Looked After Children’s Strategy 2014 - 2017

Improving the outcomes for our Looked After Children and Care Leavers

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
Our Pledge to Children in Care and Care leavers

We made 71 promises to our children in care about what we will do as a good Corporate Parent. This strategy sets out how we will keep our promises!
Foreword

We welcome the opportunity to introduce this Strategy setting our ambition to work together in partnership to meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Looked After Children and Care Leavers need all services to work together to meet their needs and this can only be achieved when everyone understands and accepts their responsibilities. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 is intended to promote and deliver better outcomes for every child and young person in care. Relevant legislative requirements inform our work and are the drivers for change.

Our Children and Young People’s Strategic Plan 2013-16 states that we have made real progress in our Corporate Parenting and we have been commended for the strong voice of children in care and the commitment of Members (Ofsted, 2011). Our young people have developed the Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers together with the support of our Participation and Rights team. Elected Members and senior officers meet regularly with the Children in Care Council to ensure that we are delivering against the Pledge. We are proud of our commitment to Looked After Children and Care Leavers. As Corporate Parents, we are committed to ensuring that every Looked After Child has the best possible start in life, is given help to achieve their potential and is equipped with the skills to be responsible and sociable adults and parents. In the East Riding we have embraced the notion of ‘would this be good enough for my child’ and constantly apply this to our approach and attitude to Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers.

This Strategy outlines our responsibilities and the contributions of partner agencies. Its intention is that we set out our vision in real terms and that we can measure success by the outcomes for our children and young people. As Corporate Parents we are really pleased that children and young people have informed this strategy, ensuring that it is developed by those who are the most important to us.

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Introduction

This strategy is a joint statement of intent between East Riding of Yorkshire Council and our partner agencies, to continue to improve the outcomes for our Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers.

We are committed to ensuring every child looked after by us has the best possible start in life, experience safe and positive parenting and is given every opportunity to achieve their potential. However we acknowledge that a Looked After Child or Young Person is more likely to be vulnerable, and is less likely than their peers to achieve positive outcomes.

We and our partners are resolute in creating opportunities for our Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers and it is to this end we have created a shared vision to promote positive outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people.

The priorities in this document are drawn from our previous Looked After Children’s Strategy 2011-2016 and what our children and young people have told us is important to them. Our vision is underpinned by the recently refreshed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers; a promise given by the Council and its partners about the quality and nature of care that any child or young person can expect if they become looked after.

The Pledge was developed in consultation with young people, facilitated by the Participation and Rights Team and the Children in Care Council who have told us how we can improve their experience within the care system. This undertaking has formed the basis of the promises that we will strive to deliver against.

Children only have one childhood, so this strategy commits us to realise our vision to achieve the best possible outcomes for all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers in the East Riding.

Our vision and priorities are shaped by our understanding of local needs and by national priorities. These are set out in the Children and Young People Strategic Plan 2013-16, with our ambition that children and young people have a brighter future. At the heart of the Children’s and Young People’s Strategic Plan lie six core themes, all of which this strategy will support.

◆ Staying safe
◆ Supporting the most vulnerable
◆ Integration – services working together
◆ Early help/prevention
◆ Educational outcomes/maximising potential
◆ Health and wellbeing

Our understanding of local needs and national priorities enables us to identify what our challenges are and will be, as we set out to achieve the best possible outcomes for all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The recruitment of Adoptive Families and the retention of Fostering Families are an example of the challenges we face in our commitment to improving the outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The rural nature of the East Riding of Yorkshire can at times make placement searches challenging in securing
provision, despite ongoing work internally and with external providers, sufficiency of local provision can still be sparse particularly for those children and young people with more complex needs. The availability of local provision is also affected by the number of other local authorities who have looked after children placed in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

“I enjoy getting to know people who make decisions in my life”
Quote from a Looked After Child regarding a Looked After Child Review

Our vision for Looked After Children

Our vision for Looked after Children is simple; we want our children and young people to have everything that good parents want for their children.

We want them to be safe and protected from harm and exploitation; to be happy and healthy, both physically and emotionally whilst they continue their journey into adulthood feeling supported every step of the way.

We want our children and young people to achieve their potential, enabling them to experience learning opportunities that they are offered and to participate in the decisions affecting their lives. We want the very best for each and every young person and will work in partnership to remove barriers to achievement. This includes making decisions in a timely manner and in their best interest. We aim to achieve permanence and stable placements. This includes making a smooth transition to adulthood with continuity of support, access to employment and higher education and training, while continuing to live within a supportive and enabling environment or independently in good housing and experiencing financial security.

We want them to work with us, along with their parents and carers, in shaping how we manage and organise the planning, resources and services that support and care for them. We will harness the talent and enthusiasm of young people to ensure that all our services meet their needs.

“We don’t give up on us at the first hurdle, it may be difficult at first but the differences you can make in our lives is priceless, it will sometimes just take us a little while to realise this”
Quote from a Looked After Young Person (regarding teachers)
National context

At 31st March 2013, there were 68,110 Looked After Children across the country, an increase of 12% from 2009. In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of children taken into care. Nationally, 28,830 children became Looked After during the 2012/13 year, an increase of 1.5% on the previous year.

The national trend has been associated with a number of factors:
• A greater focus on child safety since the death of Peter Connelly (Baby P). This resulted in an increasing number of child protection cases which lead to an increase in court proceedings and Looked After Children.
• Older children coming into care with increasingly complex needs.
• The number of infants surviving at birth, through improved medical interventions, with resultant and significant special needs.
• An increase in numbers of unaccompanied child asylum seekers.
• Changes in guidance and regulations regarding Local Authority responsibilities towards homeless young people aged 16 and 17.
• Emerging legal duty on councils to provide financial support for those who want to stay longer with foster carers.

Local context

At January 31 2013, East Riding of Yorkshire Council was responsible for 322 looked after children. This is a rate of 50 per 10,000 population under 18 years of age. This rate is lower than the rate for the Yorkshire and Humber region (66 per 10,000) and England (60 per 10,000).
Two thirds of Looked After Children are placed in foster care, with another 25% placed either with parents, with family and friends, or awaiting adoption. The remaining children are placed in a variety of residential care settings. The age profile of Looked After Children is mixed. 30% are aged under 5, a further 20% aged between 5 and 10, and another 35% aged between 10 and 15. The remainder are 16 and 17 year olds.

Children are looked after in East Riding for a variety of reasons. 60% of children are looked after under a Care Order, 25% under a voluntary arrangement. Currently, the remainder are looked after under a Placement Order. Occasionally, children become looked after due to an Emergency Protection Order, or because they are in police protection. Children are now staying in the care system for less time. In 2008/09 the average stay in care was 140 weeks, but by 2012/13 this had fallen to 111 weeks.

The East Riding is classed as a net importer of Looked After Children, meaning that there are more children placed in the East Riding by other local authorities than we place ourselves. The majority are from neighbouring local authorities such as Hull, but there are 33 children placed from outside the Yorkshire and Humber boundaries. (February 2014)

“I think it’s like living in a big family, but with different mums and dads everyday"

Young person on what is like living in a children’s home
What difference are we making?

Set out below is a summary of the progress we have made against the priorities set out in the previous Looked after Children’s Strategy 2011-2016:

1. **Ensure that they stay safe in their home and community**
   - Two thirds of Looked After Children are now placed in foster care, with another 25% placed either with parents, with family and friends, or awaiting adoption.
   - The East Riding Safeguarding Children Board Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation subgroups are taking a proactive approach to ensure there are effective systems in place to support Looked After Children.
   - The Participation and Rights Team are providing independent ‘return visits’ (MISPER visits) to young people who have been reported as missing to the police and who are either in the care of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council or who live at home in the East Riding and have an allocated social worker.
   - Children’s Rights Officers are carrying out children’s rights visits for young people placed in secure units who are looked after by the local authority. Feedback has been positive in providing additional support to these young people.
   - Offending rates for Looked After Children are low.
   - Our two children’s homes have been judged by Ofsted as good and outstanding.
   (Autumn 2013)

2. **Ensure that they have stable placements**
   - Placement stability is good and local provision has grown and developed over recent years.
   - We placed a high percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation.
   - A Permanence Panel has been established to ensure the most appropriate form of permanence pathway is provided in a timely manner, which is compliant with legislation, local and national guidance.
   - We have been improving the timeliness of adoption; Ofsted inspected the service in November 2012 commenting that there was “Outstanding levels of support provided to children and their adoptive families.” This means that very few prospective adoptive placements have been disrupted and children continue to live in stable well supported families who are able to meet their needs well.”

3. **Improve their health and wellbeing**
   - The rates of immunisation for Looked After Children are, at 75%, lower in East Riding than in the region (76%), or in England, (83%),
   - Dental checks for Looked After Children are higher at 87%, compared to 72% in the region and 82% in England.
   - The proportion of Looked After Children who have had their annual health assessment is 89%, compared with 88% in the region and 87% in England.
   - A high proportion of Looked After Children in East Riding (87%) have had an emotional health assessment via a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. In the Yorkshire and Humber region the figure is 59%, and 71% for all of England.
• The rate of Looked After Children with normal or borderline emotional health is higher in the East Riding than in both the region and nationally.
• A new service specification for Child Adolescent Mental Health Services was introduced.

4. Improve their education and enjoyment
• The Virtual Head teacher is monitoring progress on Personal Education Plans and champions educational outcomes.
• Our Looked After Children have consistently performed well at Key Stage 2 and longitudinally at Key Stage 4.
• We have no permanent exclusions and have seen a reduction in fixed term exclusions.
• We have 11 care leavers in higher education.
• Every Looked After Child has a Personal Education Plan which is monitored at their review.
• In response to comments from the Children in Care Council a DVD has been developed with young people and filmed/produced by Hull College to raise awareness around issues Looked After Children encounter in education.

5. Improve their positive contribution outcomes
• We have a well established Children in Care Council (CICC), Mini Children in Care Council and Groovy Gang consultation groups for children in care.
• The Altogether Group (TAG) a support group for the children of families who foster has been established.
• The Adoption I.D. group a support/consultation for young people post adoption has been established.
• We hold an annual celebration event to reward all those year 6 students who have completed SATs and the year 11 students who have gained exam results.
• The ‘short break statement’ now includes a ‘young person friendly’ section following consultation with disabled young people.
• A children’s guide booklet was produced in consultation with the CICC on behalf of the fostering team, in order to provide younger people with the information they need at the early stage of coming into care.
• Young people are also now involved in recruitment panels and deliver training to Foster Carers, Councillors and on the councils Childcare Induction Programme.
• The majority of our Looked After Children now complete an electronic questionnaire ‘Viewpoint’ to capture their views prior to reviews.
• 84% of Looked After Children contributed to their reviews and are encouraged and supported to chair their review.
• We have an effective Independent Visitor scheme which young people commend.

6. Support young people to achieve economic wellbeing
• 74% of 19 years olds were in education or training compared to 66% nationally.
• Annually, the Council and partners take part in the Commissioners’ Takeover Day.
• The Council is working with the third sectors partners to offer volunteering opportunities and subsequently educational and employment opportunities.
• The Pathway team holds the national FromCare2Work Quality Mark.
• There are well established series of ‘How to get a job and keep it’ events.

The Independent Review Service underwent an Ofsted thematic inspection in January 2013. Feedback was positive, advising there was good evidence on all cases that young people actively attend their reviews’ and are able to contribute and express their views via a variety of means including drawings, telephone calls, face to face meetings and consultations. Recommendations were appropriate and clear and there was sound evidence these recommendations were tracked and formally reviewed. Where recommendations were not being met, the Independent Reviewing Officers were chasing them appropriately and entering dispute resolution process if required.

You can find out further information in the:

• Looked After Children Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Autumn 2013)
• Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children Statement and Process for Placement Finding (February 2014 Refresh)
• Virtual Headteachers Annual Report 2012/13
• Independent Review Annual Report 2012/13
• East Riding Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2012/13

"You get a lot of support, but sometimes that gets on my nerves"
(Quote from a looked after young person)
What young people told us

Through a range of consultations and engagement opportunities, children and young people have told us that they:

• are concerned about bullying and specifically bullies on the school bus

• wanted to be safe and secure where they live and in the community, and want the right to choose where they live

• want support, education and information relating to smoking, alcohol, drugs and sexual health to enable them to make healthy choices

• want support around meeting emotional and mental health needs

• need access to a computer to support their education

• want their workers and the managers to have high aspirations for them

• want to be able to talk to someone in school when they experience difficulties and pressure

• want to influence decisions made about their lives

• want to have an input to who to invite to their reviews

• want young people to be advocates for them

• want to meet with people in the Council who make decisions affecting their lives

• want opportunities to have a good mentor

• want more work training opportunities and improved access to jobs

• would like training events and one-to-one support with issues such as dealing with stress, interview techniques, time management, self-esteem, self-image/motivation, CV writing, communication skills and constructive criticism.

• found the benefit of focused programmes to help with applying for posts/interview techniques/CV writing has been invaluable.

• found apprenticeships and work opportunities within the Council had been very successful for a number of reasons, for example: the value of being around staff that value them and are familiar with the circumstances of young people in the care system: easy access to support: good mentor opportunities
Developing our priorities

We have considered the wider strategic priorities that inform our plan, consulted with Looked After Children and Young People and listened to what they told us which led to a review of the Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers.

We have also considered what the Looked After Children’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is telling us.

Partnership working between agencies is crucial to establish a multi-agency approach in promoting best outcomes for all our Looked After Children and Young People. We have therefore included partners in developing our priorities. Our priorities, as set out below, identify where we want to be in meeting the needs of our Looked After Children and Young People, the promises we have made through listening to what they have told us and what key actions we are taking to meet their needs.

As a result, our priorities are to:

1. Ensure that they stay safe in their home and community
2. Ensure that they have stable placements
3. Improve their health and wellbeing
4. Improve their education and enjoyment
5. Improve their positive contribution outcomes
6. Support young people to achieve economic wellbeing
Delivering our Priorities

For each of our six priorities, we have agreed a view of where we want to be, which has been developed as a direct result of the promises within the Pledge. Much of the delivery of the Pledge is embedded in the way we work and is set out in operational delivery plans to ensure each promise is kept. However, some promises will require a more strategic and longer term approach, particularly where they are responding to local or national challenges and a changing legislative framework. Where this is the case, they are set out below.

1. Ensure Looked after Children and Care Leavers are safe in their home and in their community.

Where do we want to be?

Children and Young People who are looked after feel secure and experience the feeling of security associated with being with carers that they have confidence in; they feel listened to if they have concerns about safety.

Children feel happy and confident where they live; risk taking behaviour is reduced so that they do not wish to run away into dangerous situations where sexual assault and exploitation are known risk factors.

Children are not at risk of being bullied or discriminated, being looked after particularly is not a cause of them being bullied.

Risks to Looked after Children are minimised at transition times through minimisation of placement moves and young people are safeguarded throughout any move by thorough, considered planning.

Looked after Children and Care Leavers feel safe in their own home (family care, foster care, residential care), and safe in their community, school and during contact with parents.

We respond promptly whenever young people go missing.
Our promises to Looked After Children and Young People. We will:

- Do our best to keep you with your brothers and sisters unless it’s not safe.
- Make sure you can stay in touch and have safe, positive, purposeful planned contact, supervised if appropriate, with your family.
- Give you information about personal safety and boundaries.
- Help you develop an awareness of risk and let you take reasonable risks in a safe and supported environment.
- Get you an independent advocate if you need something stopped, started or changed in your life.
- Offer you an independent visitor so you have someone you know you can rely on and always be able to talk to them.

Key development Areas:

- Refresh the missing from home or care practice guidance. Continue to provide advocacy ‘return visits’ (MISPER visits) through the Children’s Rights Team to Looked After Children who have been reported as missing to the police.
- Ensure all settings are safe and secure for looked after children and young people, through our Statutory Looked After Child Review process and other regulatory processes.
- The Multi Agency Looked After Partnership are monitoring effective collaborative practice to ensure a joined up approach is used to identify risk taking behaviour, which is subsequently responded to immediately and in partnership.

Performance Measures

- Percentage of LAC in foster care, residential or family based placements
- Offending by children looked after continuously for at least 12 months

“I can’t fault them; my foster carers always look out for me and are always there for me”

Quote from a Looked After Child in foster care

“She was the only Mum I had and treated me like her own daughter. She helped me in big ways.”

Quote from a Looked After Child in foster care
2. Ensure Children and Young People are in Stable Placements

Where do we want to be?

All children and young people are safe, stable, and secure and live in caring environments that will have a positive impact on their health and emotional wellbeing and enable them to build positive peer relationships. Decisions over where children and young people live do not cause unnecessary disruption to their education but, rather, enhance opportunities to reach their potential in school.

Our promises to Looked After Children and Young People. We will:

- Allocate you a qualified social worker as soon as you become looked after and make sure you always know how to contact your social worker (or emergency duty team out of hours).

- Make sure you have access to the Children’s Participation and Rights team so you know what your rights are whilst you’re in care and who to contact if you need to know more or want to complain.

- Make sure you can see your social worker at least once a month if you want to, we’ll try not to change your social worker if it’s not necessary (unless you request it) and make sure your social worker speaks to you alone during every visit.

- Take you seriously if you request a change of social worker, and if this is not possible explain why not.

- Make sure you know **WHY** you are in care.

- Make sure you have an up-to-date agreed Care Plan or Pathway Plan, that it is reviewed every six months and that it has involved you, your wishes and your feelings.

- Make sure you have a copy of your Care Plan, make sure it is in language you understand and that you are happy with it.

- Make sure your social worker talks to your parents when making plans for you and ensure a family placement is always the first thought.

- Do our best to offer you information about a choice of placements.

- Do our best to make sure you get enough support if you are returning home to live with your parents.

- Make sure the children’s residential homes are as much as possible like a family home.
Key development areas

- Through delivery of the Early Intervention Strategy and through a focus on achieving permanency and improved timeliness of adoption, reduce the numbers of Looked after Children.

- The Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children Statement and Process for Placement Finding has recently been refreshed, which has identified a number of areas for development. An action plan is in place to address these areas. For example, recent placement finding exercises have indicated that foster care provision locally is becoming increasingly pressurised.

- Plans are in place to ensure that the needs of children and young people with complex disabilities, needing intensive packages of care and support are delivered.

- Care leavers are able to access a full range of suitable accommodation appropriate to their needs.

- Through the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership, continue to monitor collaboration between Social Care and Education Services to ensure educational and placement stability.

Performance Measures

- Young children (0-5 years) becoming looked after speedily move to a permanent home.

- Improve the timeliness of permanency for Looked After Children including adoption and rehabilitation.

- Percentage of LAC with three or more placements

- Percentage of LAC with a permanency plan

- Reduce the number of children who are being looked after on a long term basis with Care Orders, in favour of Special Guardianship arrangements and Residence Orders.

"It never really felt like home. I think this is because of all the stuff on the wall - fire exit signs, notices and things being locked away"

Quote from a Looked After Child on improving the homeliness of care homes

“My social worker was really good as he got things sorted quickly when I first came into care”

Quote for a Looked After Child
3. Improve the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children and Young People

Where do we want to be?

All Looked After Children and Young People are as healthy as other children in East Riding. All Looked After Young People are empowered to make their own well informed healthy choices.

Our promises to Looked After Children and Young People. We will:

- Make sure you have regular health checks, appointments with a registered doctor, dentist and designated children in care nurse.
- Make sure we have good systems in place to share health information so you don’t miss out on appointments when you move placements.
- Give you the opportunities to develop your personal and social skills so you can look after your personal hygiene in the future.
- Do our best to make sure you always have an adult you can talk to focus on and meet your emotional mental health needs.
- Offer you support and services on sexual health and support you to make positive choices.
- Offer you support education and information relating to smoking, alcohol and drugs, to enable you to make healthy choices.
- Offer you support information and services if you become a parent.
- Give you help with access to leisure activities that promote and encourage a healthy lifestyle with healthy eating and exercise.
- Meet your religious and cultural needs and make sure you get the opportunity to meet other young people who share your lifestyle.
- Make sure you have life work books to record your memories of your time in care.

Key Development areas

- Improve the timeliness and quality of initial health assessments.
- Increase the take up of immunisation’s for Looked After Children which are lower in East Riding (75%) than in the region (76%), or in England, (83%).
• Improve the emotional health and wellbeing of Looked After Children by working with Clinical Commissioning Groups to improve the quality of and access to mental health support services, for those who need it.

• Make the most of the opportunities presented by the transfer of the Public Health function to the Council. Ensure that, as a vulnerable group, the needs of Looked After children are taken into consideration within service commissioning and Public Health campaigns.

**Key Performance Measures**

• Percentage of Looked After Children with up to date dental and health assessments.

• Numbers of Looked After Children supported to improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing by accessing CAMHS (Improvement in MHEWB score after intervention compared to start of intervention).

Looked after children told us ways of being better informed about their health:

“Having a copy of my health plan”

“More information from social workers”

“Being kept informed about health appointments”
4. Improve Education and Enjoyment Outcomes for Looked After Children

Where do we want to be?

Looked After Children and Young People are not disadvantaged in comparison with their peers.

Every child who becomes looked after can achieve their full potential.

That Looked After Children and Young People are equally able to access and enjoy a variety of leisure activities.

That Looked After Children and Young People have levels of attainment and progress that match their peers, subject to ability and any special needs.

All Looked After Children and Young People are in a stable and good school setting, and truanting, exclusion and other absences are avoided.

Our promises to Looked After Children and Young People. We will:

- Make consent forms as simple as possible so you don’t miss out.
- Encourage you to access good quality, affordable social and cultural leisure activities.
- Support you to participate in positive activities that help you increase your confidence and to feel well.
- Help you meet other young people who are looked-after so you have friends who understand what you’re going through.
- Believe in you and what you can achieve and have high aspirations for you.
- Make sure you have positive role models in your life to look up to.
- Make sure you have the best possible start to life through good quality early years provision.
- Make sure you don’t have to move placements at important times unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- Make sure you have the support of a designated teacher who understands your circumstances.
- Try to keep you at the same school if this is possible even if you have to move placements.
Wherever you go to school, your Head teacher and Designated Teacher will make sure that you receive a good standard of education.

This means you will be well taught and given the help and support you need to keep on top of your work and make really good progress.

Make sure you have a high quality, clear, understandable, up-to-date Personal Education Plan.

Make sure you have access to a computer to support your education, help you to learn English if it is not your first language.

Not take you out of school for term time holidays so that we don’t interrupt your education.

Key development areas

Deliver the actions set out in the 2013/14 development plan of the Virtual Headteacher/school, which includes undertaking lessons learnt reflection on Key Stage performance.

In addition, through high quality personal education plans, continue to improve educational outcomes for Looked After Children, particularly at Key Stage 4.

Implement SEND reforms relating to the Children’s and Families Bill, scheduled for implementation September 2014.

Performance Measures

Absence from school of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months

Percentage of Looked After Children achieving level 4 at Key Stage 2 in Reading, Writing and Maths

Percentage of Looked After Children at Key Stage 4 achieving 5+ A*-C (or equivalent) including English and Maths GCSE

Numbers of care leavers accessing higher education

“I don't like being called a looked after child at school"

Quote from a Looked After Young Person
5. Improve Positive Contribution Outcomes For Looked after Children

Where we want to be?

All Looked After Children and Young People are able to take control of their lives, able to make a positive contribution to their day to day living and make their own informed choices about what they do.

All Looked After Children and Young People can build their self-esteem and resilience.

All Looked After Children and Young People are able to make a positive contribution within their different communities, where they live, where they go to school, both currently and in the future.

All Looked After Children and Young People are able to contribute and have a say in the future direction of service provision.

Our promises to Looked After Children and Young People. We will:

- Help you to continue hobbies and friendships from before you came into care, if it is safe to do so.

- Make sure you have access to the Children’s Participation and Rights team so you understand what your rights are and how you are able to contribute your views to your care planning and services and make a real change for yourself and other Looked After Children and Young People.

- Work together with the Children in Care Council CiCC because they will represent your views.

- Make sure you are given the opportunity to be fully involved in your care plan.

- Make sure all Looked After Children and Young People are given a choice of different ways to participate or the choice not to.

- Make sure there are regular meetings between senior managers and people who make decisions and the CiCC.

- Make sure Looked After Children and Young People living in residential homes are able to participate in residents meetings and influence change.

- Make sure we ask you once a year if you think the council is sticking to the pledge and the promises we have made.

- Listen to your views on the recruitment and training of staff and volunteers who will be working with children and young people in care or responsible for making decisions about you.
• Reward your efforts and provide you with an accreditation to mark your participation.

• Support your development as an individual by helping you with your passport, bank account, national insurance number, and birth certificate, as quickly as possible.

• If you are an asylum seeker, we will help you with your immigration status and becoming a citizen, as quickly as possible.

• Value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations.

• Take time to listen to you, respect, and strive to understand your point of view.

**Key development areas**

• Improving financial capability: Working with older care leavers, explore what information and advice would be useful to improve financial capability.

**Performance Measures**

• Percentage of LAC who contribute to their reviews

• Percentage of LAC who believe the Council is sticking to The Pledge

“I really appreciate the support of the Participation and Rights Team“
Quote from a Looked After Child

“My reviews help me to solve any problems or issues”
Quote from a Looked After Child

“Sometimes you get support when not needed”
Quote from a Looked After Child
6. Achieve Economic Well-Being

Where do we want to be?

All Looked After Children and Young People are supported to aspire to:

- engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school;
- be equipped for employment;
- live in decent homes and sustainable communities;
- be able to access transport and material goods, and
- live in households free from poverty.
- leave care with ambition and are able to become successful adults, fulfilling their potential
- access all opportunities open to others and become active members of their communities as they leave care.

In addition:

The corporate parenting responsibility is shared and delivered across all parts of the local authority to help Looked After Young People to make a successful transition to independence.

Young People have an affordable, safe and secure place to live.

Young People have every opportunity to develop their skills, engage in education, training and employment opportunities and are ready for the world of work.

Young People are financially better off in employment, education and training and do not fall into the poverty trap.

Young People receive the right support, at the right time, including when they may be most vulnerable during times of transition. The transition to adulthood can include more than one change of direction - Young People have support and encouragement to learn and start anew if this happens.

Young People make smooth transitions by promoting positive planning rather than reactive planning so that when they move on from the service, young people feel secure and confident in managing their independence.

Our promise to Looked After Young People. We will:

• Let you have a say in how your money is managed and teach you about managing money.

• Make sure you get some pocket money and choice about what to do with this.

• Try to help you develop your confidence, motivation and self-reliance.

• Make sure you are able to see a careers advisor.
• Provide you with work experience opportunities or training/apprenticeship to develop your CV.

• Provide some work experience placements and apprenticeships within East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

• Make sure when you leave school you have an offer of further education, training or employment.

• Provide access to information relating to benefits, budgeting and saving, including a bank account.

• Listen to you and offer you services to support your independence when you’re leaving care and make sure you succeed!

• Help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can.

• Work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready.

• Do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move into independent living and make sure you succeed.

Key Development Areas

• Work with the East Riding Citizens Advice Bureau to develop a training package for our mentors to support young people and care leavers to achieve financial capability.

Performance measures

• Percentage of care leavers who are NEET

• Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation

“If you have the right pathway worker, it is like the light at the end of the tunnel.” (survey of care leavers 2013)

“There needs to be more information and advice about living independently” (feedback given in an exercise with young people on how we meet the promises)
The Role of the Multi-agency Looked after Partnership.

The responsibility for implementation of this strategy, and its ambition to improve outcomes rests with the Multi-agency Partnership for Looked after Children.

This Multi-agency Looked After Children’s Partnership was established to ensure the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers were prioritised within all partner agencies and a joined up partnership approach was adopted in identifying and providing services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

The Multi-agency Partnership reports regularly to the Corporate Parenting Group which also includes representatives from the Children in Care Council. The Multi-agency Partnership will also report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to demonstrate how satisfactory progress is being made across each of the outcome areas strengthening the governance of the Multi-agency Partnership.

Managers from all agencies working with Looked After Children and Young People attend the multi-agency Vulnerable Children and Young People’s group (which reports to the Children’s Trust Board), to discuss and reflect on what has been achieved, how has this been demonstrated and how have the achievements contributed to meeting needs.

Membership includes representatives from the Participation and Rights Team, Health, Education, Children’s safeguarding services, Children Independent Safeguarding and Review Officers (CISRO’s), Child Care resources, Early Years and Family Support and other services and organisations that have an active role in providing services to Looked After Children.

Monitoring Progress and Performance

Members of the Multi-agency Partnership for Looked after Children are signed up to the pledge and to the commitments given in this strategy.

A current action plan is being reviewed to support delivery of the priorities set out in this strategy with clear accountabilities’ for each aspect of the strategy including timescales and milestones. The action plan will address the promises identified in the updated Pledge, identifying a key lead and time frame for completion of each action. The targets within the new action plan will highlight any areas which are not being met to enable action to be taken. The annual review will consider the achievements of the Multi Agency Looked after Children’s Partnership and Vulnerable Children and Young Peoples groups in relation to progressing actions. The annual review also monitors the impact on outcomes in relation to our pursuit of the Care Matters Agenda, thus, ensuring that the strategy continues to reflect a dynamic approach to meeting the ever changing needs of Looked After Children and Young People.
The Multi Agency Looked After Children’s Partnership is also committed to periodically refreshing the strategy to reflect changes in children and young people’s needs. Arrangements are in place with the Children in Care Council so that they have a voice in developments and help monitor progress and consultation takes place regularly with children and young people, providing opportunity to also review the Council’s Pledge. There is a wealth of performance information measured and monitored in respect of Looked After Children. The key measures linked to the delivery of this strategy are shown in the table below. These measures will be agreed with professionals and the CICC to ensure they reflect the issues of most importance to the successful delivery of this strategy.

**Performance and outcome measure framework**

At an operational level, the Looked After Children Analysis Group, comprising of a range of children’s services’ managers and other key Council staff meets monthly. This group is practice and strategy based, and is provided with detailed and accurate timely data, to inform service discussion and to determine key issues. And will be responsible for monitoring the measures set out in the delivering our priorities sections of this strategy.
Resources

The resources needed to meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers will be drawn from existing resources within the Multi-agency Looked After Partnership.

The Strategic Partnership for Looked After Children

Who are we?

Parents, Relatives, friends and Foster Carers of Looked After Children and Young People

Participation and Rights Team

Children’s Homes Adoption Services Fostering Services Family Contact Service.

East Riding Safeguarding Children Board, Humberside Police and CAFCASS

East Riding Schools other education services and leisure services

Supported Lodgings providers, Housing and other providers of services to children in the voluntary and not for profit sector, Private and Independent Sector

Commissioners and providers of health services including mental health services

Social Workers, Family Support Practitioners CISRO’s, Managers Social Care Workers

Youth and Family Support and Universal Children’s Services

Children in Care Council, Corporate Parenting, Elected members and Director of Children, Families and Schools

East Riding Schools other education services and leisure services

Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Links to Key Documents

This strategy should be read in conjunction with East Riding of Yorkshire Council’s:

- **Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers**
- **Children and Young People’s Strategic Plan 2014-17**
- **Looked after Children Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**
- **Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children Statement and Process for Placement Funding**
- **East Riding Safeguarding Children’s Board Business Plan 2011-16 Update 2013**

Additional Information:


IRO handbook: Statutory guidance for independent reviewing officers (IROs) [https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/Lookedafterchildren/Page1/DCSF-00184-2010](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/Lookedafterchildren/Page1/DCSF-00184-2010)


Fostering services: national minimum standards (2011)

Working together to safeguard children (2013)
https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00030-2013