

# Corporate Parenting Panel Supplementary Agenda



- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 8)  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 April 2023 as an accurate record.
- 7. National Safeguarding Practice Review Croydon Working Group Update** (Pages 9 - 16)  
The National Safeguarding Practice Review Croydon Working Group Update report is attached.
- 9. Corporate Parenting Strategy Report** (Pages 17 - 30)  
The Corporate Parenting Strategy Report is attached.
- 10. Children in Care & Care Experienced Adults Scorecard** (Pages 31 - 32)  
The Children in Care & Care Experienced Adults Scorecard for May 2023 is attached.

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## Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 26 April 2023 at 5.02 pm in F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Maria Gatland (Chair);  
Councillors Samir Dwesar, Maddie Henson, Tamar Barrett and Helen Redfern

#### **Co-optee Members**

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative)  
Shelley Davies (Director of Education)  
Sarah Bailey (Head of Virtual School & Head of Service for Access to Education)  
LaJay Taylor (E.M.P.I.R.E)

#### **Also**

**Present:** Roisin Madden, Director of Children's Services  
Adam Fearon-Stanley, Service Manager  
Jane Scott, Subject Matter Expert

**Apologies:** Councillor Sue Bennett and Mike Bonello

### PART A

#### **21/23 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 18 January 2023 and Wednesday 15 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **22/23 Disclosures of interest**

There were none.

#### **23/23 Urgent Business (if any)**

There was none.

#### **24/23 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)**

The Service Manager, Adam Fearon-Stanley, updated the Panel in relation to the Quality and Safety Review regarding Children in Care with Disabilities and Complex Needs (item heard in the January Corporate Parenting Panel meeting) that the service had set up a working group to implement improvements. A

report would be provided for the next meeting addressing the gaps identified when the work was previously discussed. Further, the Panel heard that Phase 2 had been published regarding the Doncaster case.

## **25/23 Update from Children in Care Council - E.M.P.I.R.E.**

The EMPIRE representative Layjay Taylor, updated the Panel highlighting that:

- A young person became a champion for the National Care Leavers Forum following a two-day event in Leeds. This young person was supported by staff during the event. The young person had spoken to sixty managers from all local authority across the UK where the young person spoke very well providing her own experience and public speaking. Feedback from the sessions were positive with lots of reflection from the experience.
- There was a session for young people to meet with different employees to have 1-2-1 job interviews at the Edison Hotel, this aimed to give the young people opportunities for careers choices. Others career choices included football industry viewings amongst more.

The Panel welcomed the update and congratulated the young person on their achievement and success in this opportunity and credited their public speaking. The Panel further gave appreciation to the supporting staff who was present throughout.

In response to the question relating to the training young people were given for public speaking, the Panel heard that staff at EMPIRE provide public speaking training support, additional support was provided using clips from YouTube, encouragement and 1-2-1 support was also provided to the young person on the day. Further, at EMPIRE, weekly training sessions which are monthly themed were provided within their sessions.

## **Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 23-25**

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2025 report which outlined key aspects of a proposed Draft three-year Corporate Parenting Strategy 23-25 with a new Draft Terms of Reference.

The Chair of the Panel shared with members that the Department had a recent visit from Mark Riddell from the DFE who was looking into the work done by Childrens Social Care to support our Care Leavers. He had also visited a number of other Councils. He recognised the changes to the Corporate Parenting Panel as positive but we need to do more for our Care Leavers not only in Childrens Social Care a "Whole Council " approach was needed. Following his meeting with a number of our Care Leavers and discussions with senior officers he shared his recommendations. Present at the meeting were

the Executive Mayor, the CEO, the Director of Childrens Social Care and the Lead Member among others.

The Panel received a presentation from the Service Manager, Adam Fearon-Stanley who shared the work the service had engaged in with the young people to contribute to the strategy. Adam highlighted that all children deserved to be cared for, respected, listened to and supported, to feel safe and loved. All children deserved an opportunity and support to grow into happy and successful adults. As corporate parents, it was the responsibility to be a supportive parent in times when birth, adoptive parents or carers were unable to fulfil the role, additionally to be corporate grandparents. This responsibility was for the whole council and partnership approach council staff and elected members and partners.

The Panel further heard that the voice of the children and young people often involved the engagement of activities. The service had established the Sunday Service, which was an opportunity for older members of the Children in Care Council (CICC) to get together. Over the last six months the service recognised how to widen focused participation approach: i.e., focus group for virtual college; permanence group; Corporate Parenting Panel Co-Chair; also work around the mocking-bird model – in supporting fostering and how the service received feedback of their experience. This would include CICC working with different teams. The service was recruiting to expand the team and continue to deliver and provide strength in support and management.

As part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Subject Matter Expert, Jane Scott shared with the Panel the four priority areas as mentioned within the report which were: Housing; Education, Employment & Training; Permanence Stability; Health & Adult Transitions.

The Panel deliberated in detail the four priorities by discussing three main points: (1) were the priorities the right approaches to improving this area; (2) were the priorities the right measures to understand improvement and impact; and (3) what priorities were considered should be focussed in years 1/2/3 of the Strategy.

In summary, the Panel discussed that:

Health and Adult Transitions: showed a positive approach in improvement within this area, though challenged how access would be measured for young people, SEN and other groups. The basic right for a young person that entered care was to include GP registration, dental care, health assessments as the focal point.

Employment, Education and Training: included the mental health and wellbeing of a young person to address the voice of the child as the priority. The inclusion of co-chair, ambassadors, sub-groups and strategy would highlight the voice and concerns raised. The education provision and working side by side with other multi-agency professionals were considered to be the focal point.

Housing: The transformation project highlighted that housing could not develop on the quality and speed of what was required, so the transformation board encompassed young people to apply for affordable housing with a guarantor and support. Support included charity support and affective partnership. The ability for housing to recognise their accountability to support young people leaving care each year was reflected to be the focal point.

Permanence / Stability: The voice of a child and how the service could prove that young people's voices were heard included the clarity in the language used for accessibility for the young people was considered to be the focal point.

The Panel considered the Terms of Reference as set out in the report, which highlighted the purpose, membership and tenure to membership.

The Panel welcomed the Terms of Reference with no changes.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to provide feedback on the Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy Report and Terms of Reference.

## **27/23 Children in Care Performance Scorecard**

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard. The Director of Children Services, Roisin Madden highlighted that:

- CLA15 (up-to-date pathway plans for 16 years and under) – had dropped by 3% from amber to red which was poor. This was due to current staffing issues.
- CL a (up-to-date pathway plans for 18-25 year olds) – showed 84% though sitting in amber, the relationships were improving and they were more young person led which should be the case.

In response to the question from the Panel relating to staffing within the service, the Panel heard that all positions in the service were filled, though there was budget to recruit more staff as required who had the right aptitude and approach with working with young people.

In response to the question from the Panel relating to the issues of pathways plans and the service's solution, the Panel heard that a pathway plan was best developed through a good a relationship between the young people and the professional, a number of meetings were needed and these would be scheduled in advance. The plan writer needed skills for report writing in addition to relationship building, knowledge, skills and good self organisation. As the plan was the voice of the young person it was to be created in real time. Subsequently, robust conversations with professionals leading the pathway plans were being had.

The Panel further heard that the Independent Reviewing Officers had engaged with 16+ managers to change the culture and working relationships in the

meaning and practice of the pathway plans. This helped strengthen the work by using the resolution approach which had been useful.

In response to the question from the Panel relating to how the service was doing better to engage with harder to reach young people, the Panel heard that some young people often go missing or refuse to engage which they had the right to, though this was not the reason the statistics had dropped by 3%. The numbers were based on the volume of completed Pathway Plans.

The Chair requested for the Panel to continue to have an update on Pathway Plans and have a strong narrative in the upcoming Panel meeting.

**28/23      How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?**

The Panel collectively noted that the Corporate Parenting Strategy would have a positive impact in contributing a better service for the children in care and experienced care leavers of Croydon.

The Chair thanked the officers in Children Services and the Panel for their work today and during the municipal year and looked forward to the work planned for the care experienced young people and care leavers.

**29/23      Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Not required.

The meeting ended at 7:36pm

**Signed:**

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**Date:**

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## LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Board</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> June 2023</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>National Safeguarding Practice Review Croydon Working Group update.</b>
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>Róisín Madden, Director Children’s Social Care</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Adam Fearon-Stanley, Children Looked After Quality Assurance Lead</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children &amp; Young People</b>

### 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

#### 1.1

This report provides an update from the working group established in Croydon to implement the recommendations of the National Safeguarding Practice Review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex needs in residential settings.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report [and its appendices], the Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended:

#### 2.1

To note the contents and next steps set out in the report.

### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1

To support the continuance of the working group in the interests of Croydon children.

## 4 REPORT

### **Update re National Safeguarding Review working group 01/06/2023.**

The first working group established in January 2023 has now separated into distinct working groups as each strand requires detailed planning and follow up.

Adam Fearon-Stanley, Children Looked After Quality Assurance Service Manager will continue to report on all 4 strands to Corporate Parenting Panel.

#### **1) Children's Wishes and Feelings:**

Awareness raising about the Independent Visitor Scheme and Advocacy service.  
Recruitment and training of specific Independent Visitors.

**Lead officer:** Children Looked After Quality Assurance Manager

#### **Working group members:**

Independent Visitor Service, Croydon MENCAP, Children with Disabilities Team, Independent Reviewing Officer Service, Barnardo's Advocacy provider, Children's Commissioning.

**Meeting frequency:** Bimonthly

#### **Synopsis of progress maximising Independent Visitors:**

To recruit, train and match independent visitors to the 13 children with disabilities living in residential arrangements by December 2023.

#### **Actions:**

Targeted advertising with tailored advertising for volunteers

Social Workers writing vignettes of the children to be matched with volunteers.

Volunteers to receive Independent Visitor Service training and offer of bespoke training.

#### **Synopsis of progress maximising Advocacy**

Voice based advocacy for all children looked after at residential homes with complex needs is being explored by Children's Commissioning. This is being influenced by significant potential changes in policy and procedure locally and nationally.

- Government's response to Care Review "182. We are working with the sector to implement **an opt-out model of independent advocacy**.... We will develop the policy to ensure that a future advocacy service will empower and listen to children and young people, including children with different communication needs.

- Local consideration in Croydon of joint commissioning an All-Age Advocacy Service between Children and Adult Commissioners to improve quality of service and cost efficiencies.

Next meeting led by the Director of QCPI on 1 June.

## **2) Our use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ):**

To consider alternate approaches to evaluating children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing.

**Lead officers:** Principal Social Worker and Children Looked After Quality Assurance Service Manager

### **Working group members:**

Children with Disabilities Team, Independent Reviewing Officer Service, Barnardo's Advocacy provider, Principal Social Worker and Systemic Practice Service

**Meeting frequency:** Bimonthly

### **Synopsis of progress:**

Approaches are being developed to enhance of the understanding of social workers and colleagues of children's emotional and mental wellbeing which will be piloted and reviewed over 6-month period to December 2023.

For children with different communication skills, we would want to develop participation through the practitioner gathering views of family members, professionals, and observing children at home and in education and short breaks settings.

A core principle being that practitioners come to understand the meanings of behaviour and behaviour as communication. That this enables the recognition of behaviours that are communication which are not known and are new in the life of a child which may indicate the need to review and assess what help and support that child may require.

Access to Monthly systemic consultation to Children with Disabilities Team has begun for 2 children per month, for an hour consultation for each child to include social worker, team manager and Independent Reviewing Officer.

We would anticipate more effective care planning, an improvement in relationships with children, parents and professionals. Dip sample of children who have been discussed in this space will be undertaken in September 2023 to feedback to working group.

This will be strengthened by the pilot of an alternative approach to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

A structured reflective discussion between supervisor and social worker is proposed. This will use a revised pro forma that emphasises interaction and observation of the child in different settings, by the social worker, different professionals and family members to understand a young person's emotional wellbeing.

**Actions:**

CWD Service Managers to identify a small group of social workers to pilot alternate approach. On 5<sup>th</sup> June brief and gather feedback on pro forma and establish additional training needs for social workers in different communication methods.

Training will be delivered in June to July 2023 in parallel with the development of a pro forma for structured reflective discussion which will act as alternate SDQ.

**3) Our oversight of aspects of medical care received by children and young people:**

There will be consideration with the CLA Health Team of how the evaluation of these elements can be incorporated into health assessments, which would support partners to improve recording standards, providing assurance to the child's family and the corporate parent. We will explore via our Commissioning Team and Southwest London Integrated Care Board area community pharmacists how expectations can be set with providers re PRN decisions and the extent to which families & we as the corporate parent are sighted on this.

**Lead officer:** Children Looked After Quality Assurance Manager and Designated Nurse for Children Looked after (Croydon)

**Working Group:**

CLA Health Nurses, Children's Commissioning, IRO Service

**Synopsis of progress:**

All CLA Health Assessments for children in this cohort are now undertaken face to face with CLA Health Nurses visiting children at their homes rather than written based on others reporting. This enables a greater degree of scrutiny over areas of concern identified in audits – storage of medicine, use of PRN and dispensing by pharmacy on site and possible impacts.

These assessments take place annually and hence evaluating impact requires ongoing monitoring both by Designated Nurse in terms of implementation and quality assurance, and the Health Operational Groups oversight in terms of impact on practice and outcomes.

It is proposed that feedback on this small group of children be incorporated as an agenda item for Health Operational Group, which will be discussed further.

**Action:**

In interim a meeting specific to this strand is to be confirmed in June 2023 with the working group members to confirm escalation re dispensing pharmacies, confirm oversight of Health Operational Group by 30 June 2023.

#### **4) Our oversight of aspects of contractual agreements around staffing:**

There is a requirement to strengthen monitoring of this aspect of contractual agreements either through existing contract monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms or as a specific focus. We will explore with our Commissioning team how we currently monitor this aspect of contractual agreements and where this can be strengthened.

**Lead officer:** Children's Commissioner and Head of Commissioning and Procurement.

#### **Working Group:**

Children's Commissioning, CLA Health, Placements, Children with Disabilities, SEND

#### **Synopsis of progress:**

The result of our auditing showed that while our children were safe, there was further scrutiny needed on staffing levels, which though at safe levels were not always at the level we had originally commissioned them. It was proposed to trial a regular, multiagency (Social Care, Health, Education, Commissioning and Placements) contract monitoring meeting.

The aim was to have this meeting onsite so that both staffing and medical records could be scrutinised, as well as robust, in the round challenge on certain aspects of delivery to assure senior members of staff on placements that were all a mixture of dual and tripartite funded.

The initial meetings have developed strategic commissioning conversations, and for resolving some operational issues, they have not become the combination of contract monitoring and Quality Assurance that was initially envisaged. Education have also not been present at discussions so far which needs to be remedied.

This strand of work needs to be considered in the context of **National** Review Recommendations from the Phase 2 Report published in April 2023. It provides a number of recommendations for Local Authorities and national government with regards to changes in practice. Particularly relevant for LA/ICB Commissioners at a placements level were the following:

- *Recommendation 3:* Local authorities and ICBs should be required in statutory guidance developed by the Department for Education and NHS England to jointly commission safe, sufficient and appropriate provision for children with disabilities and complex health needs aligned with local inclusion plans and planning for care through Regional Care Cooperatives

- *Recommendation 4:* The DfE, DHSC and NHS England should co-ordinate a support programme for commissioners in local authorities and ICBs, focusing on improvements in forecasting, procurement and market shaping.
- *Recommendation 8:* Systems for the early identification of safeguarding risks in residential settings should be strengthened through an enhanced role for host local authorities and ICBs in the oversight of residential settings in their area.

**Action:**

In light of the above, it is proposed that rather than seeing the contract monitoring meetings as the way we are managing risk, that we focus on an operational level, with social workers and CLA nurses being empowered to ask appropriate questions about staffing levels and medication. Commissioning and Placements in this model would then be an escalation point, rather than an information gatherer if there were issues found. Issues and concerns would then be dealt with according to the Provider Improvement Process. We would continue a programme of quarterly meetings for providers with significant spend, for strategic conversations. Equivalent approaches used for practice improvement in Kent have been shared which we can consider (an established pro-forma used by social workers on visits)

In interim a meeting specific to this strand is to be confirmed in June 2023 with the working group members identified including new head of specialist services to agree alternate approach by 30 June 2023.

## **7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 7.1** This report supports the council priority of working with partners to enable our children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, to fulfil their potential. We also want to make Croydon safer for young people and keep vulnerable children and young people safe from harm.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1.1** There are no specific financial implications of this report.

### **8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.2.1** There are no specific legal implications of this report.

### **8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

**8.3.1** The work of this group supports addressing equalities challenges for children with disabilities in residential settings.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**9.1** The National Practice Review full document can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-with-disabilities-in-residential-settings>

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## LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Board</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>21.6.23</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>FINAL CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 23-25</b>
<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR- Debbie Jones DIRECTOR-Roisin Madden</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jane Scott, Transformation Lead. Childrens Services.</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>CLLR Maria Gatland</b>

### 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report incorporates feedback from the previous Corporate Parenting Board consultation on the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is requested to agree the Final version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 23-25.

### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To inform the completion of a Final Corporate Parenting Strategy and TOR.

## 4 REPORT

### 4.1

## Croydon Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2025

### Introduction

***‘To be helped to succeed in education, to travel beyond Croydon and see the world, to have experiences with our friends, family and the professionals that work with us. These are important and make us happy’.***

**Feedback from children and young people. January 2023.**

All children deserve to be cared for, respected, listened to and supported. To feel safe and loved. All children deserve opportunity and support to grow into happy and successful adults. Our Children in Care and Care Experienced young people are no different, but without a stable family to support them, and often having experienced trauma, they face more challenges in achieving their aspirations.

As Co-corporate parents, it is our responsibility to be the supportive parent in times when birth, adoptive parents or carers are unable to fulfil this role. For those young people with their own children, we need to become ‘Co-corporate grandparents’.

This responsibility is not just with social workers and professionals who work directly with children and young people but is a ‘Whole Council and Partnership Approach’, council staff, elected Members and partners. We want everyone to read this strategy and ask themselves: **“What can I do in my role to help children and young people in and leaving care?”**

### Our legal duty

Social care, education and health services are committed to supporting children to remain within their families where possible, only using care for the right children, at the right time. When children or young people are unable to live with their parents or guardians, it is the duty of local authorities to care for them with our partners. As established in the Children Act 1989. Corporate parenting principles are set out in the Children & Social Care Act 2017 as below:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Children Act 1989 also places a duty on the council's partners, including Health, Education and Housing services, to provide help, support, and provide services to ensure that the wider Corporate Parenting responsibilities are achieved. The Government's response to the Care Review supports this approach. We need a whole system approach and effective partnerships so that we can succeed in supporting children and young people in care and leaving care, in all aspects of their lives, no matter where they live in Croydon. We must also create supportive links with our partners when our children and young people live in other Local Authorities.

## **Our Pledge**

The Pledge outlined below was created by children looked after and care experienced young people leading up to 2020. This Pledge was not launched due to Covid but forms the basis of more recent consultation and feedback that has been undertaken by the Children in Care Council and Care Experienced young people and other focussed consultation events as highlighted below:

### **Croydon's Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young Person Pledge. 2020**

Our commitments to you as our Looked after Children:

1. Help you with your social life and to keep contact with your family where safe to do so.
2. We will help you to access positive social and educational activities.
3. We will make sure your learning continues into later life by supporting you to consider higher education.
4. We will provide you with a place to live that is safe and happy for you.
5. We will provide you with the right help to meet all your needs and to celebrate who you are.
6. We will support you in moving on from care and prepare you for living independently.
7. We will make sure we know your needs and review our plans to meet them regularly.
8. We will involve you in decisions which affect you and we will take your wishes and feelings taken into account.
9. We will ensure you have a social worker/personal advisor, to support you, and for you to be able to contact them easily.
10. We will support you to return home if it safe and right for you.

11. We will ensure you have access to high quality good education at all stages of your childhood.
12. If you request it, we will help you see the records we hold about you.
13. We will respect you as an individual with your own identity.

## Promise

- I will show that I Hear you by:** -Listening to your views  
-Exploring ways to achieve what you want
- I will show that I See you by:** -Visiting when I say I will  
-Noticing how you are feeling
- I will show that I care about you by:** -Worrying about your safety  
-Remembering important events for you, such as your Birthday

## Our Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities reflect what we know we need to improve on over the next three years to fulfil our role as Corporate Parents, driving a 'Whole Council Approach' with our partners through the oversight of the Corporate Parenting Board. Our care experienced young people will have input as Co-Chair and Ambassadors, to influence and shape the agenda and activity so that we retain a focus on what really matters to them and their future.

Our children and care experienced young people have told us the following more recently which has informed the Strategic Priorities:

- **They want Commitment:**  
For our children looked after and care experienced young people to feel that they are seen that they are heard, and that they are cared for by their corporate parents.
- **They want Togetherness:**  
For relationships between children, and their social workers, Personal Advisors and foster carers, to be respected and nurtured, and for it to be understood that these relationships are as important when a young person turns 18 years old. To recognise the importance of children's family relationships and life stories.

### **Listen to voices of those that work closely with us:**

For the voices of those that work closest with our children and young people to be heard and taken account of, and for all parts of the council to work together to deliver improvements in services to them, especially in respect of housing.

## **Achieving ambitions and aspirations with you.**

We will achieve your ambitions and aspirations with you through:

- Strong leadership, commitment to co-parenting with your family and connected carers, driving improvements through robust performance management and a focus on what works best for you.
- We will monitor and develop our equalities improvements against our Equalities Impact Assessment.
- We will build on our engagement and involvement of children, and care experienced young people, in developing and implementing this strategy.
- We will promote an inclusive and effective partnership working across Croydon Council with support from identified elected members to each priority theme.

### **Key priority Areas**

- **Housing**
- **Education, Employment, Training**
- **Permanence Stability**
- **Health and Adult Transitions**

### **Strategic Priority 1**

#### **Housing**

#### **Vision**

Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to experience a supportive and positive transition into interdependence. This includes good preparation for living independently, choice of area, quality of housing to create a new home. Parents need to have a flexible approach when young people make mistakes and need support and guidance.

#### **Croydon's Challenges**

Croydon is operating within exceptional financial constraints. The Housing provision across the organisation requires reorganisation and a creative approach to develop a range of affordable and quality housing provision to meet the diversity of need within the borough. The offer to care experienced young people to date has not been consistently good and reflected the level of need and responsibility. As a Corporate Parent, promoting a whole council approach to ensuring that care experienced young people have the support and opportunity to live in an area with good quality affordable housing that will promote life chances and increase wellbeing and stability. We also need to acknowledge the needs of those care experienced young people who have lived outside of Croydon Borough and choose to remain in the same area in which they have been cared for. Croydon needs to build relationships and reciprocal arrangements to ensure that these young people have the same opportunities and access to good quality support and housing provision to create a home and stability into early adulthood.

What we will do: -

- We will ensure that the Housing Service and Childrens Social Care will have a joint protocol that develops a consistent approach to care experienced young people's needs and uses a common language that promotes care experienced young people's ability to engage with developing choice, suitable homes, and support.
- We will develop a range of housing options that reflects the diversity of needs and what young people tell us they need to learn, create stable homes and are able to enjoy being a Croydon resident and part of community life.
- We will provide a co-located Housing Officers, Benefits Officers, and Support staff to facilitate good housing, maximising of benefits and support to move home and retain a tenancy.
- We will provide council properties that are furnished with appliances and crucial items. We will work with partners to improve access to good quality and cost-effective home items. Provide pre and ongoing tenancy support to develop tenancy expectations, skills and good neighbour and community awareness.
- We will work with housing associations and charities to expand the development of homes for Care Experienced young people and build greater capacity in partnership working.
- We will promote greater preparation and support to ensure that care experienced young people have the requisite life skills to create a stable home and enjoy community life.

How will we know we have been successful?

- Care Experienced young people will experience a caring and responsive Corporate Parenting approach from the Housing Department and Children's Care when in need of a stable home and support into early adulthood.
- **Measure**-young people will tell us. The outcomes from contact evidence a positive and timely outcome.
- Care Experienced young people have choice and good quality housing provision to meet their needs.
- **Measure**-Data including complaints and Quality Assurance Audits evidence improvements in choice and quality of housing provision. Children's Social Care and Housing agreed joint reporting with tangible evidence points agreed.
- Care Experienced young people have prompt, informative housing advice and support and have access to advice to maximise their benefits claims.
- **Measure**-Data and feedback evidence improvements to young people's access to suitable housing and benefits.
- **Measure**-Care experienced young people will report greater input, focus and support to prepare for leaving care and whilst they adjust to a more independent living arrangement.
- **Measure**-Effective working practice indicators agreed with Housing and Childrens Social Care to monitor joint working practice and impact for young people.

Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Housing Services Personnel
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Children's Social Care Personnel
- Fostering staff, foster carers inhouse and independent Fostering providers.
- Residential providers

- Housing and Children’s social care services commissioners
- Police
- Community Safety Partnership

## **Strategic Priority 2**

### **Education, Training and Employment Opportunities. Actively supporting and encouraging.**

- **Vision**

Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. Croydon is an ambitious London Borough for all its children and young people and, like any good parent, has especially high aspirations for the children in our care and care experienced young people as they move into early adulthood.

Our vision is to ensure that all aspects of learning from early childhood development to preparation for adulthood and independence are a top priority for all those involved in the lives of our children and young people. We want to ensure they can learn and develop, attend, and engage, attain, and achieve at every stage of their learning journey from their earliest years to school, to further and higher education and go on to benefit from excellent opportunities for work experience, training, apprenticeships, employment and further education in a borough with a strong commitment to making a difference.

As leaders responsible for ensuring that the local authority discharges its duty to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children, the Chief Executive of the Council, the Lead Member for Children and Families and the Director of Children's Services will ensure that creating a culture of high educational aspirations for looked-after children and care experienced young people across the council and its partners is given priority.

### **Croydon’s Challenges**

Croydon has achieved a good standard of success for many of our children in care and care experienced young people, but we acknowledge we can and should do more. We need to continue to improve the equality of access and specialist service provision for those children and young people who need additional help. To develop the support to those children and young people who have the potential to gain A-C results in their GCSE’s and to promote opportunities for children where they can achieve success through apprenticeships and alternative learning priorities. Developing a greater range of opportunities through a Corporate Parenting Council wide approach for Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people to achieve and realise their ambitions. As Corporate Co-Grandparents we need to ensure that young parents and their children, our grandchildren, are given every support and opportunity to engage with learning and employment, recognising that this will enhance life chances in a challenging financial environment. We need to recognise and support the needs of those children and young people who are looked after for shorter periods of time and return to their birth families or live with connected carers. As Corporate Parents we understand the needs of our children who have special educational needs. With the engagement of our wider

council and partnership approach we will develop a further range of specific opportunities for children and young people to enable them to realise their potential. We recognise that we can provide more diversity and creativity to the challenge through a 'Whole Council and Partnership' approach.

What we will do: -

- We will ensure that we continue to raise the profile of need and expectation that our children and young people achieve the best outcomes to enable them to realise their ambitions.
- A Corporate Parenting Council Wide approach will promote mental health and wellbeing as a core foundation to support learning. This will include listening and responding to the voices of children and young people in relation to what supports them to succeed and achieve.
- We will support this ambition through a programme of training and awareness raising with Council members, officers, and partners.
- We will continue to drive improving the quality and impact of the Personal Education Plan as part of a Corporate Parenting Wider Council approach as a foundation to support children and care experienced young people to access employment, training, and further education.
- We will create a virtual college that will build upon the work of the virtual school and continue to aspire, track and support care experienced young people to access a range of opportunities.

How will we know we have been successful?

- All children in care continue to have a high-quality personal education plan and pathway plan that sets out how they will be supported to achieve their potential at every age and stage.
- **Measure**-children and young people will tell us what they need. The outcomes detailed will have demonstrable impact upon children and young people's life chances and ambitions.
- More Children looked after and Care Experienced young people will be supported to access and sustain higher education opportunities.
- **Measure**-Data including complaints and Quality Assurance Audits evidence improvements in the number and diversity of Care Experienced young people accessing and sustaining further education.
- Children and Care Experienced young people will have their Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ, mental health and wellbeing assessment) assessed and incorporated into their PEP plans recognising the correlation between wellbeing and educational achievement.
- **Measure**-Data and feedback evidence improvements to young people's access to appropriate emotional and wellbeing support that supports them to enjoy and achieve in education, training, and employment.

Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Virtual School



- Virtual College
- Education Providers
- SEND
- Social work – area teams and children Looked After Services
- Fostering, Kinship and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Services
- Residential Services
- 16+ Service
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service
- Employers
- Colleges
- Employment, Skills & Economic Development • Planning & Sustainable Regeneration

### **Strategic Priority 3**

#### **Permanence, Stability.**

- **Vision**
- Croydon Council and partners will work together to secure children’s futures with their families wherever possible. When they cannot live with their parents, we will secure the best plan to meet their needs in their timescales. Wherever possible children and young people will experience their home and care in the borough of Croydon. When this is not possible it will be important to ensure that every effort is made to maintain and support links with family, significant others, and community. We will create stability, care, and love in the lives of the children and young people we care for. We will listen to children and young people and incorporate their views and wishes into their plans and lived experiences.
- **Croydon’s Challenges**
- Croydon like many Local Authorities, particularly in London, strive to create sufficient homes for children and young people to reflect the diversity of need. We have achieved Permanence for many children and young people but need to become better at recognising when situations become fragile and risk the stability of a consistent home and caring experience for children and young people. We need to build more resilience into assessments and support for children, young people, carers, and partners.
- What we will do:
- Listen to our looked after children and care experienced young people.
- Review our (sufficiency) strategy to ensure that there are a range of homes and locations to meet the diversity of need for our children and young people. We will review the strategy robustly and regularly to ensure that it meets current and projected need.

- Continue to develop and improve our inhouse and partnership arrangements to ensure that permanency and stability is an experience that all children and care experienced young people can achieve. This partnership will include the views and needs of a range of families involved in a child's life.
- To develop training and skill development for social work, aligned professionals, council wide corporate parents and community partners, in assessing and planning where home circumstances and care is fragile. Seeking and proposing positive solutions, incorporating children, young people, family, and carers wishes and feelings into plans and interventions.
- Develop a range of support offers (people, programmes, approach) to deploy to increasing stability where circumstances are fragile. Creating equality of opportunity for all children and young people to experience a stable home and care.

How will we know we have been successful?

- Children and young people will live in stable and well supported homes.
- **Measure**-children and young people will tell us what they need. We will agree with children how they will know we have listened to their needs. The outcomes detailed in care and pathway plans will have demonstrable impact upon children and young people's stability, life chances and ambitions. Matching data and auditing information for longer term care arrangements will be developed and monitored.
- More Children looked after and Care Experienced young people will be supported to live in or close to Croydon.
- **Measure**-Data and Quality Assurance Audits evidence improvements in the range of placement choice, matching decisions, incorporating children and young people's views and wishes, when considering what homes, care and support will realise the best opportunity for a stable and loving home.
- We will ensure that our workforce and partners are equipped to identify and support care arrangements to be robust, stable and caring. We will further develop our practice and resources to create more stability of home and care.
- **Measure**-Data and Quality Assurance Audits evidence improvements to creating stability for children and care experienced young people.

Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Health Services
- Police
- Community Safety Partners.
- Children's Commissioning Service
- Adults and Health Commissioning Service
- Social work teams.
- Placements Team
- Foster Carers and Fostering Service
- Children's Residential Services
- Housing

- Independent Placement Providers
- Independent Reviewing Officers.
- Community partners

## **Strategic Priority 4**

### **Health and Adult Transitions.**

- **Vision**

Our children want us to value them, care for them and promote healthy relationships with their families and significant people in their life. They want us to ensure that their life stories are developed, understood, and promote their identity development which will underpin their mental and emotional wellbeing. Our children will be safeguarded and protected, they will experience improved health and wellbeing and positive transitions into adulthood. They will enjoy and thrive in their communities of choice.

- **Croydon's Challenges**

- Many of our children and young people who are in care or care experienced, have had a difficult start in life. Life expectancy and the likelihood of developing physical and mental health problems are strongly linked to their experiences of neglect, abuse and trauma. Families' experiences of access to services and support impact upon their ability to care for their children which can amplify the risks of health inequalities. Children and young people who are care experienced are more likely to develop problems with their physical and mental health and suffer health inequalities if they have faced one or more of the following, with risk increasing as more than one of the following are experienced: the child, young person needs to be looked after in the care system; they are new to the country and asylum seekers; they have experienced trauma; they are excluded from school; they have special education needs; they live in poverty; or they have experienced the youth justice system.

The effect of poor physical and mental health and health inequalities impacts throughout people's lives. Transitions into adulthood can be impacted upon by these vulnerabilities. It is strongly linked to the ability to achieve and attain within education, and employment and the ability to create and sustain a home and family life.

- What we will do:
- We will listen to our children and act upon their feedback.
- We will use our practice framework, to promote emotional healing and to support our children and young people to be able to cope with the pressure's life brings. We will support children in care and care experienced young people to improve their health and wellbeing and will provide services and a high standard of support to meet their needs including their physical, mental and sexual health. We will create a health pathway for our care experienced young people that reflects what they will need as they transition into adulthood. We will know these areas are being achieved when all our children and young people have access to the health services they need.

- We will create a robust Adult Transitions Pathway that is clear to all and is built upon a proactive partnership between Children and Adult Services. Delivering a smooth transition for those children and young people who need specific support and consideration of their ongoing special needs into adulthood. The planning for this transition will be actively considered in the care plan and pathway plan leading up to and beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to ensure transitional rigour in navigating positive options for a stable home and community life.
- We will continue to monitor outcomes that we know are effective and improve delivery:
  - immunisations status, the percentage of completed strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ's) which are an indicator in measuring mental health and wellbeing. If they are used to inform plans and practice, GP Registrations, timeliness of dental reviews and timeliness and quality of Health assessments.

How will we know we have been successful?

- For children and young people in care to be supported to have improving emotional and mental health and wellbeing. To be assured that the SDQ is informing care, education planning and support for our children and young people as per guidance.
- **Measure**-children and young people's views will be incorporated. To have 100% SDQ completion. We will report on SDQ year on year scores to examine trends and sample a range of children and young people to inform this reporting.
- Initial Health Assessments are continued to be prioritised and evidence of impact upon health planning and impact is available.
- **Measure**-Data and Quality Assurance Audits monitor the timeliness and impact of Initial and subsequent health assessments.
- Care experienced young people have access to responsive and needs led health services which include physical, mental and emotional health, sexual health and peri, postnatal health support.
- **Measure**-Data and Quality Assurance Audits evidence increased access and positive impact of health services for care experienced young people.
- To have clear pathways of support available for looked after young people moving to adult services. Themes include Mental Health, Transitional safeguarding and transitions for those young people who do not have a diagnosis and yet will continue to need support from social care (including addictions)
- **Measure**-Data is developed to monitor current and future needs. Young people aged 14-25 who are leaving care have access to mental health, drug and addiction services when needed. Young people between 14-25 years diagnosed with Autism, ADHD, learning or/and physical disability or specific vulnerabilities are identified and have a clear plan of support that addresses transitional care needs in a timely manner.

Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Designated Doctor
- Designated Nurse
- Children's Commissioning Lead
- Adult Health Commissioning Lead
- Safeguarding Lead
- Community partners

- Police
- Community safety partners

## **Governance Arrangements**

### **Board members supporting Strategic Priority Themes**

Within our Corporate Parenting Strategy, we have set out four priority themes informed by our self and external assessment, children and young people's views and wishes. The Board will arrange four respective subgroups that relate to the priority strategic areas. An elected council member will work closely with an ambassador supported from the participation service and a relevant officer or partner to drive the oversight and challenge to evidence progress and improvement in each area. The lead member will promote the priority within relevant forums, committees, decision making forums and wider council and community events as relevant. The elected member priority lead will receive updates from the operational lead as agreed and prior to reports being presented to the corporate parenting board.

### **Officers**

Officers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that services are developed and delivered to a high standard and that they inform Elected Members of the progress of the plan and any challenges that are being faced. They need to know about the children who are in our care and strive at all times to deliver the highest quality service. They are responsible for advising the Board and ensuring that any agreed actions are implemented as agreed:

- Reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board on performance relating to children in care and care experienced young people. Three highlight reports of overarching progress for children looked after and care experienced young people per year. Subgroup reporting as agreed with the Chair and Co-Chair.
- Ensuring that the Corporate Parenting Board has all relevant information to ensure that they can provide robust monitoring of services provided to children in care and care experienced young people and make decisions based on the most up to date information.

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# Children In Care & Care Experienced Young People - May 2023

	Local	UASC	Male	Female	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-16	17-18
Children In Care <b>530</b>	432	98	318	212	70	64	148	139	109

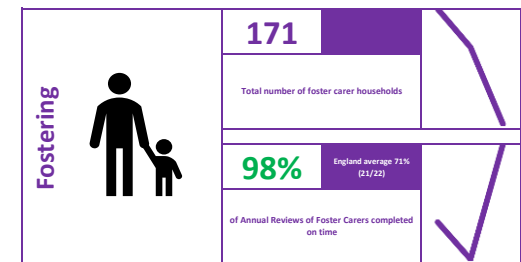
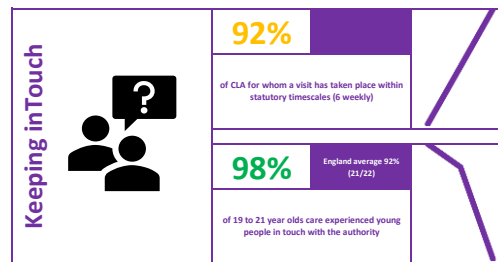
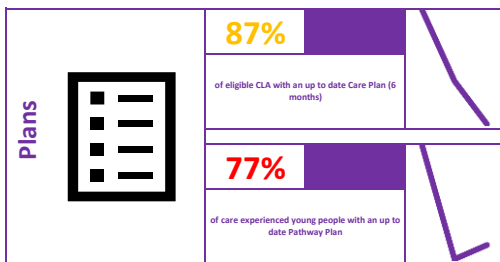
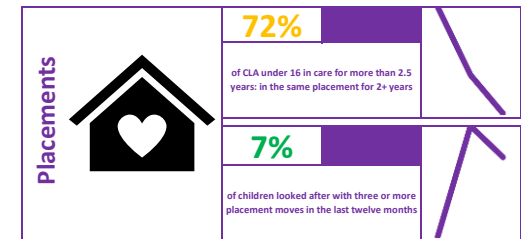
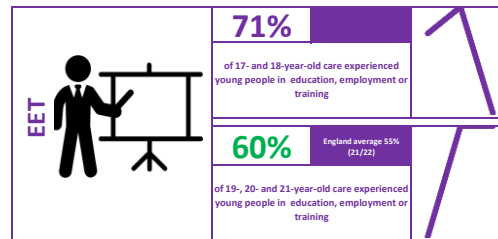
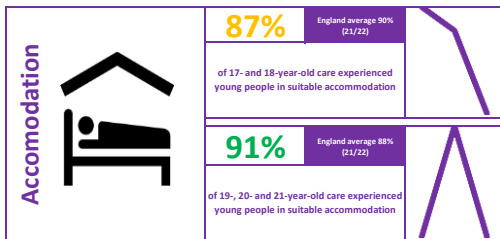


## Health



	Local	UASC	Male	Female	16	17-18	19-21	22-25
Care Experienced (OPEN) <b>768</b>	329	439	548	220	0	99	468	201

Ethnicity Description	A1 - White British	A2 - White Irish	A3 - Any other White background	A5 - Gypsy / Roma	B1 - White and Black Caribbean	B2 - White and Black African	B3 - White and Asian	B4 - Any other mixed background	C1 - Indian	C2 - Pakistani	C4 - Any other Asian background	D1 - Caribbean	D2 - African	D3 - Any other Black background	E1 - Chinese	E2 - Any other ethnic group	E4 - Information not yet obtained
No of CLA	125	3	41	1	41	8	13	35	4	8	61	73	55	31	6	19	6
%	23.6%	0.6%	7.7%	0.2%	7.7%	1.5%	2.5%	6.6%	0.8%	1.5%	11.5%	13.8%	10.4%	5.8%	1.1%	3.6%	1.1%



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