

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

CORPORATE PARENTING IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the ongoing support of and provide Cabinet with an update on Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Children Act 2004 makes it clear that the council must take the lead, via its Lead Member for Children's Services and its Director of Children's Services, in bringing together a partnership designed to address the needs of children and young people in care as Corporate Parents.
- 2.2 There is a strong commitment across the Council and our partners to Corporate Parenting with a focus on improving outcomes for the children in our care and care leavers.
- 2.3 The Council and our partners pledge to children in care and care leavers is contained within the North Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Promise and the Local Offer to Care leavers. 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.
- 2.4 The well-established and successful Corporate Parenting Board drives the commitment to Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire. It is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Culture.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is attended by elected members and senior leadership officers from across the council and partners. It is also attended by young people from the Children in Care Council who provide challenge, insight and feedback to the board.
- 3.2 The membership of the board has recently been refreshed and now also includes the Lead Member for Young People and Leisure, Cabinet

Member for Resident Engagement and Governance and the Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Culture.

- 3.3 Good News Stories – how Corporate Parenting makes a difference:
- The prioritisation of Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire is demonstrated by the successes achieved, including:
 - supporting young people to attend a recent open 'Introduction to University' day at Hull University to raise aspirations,
 - support from Corporate Parents to help children to be reunified with and remain successfully with their families,
 - supporting children to take part in regular celebration events,
 - working with groups of children in care and care leavers to raise their self-esteem,
 - promoting the recruitment of foster carers through events and supporting staff as 'Foster Friendly Employers'.
 - Development of enhanced models of practice to help children remain with and return to live with their families. These include:
 - 'You Say Who...' an innovative approach to helping children identify and build relationships with the people who are important to them. Children and young people have been involved in developing the model.
 - The 'Holding On' approach works with parents who have previously had children removed from their care to provide an opportunity to focus on their own needs and learn new ways to adapt to challenges and stresses to be in a better position to provide the kind of family life that they would want to provide for themselves and any future children.
- 3.4 Recent examples of individual successes with the help of Corporate Parents include:
- a young person who is successfully maintaining full-time employment through support with their transport,
 - young people achieving higher grades at school through individual help,
 - supporting children to take part in activities they enjoy such as to perform in dance competitions,
 - helping young people to continue at college,
 - children who are achieving at school including a trophy in PE, pupil of the week and representing the school at an event at Cambridge University.
- 3.4 Outcomes for children in care and care leavers continue to be positive with children in care and care leavers benefitting from increased stability in their care placements, consistent workers and fewer school changes, a higher proportion than the previous year of children in care living with North Lincolnshire Foster carers and the number of care leavers who are in education, employment and training continuing to be above comparators.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report is seeking the continued support of Cabinet as Corporate Parents with the ongoing commitment to the North Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Promise.
- 4.2 The Corporate Parenting Promise has been devised and agreed with children in care and care leavers. All Corporate Parents are asked to commit to the promise and the Corporate Parenting Champions provide update on the progress made within their services and organisations to fulfil the promise.
- 4.2 Commitments and actions to fulfil the promise include children and young people being encouraged to take part in healthy lifestyles through free Leisure Passes, young people prioritised and supported to live successfully in their own accommodation when they are ready to do so and help to progress to and succeed in further and higher education.
- 4.3 The Local Offer to Care Leavers has been in place since 2017. It was agreed with the young people and details the help provided by the council and partners for all care leavers in North Lincolnshire. This includes commitment to support young people in their aspirations, training, employment, accommodation and in developing resilience and integration within the community.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

- 5.1 Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire continues to be resourced through current budgets. The council and partners meet their commitments to act as good Corporate Parents through creative and flexible use of existing resources and going 'over and above' their roles to prioritise children in care and care leavers.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

- 6.1 None in this report

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 7.1 N/A

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 8.1 N/A

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Cabinet recognises the continuing progress and successes of Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire and continue to support and renew their commitment to Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire as detailed in the Corporate Parenting Promise.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –

North Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Promise
North Lincolnshire Local Offer to Care Leavers

THE NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL OFFER TO CARE LEAVERS



JULY 2018



THE NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL OFFER TO CARE LEAVERS

July 2018

1. Introduction

This document tells you about all the help that is available to you as a care leaver. We know that it's a big step to move to living on your own. We want to make sure that you know where and who to go to for advice and help.

Care leavers helped us design this local offer and we will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need. We have written this document with care leavers in North Lincolnshire. If there is anything in the document you are not sure about or need further information about, please ask your worker.

To be able to get the help detailed in this document, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16th birthday) or for 13 weeks after your 16th birthday. If you're not sure whether you have, then ask your social worker or personal adviser.

This document is also available on the North Lincolnshire Council website.

Your social worker or personal advisor will talk with you about the information in this document.

Corporate Parenting Principles

The *Children and Social Work Act 2017* introduced 'corporate parenting principles', which are things that the Council and our partners must do when

helping children in care and care leavers. We have made sure that these are included in our 'Corporate Parenting Promise' to children in care and care leavers. The promise is made with the help of children in care and care leavers who have told us what it is important to include.

For more information on Corporate Parenting and the Promise, please see the North Lincolnshire Council website and talk to your social worker or personal advisor.

The North Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Promise

Corporate Parents for Children in Care and Care Leavers in North Lincolnshire promise to:

- act in the best interests, and promote the health and well-being, of children in care and care leavers;
- encourage children in care and care leavers to express your views, wishes and feelings;
- take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children in care and care leavers;
- help children in care and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children in care and care leavers;
- for children in care and care leavers to be safe, and for stability in your home lives, relationships and education or work;
- prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

To do this we will:

- 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

2. Support that North Lincolnshire Council and our partners provide

Relationships

We believe it is important that young people are helped to maintain relationships with people that they know and trust.

As well as support from your Personal Adviser, additional practical and emotional support might be through:

- Inviting you to attend drop-ins and informal opportunities to meet and talk
- Providing you with a mentor/peer mentor – this may be someone within the council or our partners or another care leaver who can share their experiences
- Help to maintain or regain contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers, care workers, Independent Visitors or social workers.
- Support to re-connect with your family where it is in your best interests.

Participation in Society

We want our care leavers to be active members of society, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. We can help you participate in society in the following ways:

- Providing information on groups and clubs you may wish to join
- Informing you about any awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests
- Encouraging and helping you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in elections
- Offering work experience within the council
- Informing you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in
- Informing and helping with the cost of leisure activities
- Giving you advice and helping you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver.

Accommodation

The council believes that children in care and care leavers should be able to live in their home for as long as they need to and wish.

How we do this:

Age 16 / 17

We believe that, where possible, young people should remain in their care placements until they are at least 18.

The council will ensure that you have a suitable care placement to live in such as with a foster carer or in a children's home.

We will support you to 'stay put' in your home until at least 18. However, if you choose to leave care before this, we will ensure that you have suitable accommodation and support.

Over 18

North Lincolnshire Council will provide advice and support so that you can live in suitable accommodation with the help that you need.

As part of this we contract the PHASE community interest company to provide access to a range of suitable accommodation including:

- Remaining with your foster carers
- Supported Lodgings
- Shared accommodation
- Self-contained accommodation
- Support to access social housing
- Out of term accommodation for care leavers in higher education

Working alongside PHASE we will:

- make sure you have access to the benefits you are entitled to.
- Offer further accommodation opportunities if things go wrong
- The Staying Put/Staying Close offer.
- Provide a Leaving Care Grant that can be used to furnish your first property
- Practical moving in help.
- Provide continuing advice about maintaining a tenancy*, including paying rent, Council Tax and bills regularly.
- Help you look after your home including decorating, minor repairs and cleaning advice

** a tenancy is a contract between you and your landlord that lets you live in a property as long as you pay rent and follow the rules*

Staying Put with your former foster carer

If this is what you and your foster carer(s) want, we will support you to remain with your foster carers under what is called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last until you are age 21

Education, Training and Employment

We provide opportunities to children in care and care leavers to raise and support your aspirations, help develop awareness of opportunities and skills and help you to be work ready.

We provide opportunities and flexible work training, information and experience. This includes regular 'Aspirations Days*' to help you gain knowledge, understand the career opportunities available and how you can be supported to achieve them.

** aspirations days are opportunities to spend time with local employers, training providers and advisors to have a taste of what they do, discuss your training needs, develop your awareness and build confidence in planning for the future and gaining employment. You will be supported to attend by your worker and have the opportunity to talk about anything you wish and any support you need to achieve your aspirations.*

We also work with our partners to offer work place opportunities, including work taster sessions, work experience apprenticeships and job opportunities. These are flexible and tailored to young people's needs and are supported by Corporate Parents from across the Council and partners.

We want to be aspirational for our care leavers and help you to access the education, training and employment you are interested in. To do this:

- We will help you to get careers information and advice – this can be either through your Personal Advisor, the colleges and/or the Education Inclusion Service.
- [Note – the Education Inclusion Service provide support, help and advice to help children and young people to succeed in their education and training and into employment]
- We will help with transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews.

- You will receive additional help if you attend college, including a plan to detail how you are supported to do well in college and individual guidance or help when you need it.
- If you have special educational needs we will make sure that you receive any additional help you require.
- Young people who attend college receive a Further Education bursary.
- We provide help in obtaining equipment, essential clothing, and books to support your education training and employment.
- We encourage and help you choose to go to university e.g. accessing tuition fees and maintenance loans, travel costs at the start and end of term and making sure you have somewhere to live during the holidays – this may be with your foster carer, in your own accommodation or in supported accommodation.
- If you attend university, we will provide a bursary of £2000 which is over and above any other bursary gained.
- As Corporate Parents, the council and our partners provide opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment for care leavers.
- We hold regular events to celebrate the achievements of children in care and care leavers. These are supported by Corporate Parents from all agencies.
- When you achieve educational success we celebrate your achievements - for example take you out for a meal when you finish your A-levels.

Health and Wellbeing

We will support and encourage you to be healthy and provide the help you need to achieve this. This includes:

- Giving you information on keeping yourself healthy
- Providing a health passport as you reach 18 – this is a summary of your health information.
- Help to register at health services when you move home.
- Help you to manage your emotional well-being – this may include CAMH services or supporting you to access services as an adult. CAMHS provide support until you reach 18. This includes offering therapeutic support for anxiety, depression/low mood, obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorders, self-harm/suicidal thoughts and assessment for neurological development disorders including ASD and ADHD. The CAMH service will also oversee the transition to adult mental health services where needed.
- Help you to attend hospital or doctors' appointments.

- Provide help and support if you are a parent – this includes through the PASTURE which is a support service for young parents and includes advice, help and – in some cases – accommodation.
- Free access to the North Lincolnshire leisure centres.

Finances

We provide financial support to help you prepare for living independently and manage your money. To do this we will:

- Make sure that you have the advice you need to learn to manage your money and that this is detailed in your Pathway Plan.
- Help you to open a bank account.
- Help you to gain appropriate identification documents, such as a passport and/or provisional driving licence.
- Help you to get your NI number – this might be writing a letter or helping you complete an application
- Provide additional financial support if you need it in an emergency.

Other Help and Support

- If you have special educational needs there is a 'Local Offer' that describes the help you can expect – we will make sure that this is explained and you are helped to access this support. Further information is available on the Council website.
- We will make sure that young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers have the support they need and this is recorded in their Pathway Plan.
- We will provide a gift at Christmas and at each birthday up to the age of 21.
- We will provide additional support to help you gain additional skills such as obtaining a driving licence this may also be used as an incentive.
- Advocacy support into adulthood
- We will help you to take part in events and activities such as the Awesome Kidz Awardz, art shows and other events
- We will help you to share your views and be involved in improving how we support you – such as being a part of the Children in Care Council and help you to be part of wider contributions to decision making such as the Youth Council, recruitment of staff and carers and commissioning of services.

3. Statutory entitlements – what the law says you must be given.

Advice and Support from a Personal adviser

North Lincolnshire Council provides a personal adviser for care leavers until you are 21. Care leavers also have the right to a personal adviser up to 25 should you wish.

You can ask for support from your Personal Adviser at any time you would like some help up to the age of 25, whether you are in education or training or not.

Your Personal Adviser is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. Personal Advisers should talk to you about what support you need and record this information in your pathway plan.

We will try make sure that, wherever possible, you keep the same Personal Adviser. The amount of support that you receive from your Personal Adviser will depend on what you want and your circumstances and will be recorded in your pathway plan.

We will consider with you what extra support you may need. You might, for example, need extra support because:

- You have special educational needs or a disability
- You are an unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear
- You are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system
- You are a young parent
- You are going through a difficult time in your personal life

Pathway Plan

Personal advisers are responsible for ensuring that a Pathway Plan is created and kept up to date for each care leaver. Your pathway plan is written after consultation with you and important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals, and identifies exactly what support you will receive from us. We will review your pathway plan with you regularly so that it is kept up-to-date and you understand and are happy with its contents.

- We will prepare a Pathway Plan with you that sets out how we will help you to achieve the things you want to.

- We start the Pathway Plan together while you are still in care – around your 16th birthday.
- We then review the Pathway Plan with you at least every six months to make sure that it is up-to-date.
- We will always involve you in preparing and reviewing the Pathway Plan.

Care leavers' rights

- You have a right to be involved in all decisions about when you leave care and your plans for leaving care.
- We will make sure that you can let us know what you think of and how you feel about the services you receive.
- You have a right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care.

Your right to be heard and taken seriously

- You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. You have a right to support from an independent advocate if you want to challenge decisions about the support we give you.
- Independent advocates can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They are separate from Children's Services.
- You have a right to talk to the Children's' Advocate at any time including if you want to challenge decisions about the care and support you are provided by the local authority. You can contact the advocate on 01724 296639. Contact details are also on the North Lincolnshire Council website.

We also provide:

- Assistance with expenses associated with employment, education and training.
- A higher education bursary of £2,000 if you go on to higher education.
- Suitable accommodation during vacations if you are in higher education or in residential further education.
- A set-up grant to help you buy essential things when you move into your own home.

4. Who can help?

Key contacts for Care Leavers:

- Leaving Care Service / Personal Advisers – tel 01724 296500
- Housing Advice Team – tel 01724 296500
- Complaints and Representations – tel 01724 296426
- Local authority leadership including the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member – tel 01724 296296
- Fostering Services Team – 01724 297042
- Education Inclusion Careers and Progression Team – 01724 298554
- North Lincolnshire Careers and Progression team – tel 01724 298554
- PHASE accommodation and support service – tel 01724 298374
- Children's Participation Team (including the Children in Care Council) – tel 01724297240
- Mentoring and advocacy support - Children's Advocate – tel 01724 296639

see also the North Lincolnshire Council website for more details

Other services that provide support for Care Leavers in North Lincolnshire include:

- The children in care Health Team
- CAMHS – 01724 408460 (CIC and CL can self-refer between ages of 13-18. Schools and GPs can also refer.)
- VirginHealth (sexual health advice and support) - Call 0300 330 1122
- DELTA substance use support service – tel 01724 298528
- North Lindsey College - tel 01724 281111 info@northlindsey.ac.uk
- John Leggott College – tel 01724 282998
- Humberside Police, Early Intervention Team (offer help, advice and support) – tel 07464 649292
james.mckellarmain@humberside.pnn.police.uk

Other places you can go to for help or advice include:

- Citizens Advice Bureau – tel 01724 870941
- Humberside Fire and Rescue – tel 01724 295920
- Action Station – tel 01724 296969
- North Lincolnshire Youth Council – tel 01724 298440
young.voice@northlincs.gov.uk
- Care Leavers' Foundation – 01678 540598

- Youth Information and Counselling Unit (YPs aged 13-25) – 01724 281824/297972
- CRUSE Bereavement Care (self-referral) – 01724 281178
- Life Central website and app – www.life-central.org (Emotional wellbeing and health support for children and young people, parents, carers and professionals)
- Talking Shop – 19 Market Hill, Scunthorpe, 01724 867297 (Drop in or call for advice and psychological therapy for young adults aged 18+.
- Options Recovery College – Sandfield House, 297 Ashby High Street, Ashby, 01724 275959, optionsrecoverycollege@rdash.nhs.uk (Free educational courses for young adults 18+ that support people in managing everyday mental health issues including stress, low mood, anxiety, low self-confidence and difficulties with sleep. Prospectus available at www.rdash.nhs.uk/optionsrecoverycollege)

Corporate Parenting Promise to Children in Care and Care Leavers (2018 – 2020)

As Corporate Parents for Children in Care and Care Leavers in North Lincolnshire, we promise to:

- act in the best interests, and promote the health and well-being, of children in care and care leavers;
- encourage children in care and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- take these into account;
- help children in care and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the Council and its relevant partners;
- promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children in care and care leavers;
- for children in care and care leavers to be safe, and stable in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

To do this we will:

- Ask your views, listen to what you say and act on it
- Recognise that everyone is unique and has their own needs
- Support you and give you the information you need to lead a healthy lifestyle
- Help you to feel safe
- Support your relationships with your family, friends and people important to you
- Make sure we help you to be the best you can be
- Have high ambitions for you and help your goals to come true
- Support you to access the education and training you need that helps you develop your skills and achieve your aspirations
- Work with you to support other children and young people who may have had similar experiences
- Have high expectations of you and expect you to act sensibly
- Provide opportunities for training and work experience and help 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 to be involved in the community