priorities:

- **Raising Aspirations** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children in care want to be the best they can be to achieve their potential
  - Ensure children in our care have an equal chance to succeed by setting plans that recognising their uniqueness and supports them to fulfil their potential
  - Provide first class education and support
  - Support children through life transitions and into early adulthood
  - Encourage opportunities for young people in and leaving care to be in training and/or in employment
- **Ensuring children and young people feel safe and are safe** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child in care is safe in their home, their school and in their community
  - Provide sufficient and safe accommodation and strive where possible to be near to the child's family
  - Recruit staff who are safe and equipped to work with children in care
  - Provide independent advocacy and access to trusted adults
- **Giving children the 'best start'** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child in care has the best start in life and parents are support to create strong families
  - Effective early identification and robust prevention services to maintain children at home, with their parents and in their communities.
  - To undertake timely child centred assessments and where this is not possible secure permanent and stable alternative care
  - Ensure access to comprehensive and high quality Health Care.
- **Close the gaps in outcomes between children in care and their peers** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children in care receive the support they need so they are not disadvantaged
  - Provide additional support in school, further and higher education and employment to give children in care an equal chance to succeed
  - Provide additional information, advice, guidance work experience and job opportunities.
  - Encourage participation in positive activities and reduce negative consequences of risky/anti-social behaviour
- **Celebrating and engaging children and young people** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children in care are valued as part of the community and their achievements are recognised and celebrated and where children and young people in care have a 'voice' that is listened to and acted upon.
  - Provide children with opportunities to have their say and influence their plans that affect them
  - Support the CiCC to improve services for children in care
  - Celebrate achievements and success

- **One Vision, One Workforce –Children have said that they need:**

Vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them

Understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon

Stability: to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them

Respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not

Information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans

Explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response

Support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family

Advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.

Our aim is to develop a stable and confident workforce that have the necessary skills, confidence and support to deliver the above requirements through a highly effective service.

### **Priority Actions within the Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2011-2013**

The Priority Action Plans contained within the strategy included:

- Implement a tracking and transitions process that enables the most vulnerable children to have appropriate education, training and employment. Increase capacity to ensure specialist IAG workers oversee and support all LAC through transition and with CV and interview preparation.
- Develop the role of Virtual Heads overseeing strategy, developments and performance.
- Quality assure a random sample of PEPs on a quarterly basis alongside our colleagues in Learning and Improvement. Develop mechanisms (utilising the PEP process) to ensure the Pupil Premium is used effectively to improve the educational outcomes for LAC and embed early years PEPs as part of statutory review process
- Increase accommodation range and choice in line with the need outlined in the placement sufficiency strategy including:
  - Reviewing models of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to ascertain whether a social enterprise model would enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market.
  - Developing fee based foster carer scheme and increasing the number and choice of carers.
  - Reduce our current mainstream children's homes by two and build a new, purpose built, children's home linked to supported accommodation for young people
  - Increase the number of prospective adopters to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption locally
  - Lead the regional approach to increase and provide opportunities for adults who wish to adopt and children who need adoptive placements.
- Continue to build on existing practice to ensure compliance with the 'Adoption Action Plan' and the Norgrove report to ensure children achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop co-location between police/SWS to have joint discussion/decision making with regard to Children in care who demonstrate risky behaviours
- Implement programme of life skills training to ensure young people know how to keep safe and look after oneself.
- Deliver a Corporate Parenting Training plan that includes, Elected Members, Partners and staff to understand and recognise the importance of the Principles and Plan for LAC.

- Reshape preventative services to build upon our successful family support intervention strategy and ensure wider services prioritise children, young people and families who are more vulnerable and who are at risk of family breakdown.
- Increased capacity within the LAC Health team to continue to improve the timeliness and quality of initial health assessments. Ensure the SDQ is an integral part of the Health Assessment.
- Further develop specific CiC related practice forums facilitated by the Head of Safeguarding and Practice to enable staff working with children and care leavers to have the opportunity to reflect and increase their awareness
- Review and develop integrated social work services to ensure the child's journey is reflected in structures and ensure a minimal number of points within the process where a social worker is changed.
- Develop child friendly care plan

## **OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE: 2011-13**

### **How we performed in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people**

#### ***Raising Aspirations* – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person wants to be the best they can be to achieve their potential.**

Children and young people are encouraged to have high aspirations and encouragement and support are provided to ensure that children and young people are able to achieve their potential and their aspirations. Additional support such as tutoring, homework clubs, dedicated educational support and training for designated teachers support children to achieve in their education. We have also in place a 'Letter Box' scheme to support children with their education where children receive individualised packs sent to their homes containing books, games and activities to encourage their educational progress.

Children and young people are also supported through regular events and activities to celebrate their successes, talents and achievements. These are well-attended by Corporate Parents from across the council and its partners.

Events to celebrate children and young people's successes have been initiated by the children and young people; and have included talent shows, art shows and competitions, football matches, films, plays, creative writing competitions and the forthcoming Awesome Kidz Awards event. Recently, young people from the Grove have taken over running the annual fishing match and a new knockout pool tournament was held at Brigg Youth Club, initiated and run by young people.

The Virtual Head now oversees the strategy, developments and performance in relation to children in care and their educational achievements. The head chairs a regular multi-agency steering group to oversee progress and links closely with the Looked after Children Education Service.

Systems are now in place to quality assure a random sample of PEPs on a quarterly basis alongside colleagues in Learning and Improvement. The use of the Pupil Premium is contained within the PEP with the expectation that it is utilised to improve the educational outcomes for LAC. The early years PEPs are now embedded as part of the statutory LAC review process.

Achievement at Key Stage 2, in English, has improved over the period from 25% in the Academic Year 2010/11 to 33% in 2011/12. For Maths at Key Stage 2 the results were not as good going from 50% in 2010/11 to 44% in the Academic Year 2011/12. With such small cohorts within our authority the difference of 10% represents 1 young person. The proportion of children in care achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs with English and Maths during 2012/13 was 15%, which is one child less than the previous year, but those young people achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs generally has increased to 31%.

School attendance for children in care continues to be good and often excellent (11% of CIC with 100% attendance). Attendance of 98% of Children in Care is above 95%, and in line with peers. The proportion of children in care achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs with English and Maths during 2012/13 was 15%, which is one child less than the previous year, but those young people achieving 5 A\* - C GCSEs generally has increased to 31%.

There is now in place a tracking and transitions process that monitors and ensures plans are in place for all young people to have appropriate training, education or employment. This is overseen by the manager responsible for IAG. There is also increased capacity within the IAG service with a specialist IAG worker to oversee and support Children in Care and Care Leavers through transition and with CV and interview preparation. The IAG manager also oversees work placement, support and employability opportunities and young people are supported and encouraged to take up the offers of work placements by Corporate Parents from across the council and its partners.

'Drop in' sessions have been created at the Young People's Support Centre with Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to give care leavers assistance with their employability and career planning. These have proven to be popular with care leavers, and have helped them to get support with apply for jobs and college courses. Business advice is also available for children in care who would like to start their own business

Of the 14 young people in the 19 year old NEET cohort:  
5 (36%) were unable to be in EET:

- 4 young people were in custody during their monitoring period (2 of these were cases closed to the service several years earlier following successful return to their families)
- 1 was a young parent expecting their second child and choosing not to take part in education, employment or training

Of the remaining 9 (64%) 8 were in EET (the other young person did not wish to take up the opportunities provided). The final figure was therefore 57% in EET

Two care leavers were supported to successfully complete their university degrees, with a further three entering or continuing Higher Education.

Children in Care Council members are working towards a Youth Voice Award, which will give then accreditation for the work they currently do with the CiCC. The projected date of completion is December 2013

## **The GPK**

The younger arm of the Children in Care Council encourages children to participate in the planning and management of services and activities, developing positive relationships and behaviour, thereby encouraging their social and emotional development. They report that involving them in decision making about services at an early stage empowers them and their self esteem and self confidence are enhanced.

The GPK have been involved in the recruitment, selection and training of foster carers for a number of years, most notably during the Skills to Foster Course. They have been involved in Anti Bullying, safety leaflets, fostering information, designing sex and relationships leaflets, the content of Children's Plans. Their "HQ" is currently the Grove, which was returned to at their request, after a period within a local Children's Centre

***Ensuring children and young people feel safe and are safe – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person is safe in their home, their school and in their community.***

### **Risk Analysis Framework (RAF)**

Within North Lincolnshire there is a well-embedded Risk Analysis Framework (RAF) which provides a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk. The Risk Analysis Framework is integral to and sits alongside statutory and individual plans for young people.

The analysis of risk takes place within the three domains of the National Assessment Framework: Child's developmental needs, parental capacity to meet those needs, and family and environmental factors that support or hinder. It focuses on two key aspects– what factors are there in the child's life that present a risk to their well-being (risk factors), and what factors guard against risk (protective factors).

Having determined what risk and protective factors exist, the process is then to judge the balance of those factors, particularly whether there are sufficient protective factors in place to balance out the risk factors. The next stage is to judge what meaning the level of risk that exists has for the child. This will be on a continuum from no significant risk to severe risk.

Finally, the worker must determine what needs to change in order to reduce risk to acceptable levels, and devise a plan to deliver that change. The risk analysis is repeated at milestones such as reviews, and at times when significant change occurs in the child's circumstances.

### **Anti Bullying**

Two members of the CiCC have undertaken Anti bullying ambassador training, one having taken the role of Anti Bullying representative for North Lincolnshire. This involves regular attendance at national meetings. They have written an Anti Bullying Charter, which is now in place at the Grove, where they live.

### **Children's Rights**

The residents of the Grove wrote their own version of the Children's Charter, signed up to by all staff at the Grove.

The CiCC considered and endorsed the national Children's Charter.

### **"How to stay Safe" leaflets**

Both the Bizz Group and the GPK have been involved in the production of leaflets for children in care and for disabled children.

## **Placement Choice and Stability of Placement**

The number of North Lincolnshire Foster carers has increased substantially with the number of new carers approved increasing from 9 in 2010-11 to 22 during 2011-12 21 were recruited in 2012 –13, we have set a target of 30 for 2013 -14. This represents 43 new carers in the last two years. There is a robust recruitment campaign in place and to focus on carers for older and harder to place young people. This has helped us reduce the need for expensive external placements. We are developing a fee based foster carer scheme to further contribute to increasing the number and choice of carers.

- We have reduced our mainstream children's home provision by two and have reinvested the savings through this in the development of support to young people, increasing family placements through adoption and fostering and building a new, purpose built, children's home linked to supported accommodation for young people.
- The residents of the Grove have been involved in the design of the new campus, having been consulted about the plans at an early stage, undertaken site visits, chosen their bedrooms and they will choose the furnishings and decoration in the near future.

The stability of placements for children remains good with 9.7% experiencing 3 placements in 12 months (a slight improvement on the previous year). Long term stability remains a challenge, has improved by 5% on the previous year and is broadly in line with statistical neighbours result for 2011/12 (2012/13 not yet published). There is a continuing need to focus on ensuring stability for those in the older age ranges and increase placement choice and stability over a prolonged period. This will require robust support and specialist intervention with some children to maintain them in their current placement.

Three CiCC members delivered "Staying Put" training to a group of fostering social workers and social work students, which had been prepared by four young people using the "Staying Put: 18+ Family Placement Programme (Peer Research Report)", their own opinions and the opinions of others discussed in the previous Children in Care Council Meeting.

## **Services for Older Young People**

Services have been re-shaped to ensure that delivery of plans, support and accommodation are consistent and provide high quality services to meet the young people's needs. This includes Qualified Social Workers within the service, the development of the role of Support Officers and the creation of peripatetic support teams to support young people living independently or within supported accommodation. All young people receiving a service have suitable accommodation provided to meet their needs with support in place and plans to ensure they have meaningful targets that are aspirational and focus on achieving positive outcomes.

We have reviewed models of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to ascertain whether a social enterprise model would enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market. This has progressed through the viability process and work is on-going to develop the business plan and model of delivery as a Social Enterprise. This service will deliver the accommodation and support to young people who are living independently either Care Leavers or vulnerable young people who have presented as homeless.

We have developed a range of placement options for young people as they move through the care system and young people who are assessed as needing on-going support in their accommodation. This includes:

- The Children's Home
- Supported lodgings
- Pasture – 6 supported flats for young mothers and their children
- Supported Accommodation with NL Homes
- Arrangements to provide accommodation with Private Landlords
- Supported shared houses

### **Cambridge House Young People's Support Centre**

As well as being the "HQ" for the Peripatetic Team and the Children in Care Council, the Centre has a young people's area, providing activities and space to relax or undergo training, a private interview room, education room with IT, garden and large kitchen. The young people have always made this space their own, choosing décor and furnishings, and choosing the activities and events which take place. A monthly calendar of activities within the Centre is informed by the feedback from events and the suggestions box.

The weekly Drop In provides a nutritious meal and space to socialise with peers and staff, including personal advisers, Children in Care Nurse and IAG worker. Young people have said they value this time and would prefer any more formal input, such as the "Hot Topics" current events discussions, or consultations, to take place in another context. They also value being able to listen to music and watch TV, with both being made available

Recently, eight young people have attained their food hygiene certificates, enabling them to undertake catering for activities and events within the Centre. They also advised on the re-equipment of the kitchen.

The launch event for the Independence Workshops was well attended, with over 25 young people attending. On offer were: a Police PCSO with "beer goggles" and Antisocial Behaviour Information, Hazard House information from the Fire Brigade, Consultation Stand with Children in Care Council information, Gardening and "guess the fruit and veg" stand, Price is Right game for guessing the cost of food items, Hygiene and Cleaning information, CEOP DVD's, Local Activities and Interests, DELTA stand, Diversity and culture with foods from around the world, Ready Steady Cook lunchtime challenge, and a raffle. This resulted in young people choosing tailored packages in the various workshops, one new CiCC member and three more young people interested in training for recruitment and selection. Feedback from this event was very positive.

### **P.A.S.T.U.R.E**

Pasture accommodation is a specialist accommodation and support for young parents which offers supported living and services such as baby massage, salt dough modelling with input from health and social care professionals. Care leavers were influential in the development and design of the housing accommodation and the support available within the project is in line with the expressed wishes of the young people. Young people now have a better

opportunity to care successfully for their babies, learn parenting skills and understand development. Six young people so far are benefitting from living in the accommodation. Residents have been involved in the selection of tenders for the contract to run the Pasture, including undertaking interviews via a young people's panel.

### **Permanency through Adoption**

We have focused on increasing the number and choice of prospective adopters to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption locally. The Council has taken the lead within the regional Adoption Consortium and the development of a business model to increase the collaboration between authorities thereby increasing placement choice and availability. The number of adoptive carers recruited has doubled over the past year and there is a robust recruitment strategy in place to increase further the number of carers recruited during 2013/14.

In order to ensure that children are able to progress to achieve permanency we have reduced the length of time taken to achieve final orders and are in a strong position to achieve the timescales specified within the Norgrove Review of public law proceedings. During the year 2012/13, proceedings reduced from 56 weeks (Apr-Jun 12) to 41 weeks (Jan-Mar 13). The number completed within 26 weeks has now also increased from 17.6% to 44.4%.

Current measures for Adoption performance are through the Adoption Scorecard. We continue to more than achieve the thresholds set by the scorecard.

North Lincolnshire continues to exceed the threshold set for the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family which was set at 639 days from 2010/11 to 2012/13, The 2008-12 3 year North Lincolnshire average was 612 days. It was below the England average of 636 days and Statistical Neighbour (SN) average of 622 days. North Lincolnshire achieved 70% of children waiting less than 21 months to be adopted for the 2009-12 3 year average. This performance is better than the England average of 56% and SN average of 55%. North Lincolnshire was ranked 1 out of 15 in the region.

### **Visits to Children's Homes**

Elected members have been trained to undertake corporate parenting visits to our two children's homes and these are in addition to and compliment the regulatory visits undertaken by designated officers. The corporate parenting visits offer the children and young people a chance to talk independently, offering an additional safeguarding check and a check regarding the quality of care.

These visits have been well established for a number of years and provide a real opportunity for young people to talk to elected members and share their views, wishes and concerns.

### **Children Missing from Care**

For the small number of children in care who are reported as missing North Lincolnshire Council have robust mechanisms for ensuring that action is taken straight away to ascertain their whereabouts and ensure their safety. This was recognised as excellent practice in the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked after Children in 2012.

We have developed a multi-agency missing children management group that meets regularly to oversee children reported as missing. The joint protocols agreed with

Humberside Police have been reviewed and updated and the group oversees the implementation of these protocols.

The number of children in the Council's care who have been reported missing has reduced annually over the last 4 years and is currently at its lowest level. Of the small number of instances during 2012/13, most (71%) of the children returned within a few hours. In only 2 cases was the child missing for more than 24 hours both were with friends and returned safely of their own accord.

Of children reported as missing for any length of time from Children's Homes during 2010/11 and 2011/12, 66% of the instances were young people aged over 16. Of these, 83% (20/24) were in voluntary accommodation and therefore free to discharge themselves from care should they wish.

The Children in Care Council designed and wrote a leaflet explaining the Missing from Care process in 2007, which is issued to all children and young people entering care. This has recently been reviewed by the CiCC and updated, with the result that a leaflet able to be understood by younger children, a credit card with essential information and telephone numbers and a leaflet designed for carers are all in development.

***Giving children the 'best start' – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child has the best start in life and parents are supported to create strong families.***

### **Children in Care Population**

North Lincolnshire had 165 Children in Care on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. We have maintained consistently low numbers of Children in Care (approximately 17% lower than nationally) demonstrating the success of supporting children who are 'on the edge' of care remaining with their families. The number of children entering care has reduced substantially since 2011 – during 2012/13, 66 children entered care compared with 76 the previous year and 105 in 2010/11.

This shows that the focus of the council from its inception of putting families first, the use of intensive family support, targeted interventions to support families, integrated working and clear management accountability for managing the care population is continuing to be successful in maintaining a stable care population. Services have been re-shaped and new working arrangements have been developed. This includes increased staffing capacity and management oversight.

The age profile of Children in Care (CiC) continues to demonstrate that early and effective intervention is making a difference. Of those children who entered care between April 2011 and December 2012, 54% were aged 0-4 (compared to statistical neighbour comparator of 50%). The trend of an improving age profile of the care population with children entering care younger in comparison with previous years and the England average has continued. This demonstrated good practice in identifying children early and making timely decisions to safeguard children through statutory interventions. Decision making through the placement panel continues to oversee and analyses the child's assessed needs and ensures management oversight and decision making

This early identification and intervention has enabled increased success in achieving good outcomes for children through timely permanence within a family environment – the number of children leaving care who achieve permanence increased to 48% (approximately double the national comparator).

The % of children ceasing to be looked after who were adopted in 2012/13 was 19% (up from 6.6% in 2007). This compares favourably with the latest statistical neighbour comparator of 18%. The % of children leaving care with a legal plan of permanence (including adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders) in 2012/13 was 47.3%, this is substantially higher than the national average.

## **Health**

There is strong multi-agency engagement which enables us to improve the health and education of looked after children. We have seen an increase in capacity and in outcomes within both health and education outcomes, improved rate of initial health assessment completed on time and improved education progress.

For those children who do not have their own dentist when they enter care, we have available two community dental practices that regular review the dental care of looked after children in North Lincolnshire. All children in care are registered with a General Practitioner.

## **Children in Care Nurse**

In 2012 the capacity of the health provision for children in care and care leavers was increased with the creation of a dedicated Named Nurse for children in care and an increase in hours for the Designated Doctor.

This has helped ensure that the proportion of children having up-to-date health assessment and dental checks has remained over 90% since 2007 and achieved 95.9% in 2012/13 compared to a national average of 86.5% (CIC 1yr+).

Throughout the period, the Children in Care Nurses have taken an active role in improving the health of children in care. As well as, in conjunction with the designated Doctor, undertaking health assessments, preparing health plans and monitoring the health of children in care, they also provide one to one work with children where there are identified health issues such as eating disorders. They provide information to children in care on their health needs and are available for consultation, advice and support to staff and carers. They also run weekly 'drop in' sessions at the Young People's Support Centre so young people can seek advice on any health issues.

The designated nurse is also trained in working with young people on sexual health issues and offers advice, support and medical interventions where needed. The nurses link very closely with the Case Management Team, carers and other workers.

## **Emotional Well-being**

There continues to be a dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for children in care and care leavers. In May 2013, 56 children and young people were receiving a service. This includes individual work with children, support to placements through the TFC model (see below), consultation with workers and carers, dyadic therapy and group work.

## **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**

In conjunction with psychologists in the CAMH Service, SDQ screening has been undertaken for all children in care aged over 4 years old. This was utilised as a screening tool to ensure services were targeted at the right children and young people. All qualifying children had an SDQ undertaken and all were reviewed by qualified psychologists within the CAMH Service and complement other referral processes and tools to ensure that mental health services were targeted effectively. We have consistently achieved high numbers of

completed SDQ's, achieving 100% completed for the children and young people who are eligible for the last two years.

### **Group Work**

CAMHS group work programmes continued to take place during the period with a focus on areas such as self-esteem, identity, relationships and bullying. Young people have been selected for these groups based on their own wishes and feelings, carers and workers feeling the groups would be beneficial and identified through the SDQ and other processes. Feedback from children has been very positive.

### **Tiered Foster Care (TFC) Model**

Also in conjunction with colleagues in the CAMH service, the Tiered Fostering model has continued and been built upon. This model is based on a 'Team Around the Child' framework and includes commitment from all professionals and carers involved with the child and establishes a support network around the placement utilising the foster carer, the case manager, fostering social worker, clinical psychologist and other relevant people such as the school based on the individual needs of the child. The plans and support to the child and carers are led by an allocated qualified psychologist and the team supporting each placement meets regularly to plan and review their involvement. This model has been highly successful in achieving positive outcomes for children, supporting carers and improving the stability of placements. Children are identified to access this scheme through regular meetings between CAMHS, fostering and case management staff.

The Tiered Fostering CAMHS approach to working with children in care was nominated for the Health Service Journal award under the category of enhancing quality and efficiency in services for children and young people. The awards were held at a ceremony in London in November 2011. There were over one thousand applicants for the award of which 60 were shortlisted and of which North Lincolnshire were one of three to be invited to attend the award ceremony.

### **Substance Misuse**

In conjunction with Drug Education Liaison Treatment Agency (DELTA) we have developed dedicated referral pathways to services to reduce the use of substances. These pathways mean there are tailored packages of intervention to meet the individual needs of children and young people. This is managed by 3 monthly consultations involving CiC Case Management, DELTA staff and the CiC Nurse. This reviews interventions to ensure packages of intervention are in place to assist young people with reducing smoking, substance use and ensuring they are making informed choices. DELTA staff also attend the Drop In at the Cambridge House Young People's Support Centre

Three CiCC members gave their views to health professionals at a Round table event, with the result that the sexual health services being commissioned incorporated their advice on what is important and ensuring access.

CiCC members also felt that staff would benefit from specialist training about working with children and young people on the Autistic Spectrum. This was implemented and included in the training calendar for 2013-14, with online e-learning available to all staff, and 4 modules of Autistic Spectrum and Challenging behaviour training.

***Close the gaps in outcomes between vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people and their peers – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children, young people and families receive the support they need so they are not disadvantaged***

We have reviewed and developed support to families to enable children to live safely within their own family networks. This includes review and development of Child and Family Support Services, a focus on early identification and providing the support the family need at the earliest opportunity. This is embedded with the North Lincolnshire Early Help Safeguarding Strategy. This strategy is built upon the North Lincolnshire's Single Organisational model and is for agencies and their staff, it also provides members of the public and children, young people and their families with an explanation of what they can expect locally as part of an early help offer.

The Children in Care Youth Offending Service Social Worker has an important role in ensuring plans are clearly linked for those young people who offend or are at risk of offending. This has enabled a continued focus on these young people across the services and includes older young people. Effective joint working within professional partnerships - particularly those partners working on YOS cases and contributing to risk management, safeguarding, accommodation services, community and risk management plans and vulnerability management – has helped create a positive culture for children and young people in the care system with partner agencies working effectively together to reduce antisocial behaviour and offending.

Criminal behaviour by children in care has reduced substantially over the last 5 years (from 16.8% in 2006) to 6.5% in 2012/13 – compared to an England average latest figure of 6.9% in 2011/12. This shows that the strategy aimed at reducing offending continues to be successful and services continue to work together to target those children and young people most at risk of offending.

Stability in their education is also a factor in reducing offending behaviour and the attendance at school has also increased year on year with 98% of the overall LAC population achieving 95% attendance (11% of CIC with 100% attendance). To ensure continued high standards in this, a dedicated attendance monitoring officer has been put in place with responsibility to support and monitor attendance.

We have developed with the young people and implemented a programme of life skills training to ensure young people know how to keep safe and look after oneself. This is delivered by the peripatetic workers who support young people and links closely to their Pathway Plan and support plans in place to ensure the young people are accessing work, training or educational opportunities. This has contributed to helping young people make the transition to adulthood with greater confidence and has helped them achieve stable placements and access opportunities and services.

***Celebrating and engaging children and young people – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children and young people are valued as part of the community and their achievements are recognised and celebrated***

In order to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people we are in the process of refreshing our Partnership and Collaboration Strategy.

The voice of children in care is highly valued in ensuring we strive to keep children safe. To ensure that all children are listened to and can express any concerns they may have about

their care or lives in general we have developed a range of consultation and participation processes. Children in care and care leavers have been given the opportunity to shape and contribute to future service delivery and their care plans by participating in a range of activities which included:

- Children in Care Council Meetings (BIZZ, GPK)
- Creative workshops
- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Skills to Foster course
- Individual contribution to their care plans such as exit interviews, advocacy, reviewing process and foster carer reviews
- Creative Conversation
- Corporate parenting events
- Foster carers charter
- Great Debate and takeover week

Our Corporate Parenting Pledge includes a commitment to seek the views of children in care and care leavers, to listen to what they have to say and to act on it. We will continue to involve all children and young people in care and care leavers at;

- an individual (case) level,
- a service level,
- a strategic/partnership level.

Our refreshed Partnership and Collaboration Strategy will achieve the following:

**At an individual/case level:** Each child and young person will be actively encouraged and supported to play a full part in the assessment, planning and review of the support they receive. This will include access to a lead worker and/or advocate with the necessary engagement and communication skills to develop and maintain a trusting relationship. The child/young person will understand their Plan. Their views will be considered as a central aspect in agreeing the outcomes to be achieved and the actions and timescales to make steady progress. Children will be provided with the information that they need at each stage of their 'journey', including information about what to do if they do not feel safe or if they wish to make a complaint. Support Plans will not just focus upon a child's safety and immediate welfare needs but will include actions that promote and support overall wellbeing, including interests, ambitions and aspirations for the future.

**At a service level:** Whereas feedback from children on a case by case basis will have a direct impact upon the support that they receive through their Plan, information at this level will be used to inform practice within the service. Examples include the development of child-friendly 'conference procedures' and child-friendly 'Support Plans'. Success will be measured by the ability of each service to evidence how they have engaged with children and young people and how they have refined service activity to reflect the feedback of service users

**At a strategic/partnership level:** This includes the formal engagement of representative groups of children and young people in various organisational processes. Examples include taking part in recruitment processes for relevant staff posts, membership of key strategic groups, such as the Children in Care Council and broader discussions such as 'creative conversations'.

Success at this level will mean that representative groups of children and young people contribute to the development of policy and procedure, including the identification of strategic priorities and arrangements to meet our obligations as corporate parents.

### **Further strengthening of the Children in Care Council**

The Children in Care Council (CICC) was established in 2007 to enable children and young people in and leaving care to be involved in the development of services, ensuring that their voices are heard and that children and young people have a real say in the issues that affect their lives. The CICC incorporates the BIZZ group – made up primarily of older children in care and care leavers and the GPK - made up primarily of younger children in care. The membership of the CICC is rising, showing that more children and young people want to get involved and they value to two groups. The CICC have now started to work with other Local Authority CICC's to give them support in strengthening their voice within the local authority.

The CiCC has consulted with other children and young people of a number of issues, including:

- How children can best be involved in reviews
- Quality of information given to children when entering care
- The design of documents, procedures and forms to be more child focused
- Missing from care processes and procedures
- Employability
- Rewards and Points scheme for Care Leavers
- Work with health colleagues on the design of health leaflets
- Involvement in national and international consultation
- The design of a new service project for young mothers
- Involvement in the production of the Upd8 newsletter for children in care
- Representing children at local, regional, national and international level

### **Child Friendly Care Plan**

A child friendly care plan was devised by the CICC. This was launched in January 2012 and all children were given one by their next review (subject to their age and understanding). Children have reported that they like and understand their new plan. The plan enables children to have a greater understanding of their care plans, gives them a framework to understand their plan and improves dialogue with their workers as it is meaningful and understandable for the child. Children have said they like the plan and it helps them understand the reasons they are in care and their individual care plan.

### **Adoption and Foster Care Fun Day**

At the Adoption and Foster Care Fun Day, an annual event to celebrate the work of adoptive and foster carers and their families. During the fete, opportunities are taken to gain views from foster children and the foster carers' own children about their experiences of fostering.

### **Foster Carer Charter**

Children in care and care leavers helped to develop a North Lincolnshire Foster Carer Charter through the Children in Care Council. The aim was to gather the children and young people's views of what they want from both their foster carers and North Lincolnshire

Council. The charter was developed on the children and young people's views and launched at the Adoption and Fostering Fun Day.

### **Film and Book Group**

The CICC requested that a film and book group be set up as this was something they were interested in and would like to meet up to discuss more outside the CICC. With the support of the library service, a film and book group was started and meet on a monthly basis. The group discuss a book or film of choice and have access to a large range of resources. The children enjoy attending the group and are happy that it has been set up as a direct response to them identifying it as an interest.

### **Sons and Daughters Group**

This group was established for the sons and daughters of foster carers. The group began in February 2012 inviting foster carers sons and daughters from the age of eight to attend a consultation session, games and lunch. The focus of the meetings is to elicit their views on what support they need, how this can be delivered and offer support to other children in similar circumstances. The group has been highly successful and is currently increasing membership.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

Children and young people have been involved for some time in recruitment and selection of staff and carers who play key roles in planning and achieving permanence for them. Young people are consistently involved in interviews across the service. They are **trained and** supported by staff to devise their own questions and convene their own panels. Young people involved in this process have reported that they feel it will assist their employability prospects, presentation skills and confidence in working with adults.

### **Volunteering**

Young people have been given the opportunity to volunteer at Water's Edge environmental centre and nature reserve. The young people helped with animal management and forestry. The benefits were making a positive contribution to the local community, promoting physical activity and learning from the environment from the manager and rangers.

### **Filming**

The CICC have worked with a local film company to create their own short films. The children and young people are in charge of creating the plot, the filming and the production of the film whilst also doing all the acting. They produced a horror film working with the company which won a national award called the First Light Award, which they went to receive at an awards ceremony in London.

### **National Consultations and Involvement**

A member of the BIZZ group has attended the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum and feeds back to the BIZZ group on what the group is currently doing. The forum has produced a booklet on emergency temporary accommodation, called the 'geta' guide. This has been disseminated in North Lincolnshire. They have also worked on a joint guide with managers about young people who are 21+ to help them understand their rights and what to expect in relation to support. Other activities the national benchmarking forum have completed include a nationwide balloon release during Care Leavers Week and produced a leaflet for 16 year olds on leaving care based on new guidance and regulations. All the

projects by the National Benchmarking forum have benefitted children in care and care leavers in North Lincolnshire.

The Children in Care Council was involved in an event led by Roger Morgan, Children's Rights Director. The children and young people attended the event and were able to give their views on physical restraint, staying out of trouble and running away.

The CICC are involved in the Yorkshire and Humber Regional CICC Meetings. This group looked at what makes a good CICC, how current CICC's operate in each of the represented areas, how things can be improved and the evaluation of a regional meeting. The CICC brought back the findings from the day into their regular meetings to make improvements and acknowledge their successes.

### **Cycle Club**

At the beginning of 2011 a group of young people, staff and carers began meeting up at weekends to cycle. A cycle club was formed, and the members decided to cycle coast to coast to raise money for charity. They built up their fitness and stamina, and completed the challenge. Since then they have continued with the cycling club and have been successful in cycling from Lands' End to John O'Groats. The cycle club has allowed the children and young people to gain confidence, increase fitness and feel like part of a team.

### **Takeover Week and The Great Debate**

Children in care and care leavers have been involved in both takeover week and the great debate. They have taken part in a number of placements working within the council and multi-agency settings gaining valuable experience and having the opportunity to have their say. Great debate also offers children and young people to challenge North Lincolnshire Council officers and decision makers as well as representatives from partner agencies.

### ***One Vision, One Workforce* – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where services are child centred, focused on improving outcomes and are integrated at the front line.**

There is a joint, partnership approach to delivering services to children in care and care leavers. This includes contributions from partners in health, education, schools, the police and other agencies as well as staff from across the council. This approach is supported by sub-groups who feed into the Children in Care Strategy Group and Children in Care Board. These groups are led by partners and include groups focusing on:

- Health – led by the Specialist Nurse for Children in Care
- Education (including NEET) – led by the Virtual Head for Children in care
- Participation and Engagement – led by the Principal Social Worker, Partnership and Development
- Corporate Parenting Champions Group – led by the Principal Social Worker Case Management
- Safeguarding – led by the Service Manager Case Management

Attendance at these groups includes:

- CAMHS,
- Health (including provision and commissioning)
- The Children in Care Designated Doctor
- Social Work Services
- Fostering
- Adoption
- Substance misuse support services

- Information Teams
- Education Psychology
- Colleges
- IAG
- LACES Team
- Fostering
- Education Welfare
- Other Corporate Parenting Partners from across agencies

Partners also contribute to the delivery of services to children in care and care leavers through contributing to and attending the adoption and fostering panels and multi-agency moderating panels.

There is now increased capacity within the children in care health team which has helped continue to improve the timeliness and quality of initial health assessments. The SDQ is an integral part of the Health Assessment and the team also focuses on improving health outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

We have further developed specific children in care related practice forums facilitated by the Principle Social Worker, Safeguarding and Practice. These have been positively received by workers and enable staff working with children in care and care leavers to have the opportunity to reflect and increase their awareness of models of practice, current theories and practice development.

We have in place co-located services between police and Social Work Services to enable joint discussions and decision making with regard to children who demonstrate risky behaviours, this enables joint risk management for children in care and care leavers and prioritisation of support, services and responses.

We have supported our foster carers to undertake mandatory training including safeguarding children, attachment and development, diversity and first aid. All foster carers have a Personal, Professional, and Development Plan which is updated on a yearly basis. Our carers are required to complete their TSD standards within one year or 18 months if they are Butterfly Short Break carers or connected persons carers.

Workforce Development, training and continuous professional development are given a high priority by The Council and its partners. The Workforce Board and Training and Development Group meet on a regular basis to review progress in the implementation of the Children's Training Plan and LSCB Training Plan.

### **Preventative Services**

We have reviewed and reshaped preventative services to build upon our successful family support intervention strategy and ensure wider services prioritise children, young people and families who are more vulnerable and who are at risk of family breakdown. This includes development of Child and Family Support Services, the integration of The Families Initiative within services and a focus on preventative models, early intervention utilising consistent models and approaches to supporting families and providing services.

### **Reshaping of Social Work Services**

In December 2012 Children's Services undertook a review of Social Work Services. This demonstrated an investment in front line Social Work and led to the development of the Pod

structure with a Grade 10 Senior Social Workers managing a group of 6 qualified Social Workers has given the opportunity for the most experienced workers to take a role in mentoring, coaching and joint working cases with less experienced workers.

All frontline Social Workers now have the opportunity to progress to Grade 9, whilst remaining in practice, based on evidence of their competence. This has meant that we have been able to retain a number of competent and experienced Social Workers in frontline child protection and case management work. We have a full team of permanent, qualified Social Workers with a clear support and development framework to ensure good practice is at the fore, there is a learning and developmental culture and children benefit from a well-trained, knowledgeable workforce.

A robust system of case management, auditing, quality assurance, supervision and management oversight is in place within the team to ensure that all cases are subject to regular supervision and management scrutiny and oversight and that Social Workers have a caseload that is well balanced, varied and manageable. This has enabled Social Workers to focus their work upon the most vulnerable children and the most complex and high risk families.

### **Corporate Parenting Training**

We have delivered a Corporate Parenting Training plan that includes Elected Members, Partners and staff to understand and recognise the importance of the Principles and Plan for LAC. All Elected Members are given the opportunity to attend training in Corporate Parenting and safeguarding and during the period, Corporate Parenting training sessions were provided 3 times a year. Information sessions were also held with Elected Members on the Foster Care Charter. Training includes the needs and profile of the children in care population, performance, expectations, the role of Elected Members and how services are provided to children in care and care leavers.

Training on the needs of children in care and care leavers has also been delivered to multi-agency partnership groups

### **Partnership Round Table Events**

In July 2012 North Lincolnshire hosted a multi-agency round table event. This was an opportunity for partner agencies to come together to focus on the publication of the government's adoption action plan and enable sharing of knowledge, examples of good practice and development of ideas across all agencies involved in achieving permanence for children.

The event was chaired by His Honour Judge Dowse and attended by partners from the police, SWS, legal services, the courts, Cafcass and other professionals. An action plan was compiled from the event and informed services and developments in achieving timely permanence as set out within the adoption score card. A further event is taking place in the Autumn 2013 and is set to become an annual event.

North Lincolnshire Council continues to be the lead authority within the Yorkshire and Humber adoption consortium and is the provider authority responsible for managing its business and activities. This continues to be successful in greater collaboration in the recruitment of carers between authorities, improved information sharing and initiatives such as joint training, sharing of good practice across the region and developing new approaches in achieving adoption in a timely manner.

A further event was planned for April 2013 focusing on Children in care and agencies working together to support children. The event is to be aimed at professionals from a number of partner agencies and the Children in Care Council, focusing on how we listen to children and young people, working together to improve outcomes for children and developing services based on their needs. Information and feedback from the event to be utilised to inform the Children in Care Priority Action Plan for 2013/14 and in the development of the updated Children in Care Strategy 2013-2015.

## **Corporate Parenting Activity and Support during 2011 – 2013**

### **Review of our Corporate Parenting pledge**

There is a strong corporate parenting ethos in North Lincolnshire; there is a commitment across the council and its partners to prioritise our work and commitment to children in care. This is supported and financed by the council, there is an ambition to ensure we provide an even better service with service users and family carers being central to this.

The Corporate Parenting Board re-launched their pledge to Children in Care, Care Leavers, Foster Carers and staff in February 2011 and have continued to work to deliver this. The Leader, Cabinet Member for children, Chief Executive, Director of People, partners and colleagues pledged their commitment to children in care and to ensure they experienced improved outcomes.

The following is a highlighted summary of the contribution of Elected Members, Council and Partners to better outcomes for children and young people in our care during 2011-2013.

The pledge was further reviewed in 2013 and the revised pledge launched at an event in April (see Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2013-15)

### **Leisure**

Corporate parents have created many opportunities for children in care to engage in leisure activities. This is in line with the statement in the Corporate Parenting Pledge to “Support you and give you the information you need to lead a healthy lifestyle”

These include:

- Involvement by the sports and leisure service in providing leisure passes at sports centres and swimming pools.
- Professional sport coaching at ‘Sports for all’ session
- Providing free swimming lessons
- Providing netball taster sessions – young people also took part in a Netball competition as a result of this (and some young people now play Netball regularly)
- Cycling proficiency
- Support for young people to take part in cycling events – leading to young people undertaking the coast to coast and end to end cycle rides
- Driving theory lessons for young drivers
- Gardening advice and assistance

### **Visits to Children’s Homes**

Training for Elected Members continued and increased during the period with all members attending training in Corporate Parenting and/or safeguarding children. This included training to undertake corporate parenting visits to our two children’s homes that are in addition to and compliment the regulatory visits undertaken by designated officers. The corporate parenting visits offered the children and young people a chance to talk independently, offering an additional safeguarding check and a check regarding the quality of care.

These visits have been well established for a number of years and provide a real opportunity for young people to talk to elected members and share their views, wishes and concerns.

Children's homes children's meetings are now conducted by an independent chair to ensure that the meetings can be as open and honest as possible.

## **Events**

Corporate parents also support events by children in care and care leavers such as the annual Arts Show and performances, including shows such as the North Linx Factor, Bombay Night Fever, Music 4 U, The Xmas Factor, Easter Idol and the annual fishing match.

## **Employment**

The library service advertised for a number of part time positions working within various libraries across North Lincolnshire. These positions were offered to Care Leavers before the general public, which led to two care leavers successfully taking up a position in the library and gaining valuable experience. These posts have become permanent positions with both care leavers successfully completing their inductions in to North Lincolnshire Council.

Two care leavers have been given apprenticeships within different service areas. One is to be a Ranger working with animals and the other is an Admin apprenticeship working at the Pods Leisure Centre. Whilst gaining valuable experiencing in working within both these settings, they will also be studying for a recognised qualification.

Two Children in Care Advisor positions have also been created within the Safeguarding Practice Development Team in Children's Services; these posts have been filled by Care Leavers. This will give care leavers the opportunity to work in the participation arena for Children's Services whilst studying for an NVQ in Children and Young People's Workforce.

One young person who had a work/training placement as a trainee mechanic for almost two years with Neighbourhood Services has now moved on to an apprentice radiographer.

Leisure services supported a young person in obtaining her lifeguard qualification.

Finance supported a young person in a work placement for over four months and helped her gain confidence and skills in a workplace setting.

As well as work experience and taster days, Corporate Parents from across the authority and its partners have supported children and young people to develop their employability through a variety of means including mentoring and support, mock interviews and selection exercises.

## **Creative Conversations**

Creative conversations have been established between Corporate Parents and the Children in Care Council. These are held on a quarterly basis, are integrated within the Corporate Parenting Group and give the children and young people the opportunity to meet with senior management and members to discuss issues important to them and their care planning resulting in them making a positive contribution to their own lives. The meeting is attended by the Lead Member for Children and Adults and the Director of People's Service as well as representatives from the Children in Care Council. This has aided the development of negotiation skills, confidence in dealing with adults and achieving improved life chances in adulthood for the children and young people involved.

They are attended by officers from across the council and partner agencies with a focus on particular topics. Children and young people use creative means to ask questions and raise issues with senior officers and partner agencies and use child friendly tools such as putting

officers in the 'hot seat' and giving 2 minutes to answer questions. They have also utilised drawing, games and activity based consultation to enable children to raise issues and focus on the subjects they are interested in. Feedback is provided to the meeting on progress and developments. It is also used as an opportunity to share information including the performance of the service, celebrating the achievements of children and young people and events and activities.

The meeting is also followed by activities to ensure they are enjoyable for children. These have included bowling, sessions at the Pods Sports Centre and other games.

Examples of topics discussed and issues addressed include:

- An overview of health services for children in care
- Information on voluntary work
- Information on the role of the young mayor and member of youth parliament
- Education and support for children in care
- Employment, opportunities, aspirations and support
- Leisure opportunities and activities
- The environment and the role of environmental services

Creative Conversations have provided an excellent opportunity for children and young people to raise the issues that are important to them and have contributed to developing and improving services. Examples of actions taken as a result of the meetings include:

- Further development of apprenticeship opportunities for children in care
- Corporate Parenting support to the cycle club and end-to-end cycle ride
- Reading initiatives with the Library Service
- The establishment of posts within the library service for children in care and care leavers
- The launch of the revised Corporate Parenting Pledge
- Opportunities to take up leisure activities such as free swimming lessons, taster sessions and work placement opportunities
- Contribute to the design of services for children (such as consultation by Leisure Services, Education Support Services, the Children in Care Strategy etc)

## **Next Steps**

### **Partnership Priorities for 2013**

Building on this review we have developed further priorities and actions to continue to improve and develop services and ensure that children continue to be at the centre of the services we deliver. The progress on the actions detailed in this review have been reviewed by the Children in Care Strategy Group and presented to the Corporate Parenting Board. The new priorities and actions for 2013-2015 have been developed based on the progress made. These are contained within the Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2013-15.

The key priorities for 2013-2015 following on from this review and the council's aspirations include:

- Ensure all children have provision that enables them to undertake recognised qualifications to the best of their ability. Support young people in care to be in training and/or in employment.
- Continue to build on the range of accommodation and placements to increase choice and further enable children to "stay put".

- Develop the use of the Family Group Meeting Model to enable children to live safely within their families
- Ensure compliance with the revised PLO framework
- Develop an Independent Review Service for CIN
- Work with partners to further develop a robust response to older young people at risk including shared models of intervention and approaches within an agreed framework.
- Developing further schemes for older young people and as alternatives to secure remand placements including:
  - Paid fostering scheme
  - Supported placements for older young people including Supported Lodgings
  - Activity based provision
  - Parent and baby family based provision
- Open the new Children's Campus and ensure it is an integrated part of the landscape of accommodation
- Deliver a Social Enterprise model of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market
- Continue to increase the speed of the adoption recruitment process and the number of available adopters.
- Build on the existing practice and develop a new integrated, consistent model of service user feedback embedded in practice with a management oversight and reporting process (Child and Family Feedback Form and process).
- Recognise the achievements of our children throughout the year by finding opportunities when we can celebrate the educational successes of children in our virtual school.
- Raise the profile of the Corporate Parents Champions Group, developing further action plans with all partners.

These priority actions will be delivered through the partnership groups that sit within the children in care strategic framework and report to the Corporate Parenting Board. The structure and attendance at these groups will be undertaken as part of the development of the 2013-2015 strategy.