

**Surrey County Council**  
**Corporate Parenting Strategy**

**Contents:**

**Introduction**

**Looked after Children and Care Leavers**

**Corporate Parenting – Legislation and Guidance**

**Levels of Corporate Parenting Responsibility**

**Corporate Parenting Principles**

**Our Vision and Values**

**Our Promise to Looked after Children and Care Leavers**

**Our Corporate Parenting Priorities and Actions**

- **Safeguarding**
- **Engaging with Young People/User Voice**
- **Assessment and Planning**
- **Placements**
- **Education, Training and Employment**
- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Leisure, Culture and Life Skills**
- **Leaving Care**

**Success Measures**

**Governance**

**Appendix One – Key legal responsibilities towards Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

**Appendix Two – List of ‘must dos’ in respect of our actions and behaviours**

## **Introduction**

In the community vision for Surrey, there is a clear commitment to promoting the wellbeing of children and to ensuring that 'no child is left behind'. This aim applies to all children and young people in the county but we must have a particular commitment to those children and young people who are 'looked after' by Surrey County Council.

The council's relationship with looked after children, and with those leaving the council's care, is unlike any other we have with Surrey's residents. We are 'Corporate Parents' to these young people and, as such, we have legal and moral responsibilities towards them like to those we have towards our own children. In simple terms we need to be good parents who aim to be the best possible parents we can be.

Looked after children need and deserve good parents. We must help many recover from and overcome damage and disadvantage they have experienced before coming into the council's care. We must help all thrive and flourish; reach and exceed their potential and expand their life chances. We must help our care leavers become resilient and independent adults.

For the council to be a good corporate parent, or better, we need to have the highest ambitions for children and young people looked after and have a 'whole council' approach to their care and upbringing, involving staff, carers and Elected Members alike. We need to engage the hearts and minds of all and the resources and capacity of many in helping to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.

We are passionate about doing the best for our looked after children and young people and we want everyone connected to the council and our partners to share this passion. This document describes our vision for children and young people looked after by the council and the values which inform the way we will meet our corporate parenting responsibilities. It goes on to outline our priorities and the actions we will take to ensure that no child looked after by the council is 'left behind'.

Mary Lewis, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families

Dave Hill, Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture

## Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally 'looked after' if, under the age of 18yrs, s/he is provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours; or is subject to a Care Order or Placement Order. In certain circumstances this includes disabled children in receipt of a series of 'respite care' placements.

The council's key duty towards looked after children is to 'safeguard and promote' their welfare and to 'make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the Authority reasonable'.

Children cease being looked after when they return home; are adopted or made subject to Special Guardianship. Other young people cease being looked after on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when, in line with the Care Leavers Regulations 2010, they become young adults many of whom are eligible for support and assistance as care leavers until aged 21yrs or, if pursuing education or training, aged 25yrs.

Further detail of the legal responsibilities towards children looked after and care leavers is found in **Appendix One**.

### Corporate Parenting – Legislation and Guidance

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 states that a Local Authority is the corporate parent of children looked after and care leavers. It should act in the best interests of these children and young people; keeping them safe; promoting their physical and mental wellbeing, encouraging them to express their views, wishes and feelings; taking account of these views. It should make sure that they live in stable homes, have consistent education or training, and healthy relationships. It should have high aspirations for these children and help them prepare for adulthood and independent living.

Statutory Guidance to the Act (2018) states that the role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. It describes the 'unique responsibility' councils have towards these children and defines a simple and critical question for corporate parents to ask when considering matters affecting looked after children and care leavers – 'would this be good enough for my child?'

The Guidance goes on to stress that all elected members and officers of a council should share corporate parenting responsibilities towards children looked after and care leavers. A test of the strength of a corporate parenting approach is that these responsibilities are a priority for everyone, both elected members and officers, and all are concerned about looked after children and care leavers – 'as if they were their own'. Good corporate parents will recognise all looked after children and care leavers as individuals who need, like all children, 'stability...and to be loved, cared for and feel safe,' but will also recognise that good corporate parenting must at the same time promote and enable recovery, resilience and wellbeing. This means that regard, capacity and resources from all council departments and elected members need to be harnessed to promote the best outcomes possible for children looked after and care leavers.

While specific corporate parenting responsibilities do not apply to partner agencies, the Guidance notes that councils with the highest ambitions for looked after children and care leavers will seek to engage other agencies in meeting the needs of their young people. Some, but not all, of these agencies will have general duties to co-operate with the council in fulfilling its corporate parenting responsibilities. This means that councils will need to be the strongest advocates for their looked after children and care leavers to secure services from other agencies to meet the needs of individual children and the looked after population as a whole.

### **Levels of Corporate Parenting Responsibility**

Research on putting corporate parenting into practice (NCB 2008), identified different levels of understanding and responsibilities for council officers and elected members in respect of their corporate parenting duties. For Surrey County Council these differentiated roles can be illustrated as follows (diagram to follow):

- The Chief Executive; Leader of the Council; Executive Director of CFLLC; and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families together share overall responsibility for ensuring the council is a good corporate parent. The Cabinet Member chairs the Corporate Parenting Board which drives and monitors the council's corporate parenting strategy.
- The Director of Corporate Parenting; operational LAC service managers and staff and carers working directly with looked after children and care leavers; Elected Members sitting on the Corporate Parenting Board or relevant select committees together have specialist and specific corporate parenting responsibilities.
- All other council officers and Elected Members together have general responsibilities to have regard for looked after children and care leavers, to understand the needs of these children and young people and to contribute where possible to Surrey's overall corporate parenting priorities.
- The Corporate Parenting Board will promote awareness of corporate parenting principles among all elected councillors in Surrey at County, district, borough, Town and Parish levels'.

### **Corporate Parenting Principles**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 set out seven corporate parenting principles to which councils should have regard in exercising their responsibilities to looked after children and care leavers:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.

5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

These principles are not new requirements, but rather describe a way of embedding a positive culture in local authorities towards looked after children and care leavers and provide a framework which helps local authorities understand and comply with their duties to these young people. The council welcomes and supports these principles and their aims and is determined that officers, carers and elected members act according to the principles in their corporate parenting roles.

### **Our Vision and Values**

Our corporate parenting vision is:

*To be the best corporate parents we can be, working together to provide children and young people in our care with happy and healthy childhoods, helping them reach and exceed their potential and aspirations, and supporting them into successful adulthood.*

The values we bring to help us realise our vision are:

- We must be the strongest champions of and advocates for all our looked after children and care leavers.
- We should have positive regard for all looked after children and care leavers and make sure that all are nurtured, feel loved and supported.
- Looked after children and care leavers are 'our' children and young people and we must have strong ambitions and aim high for all.
- All our young people are individuals and unique and we must parent each child as such.
- We must build trusting relationships with our children and young people so they feel able to give us their views and can talk to us about their wishes and feelings, their anxieties and hopes.
- We must listen to our children and young people and take account of their views on all matters which affect them.
- We must be resilient and persistent parents with an uncompromising approach to doing the best for our children and young people and a willingness to 'go the extra mile'.
- We want to continuously improve as corporate parents and continuously improve outcomes for our young people.

### **Our Promise to Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

During 2018 we talked to looked after children and care leavers about their expectations of us as corporate parents. Through these conversations we developed a promise to our young people. In implementing our corporate parenting strategy we need to be mindful of this promise and do our utmost to act by it:

*We will do the best we can to make sure where you live is right for you.*

*We will help you keep in touch safely with the important people in your life.*

*We will tell you about options and involve you fully in making plans about your life.*

*We will support you with your education and help you grow up with good skills for life.*

*To keep you safe and ensure that you feel safe.*

Developing the promise with young people also led to the creation of a list of 'must dos' in respect of our actions and behaviours. These are detailed in **Appendix Two**.

### **Our Corporate Parenting Priorities and Actions**

Taking account of the seven corporate parenting principles and the promise we have made to young people, we have identified a number of priorities for our corporate parenting strategy. These priorities are set out below with the actions we will take to address them.

#### **Safeguarding**

Helping children and young people be safe, feel safe and have stability in their lives is an essential role for all parents. This is particularly important for us as corporate parents of looked after children and young people, many of whom will have entered our care because of neglect and abuse and some of whom will remain vulnerable, for example to exploitation, while in our care. We need to do everything we can to keep children safe, help them recover from trauma they may have experienced and protect them from further harm. We will:

- Ensure that the safeguarding of looked after children and young people is prominent in the work of Surrey's Safeguarding Children Partnership. This will be driven by the Executive group and monitored by the independent scrutineer
- Provide high quality safeguarding training to all staff and carers working with children and young people looked after.
- Ensure that safeguarding is a central consideration in all care plans, placement plans and pathway plans.
- Do all we can to provide children and young people with safe placements in safe environments.
- Work persistently to reduce the extent of children and young people going missing from their placements and to reduce the risks faced by young people who go missing.
- Ensure that all looked after children and young people who go missing have 'return home' interviews on their return.
- Work closely with other agencies including the Police and District and Borough councils to minimise risks for our looked after children and young

people associated with going missing or living in local environments which pose particular risks.

- Help children and young people looked after access and benefit from high quality therapeutic help.

### **Engaging with Young People – The User Voice**

The young person's voice must be at the centre of our approach to corporate parenting. We want mutually respectful and collaborative relationships with our children and young people. This means embedding a culture of fully involving young people in all matters affecting them, welcoming and encouraging their participation, actively listening to and genuinely taking account of their views. We will:

- Involve all children and young people looked after and care leavers, subject to their age and understanding, in any assessment, plan or review in respect of their own lives and upbringing.
- Support young people to express their views in meetings such as child protection conferences, looked after children statutory reviews, pathway planning meetings and in their care placements.
- Provide advocates and supporters to help young people's views to be heard in these settings.
- Evaluate the extent and quality of young people's participation in all casework auditing undertaken for quality assurance purposes.
- Canvas and survey the views of children and young people on their experience of our care on a regular basis.
- Support the operation, further development and 'reach' of Surrey's Children in Care Council to enable a wider spectrum of young people to express views and challenge about their experiences in the council's care.
- Ensure that messages from the CICC are widely disseminated to officers and elected members and that responses are provided consistently.
- Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and senior managers will routinely offer to attend meetings of the CICC if requested and will take opportunities to meet, talk to and be with young people at events such as awaydays, celebration events and parties.
- Offer training on young people's participation to council officers, carers and elected members.

### **Assessment and Planning**

We know that children and young people are more likely to thrive in their own families and that outcomes for children looked after typically lag behind those of their peers. This means that, first and foremost, we need to support children to live, or return, to their own families wherever possible. When we look after a child, we need to do so with a clear purpose – to help change circumstances to enable a return home; to prepare a child and to obtain an alternative permanent family via adoption or Special Guardianship; or, for older young people who may not choose to be adopted, to provide stability and long-term care. We will:

- Work relentlessly in line with our overall Family Resilience in Surrey practice framework to ensure that our early help services, our new service models (e.g. Family Safeguarding) and our overall work with partners are effective in helping vulnerable children remain safely with their families and prevent the need for children to come into the council's care.
- Allocate a qualified social worker for all children looked after.
- Ensure that every child looked after has the highest quality assessment of their needs and a realistic care plan which focusses on permanency and stability.
- Help return children to their families when it is safe and in a child's best interests to do so.
- Ensure that permanency plans for children do not drift and are implemented in a robust and timely way.
- Seek to complete court processes efficiently and find prospective adoptive families for children as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that every child looked after has their health and education needs regularly assessed and met through specific plans.
- Review plans for all children looked after regularly with reviews chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers.
- Ensure that each young person leaving care has a pathway plan specific to their needs.
- Routinely examine key performance and quality assurance information to ensure the quality and impact of our assessment and planning practice.
- Implement a workforce strategy to enable children looked after to have consistent social workers, independent reviewing officers, leaving care workers and carers.

## **Placements**

What we typically call placements are homes for our looked after children which play a key part in their care and upbringing. As such they need to be of the highest quality. Our children have a very diverse range of needs and having a wide range of placements is essential to meet those different needs – the lack of placement choice can be an issue for social workers and young people alike. As young people move towards independence, we also need a wide variety of supported, semi-independent placements and permanent housing options for our young people. We will:

- Always seek to enable children looked after to live with extended family or kinship members when possible.
- Consider foster care as a first option of choice for all our children and young people
- Recognise that residential care may be a positive choice for some young people.
- Maintain our strong focus on recruiting more in-house foster carers and residential workers, investing strongly in their support and training and validating the contribution they make to our corporate parenting.



- Continue to implement our capital investment programme across our residential estate moving towards a model of smaller 'ordinary homes'.
- Seek to extend our placement options by implementing a robust placement sufficiency strategy.
- Strive to place our looked after children with providers rated independently as 'good' or better and minimise the use of unregulated provision.
- Seek to minimise the number of placement moves looked after children may experience, especially those which are unplanned.
- Maintain a constant focus on increasing the numbers of our looked after children who are able to live within the county and close to their communities.
- Closely and routinely monitor key data and information about our placements at both operational and strategic levels.
- Commission all placements for our children whether with in-house carers or with other providers so that our expectations of placements are absolutely clear – each child will have a placement plan which we will review as part of the statutory review process.
- Work with district and borough councils on placement choice, especially semi-independent and permanent housing options for older young people.

### **Education, Training and Employment**

Like all good parents, we must focus our efforts to ensure that looked after children receive the best possible education and reach and exceed their potential - we must recognise the educational disadvantages our children may well have faced, the poorer educational outcomes looked after children typically achieve and challenge ourselves and our young people to change this situation in Surrey. We must also recognise that a school is, for most children, a key place where friendships are made and where childhoods can be enriched through access to sport, leisure and cultural activities. We want all our young people to enjoy and achieve in their schools, be able to access further and higher education if they wish or high quality apprenticeships and training with increasingly good prospects for employment as adults. We will:

- Work with our carers and officers to increase their ambition and support for the educational outcomes which can be achieved by our looked after children and young people.
- Challenge our Virtual School to be the strongest advocates for our looked after children's education in their dealings with individual schools and local authorities.
- Ensure that all looked after children of or approaching school age have an individual personal education plan reviewed regularly and updated.
- Ensure that any looked after child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities has a comprehensive education, health and care plan.
- Work with schools to make best use of Pupil Premium entitlement to promote the educational outcomes of individual looked after children.

- Always seek to enable looked after children to remain in the schools they were attending when they come into our care.
- Strive to reduce the number of changes of school experienced by looked after children.
- Always look to place our looked after children in schools rated by Ofsted as 'good' or better.
- Work closely with schools and carers to support a child's transition to a new school setting.
- Ensure a constant focus on school attendance and exclusions of looked after children, keeping to a minimum the time our children are out of school.
- Work with further education providers, employers, district and borough councils and other public sector partners to expand the post 16 education, training and employment offer which can be accessed by older young people in and leaving our care.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Good parents want their children to enjoy good health and wellbeing and are the strongest advocates for good healthcare for their children. In the same way, we must be attentive and vigilant towards the health needs of looked after children and young people. We need to provide all looked after children with good routine healthcare, making sure that they access more specialist treatment when necessary. Many looked after children will have experienced damage through neglect or abuse in their earlier lives and some will experience trauma while in our care. It is particularly important, therefore, that looked after children can access and benefit from high quality child and adolescent mental health services. We will:

- Ensure that every child has an initial health assessment on becoming looked after which is reviewed at least annually.
- Ensure that our carers and officers are attentive to both the physical and the emotional or mental health needs of our children, as well as health needs arising from 'risky' behaviours such as substance misuse.
- Provide support and consultation to carers and residential staff in respect of caring for looked after children and young people with challenging health needs.
- Encourage carers to provide and promote healthy lifestyles to children and young people they are looking after.
- Work with Public Health and other colleagues to make prominent the health needs of looked after children and young people in Surrey's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Work with NHS commissioners and providers to ensure the continued commissioning and provision of specialist CAMHs services in Surrey (3Cs, Hope and Extended Hope) to meet the emotional and mental health needs of looked after children and to prevent placement breakdown.

- Strive to ensure that all young people placed outside of Surrey are able to access relevant NHS services to meet their physical and mental health needs which are local to their placements.
- With NHS commissioners, continue to lobby NHS England and central government for investment in local services, including in-patient provision, to meet the needs of young people with acute mental health conditions and to avoid the need for placements for young people at considerable distance from their homes.
- Promote the smoothest transitions possible from children's to adults' health services for those of our care leavers who have continuing healthcare needs.

### **Leisure, Culture and Life Skills**

Like all children, looked after children need and deserve opportunities which can enrich their lives. As corporate parents we need to encourage and enable our children to participate in, and benefit from, a wide range of leisure, sport and cultural opportunities such as attending a youth club; learning a musical instrument; playing for a sports team or pursuing other hobbies and interests. We also recognise that there are life skills it is essential for our young people to gain. We will:

- Ensure that staff and carers actively promote enrichment opportunities for children and young people in their care.
- Encourage our carers to spot talent and particular interests in young people in their care and support and encourage their development.
- Be clear in our expectations that funding notionally allocated to helping children and young people access leisure and culture and pursue hobbies and interests specified in fostering allowances and placement fees is used for these purposes.
- Ensure that all children and young people receive pocket money and allowances to enable them to make choices and gain an understanding of managing money.
- Help looked after children and young people to purchase items such as personal laptops and driving lessons according to their age and stage and in line with our financial assistance procedures.
- Encourage young people to take up part-time jobs to experience the world of work.
- Engage with schools, district and borough councils and others in the county to maximise access to leisure, sport and cultural opportunities for looked after children and young people.

### **Leaving Care**

Leaving care, like leaving home, is a critical transition for our young people and supporting them through this transition into adulthood is a major responsibility for us as corporate parents. This is not simply a matter of helping young people acquire a checklist of life and independent living skills – although it is those things – but also helping young people develop resilience, have a comfortable sense of self and have

options for their futures. We need to recognise that young people mature at different paces and that some young people will struggle to gain independence and struggle in independence. We need to aim to be there to pick up and back up our young people when we are needed. A key test of our worth as corporate parents is the ability of young people to choose and enjoy enduring relationships with us – our carers, residential and leaving care staff and social workers in particular. We will:

- Ensure that all young people in our care over the age of 16yrs has a pathway plan specific to their needs and aspirations and an allocated personal advisor.
- Ensure that all pathway plans have a specific focus on care leavers being able to access suitable accommodation and education, employment or training.
- Expect our foster carers and residential homes to provide opportunities for young people to develop independent living skills appropriate to their age and stage.
- Seek to provide the offer of 'staying put', to young people 18-21yrs old living with foster carers subject to their wishes.
- Ensure Surrey's children's homes are able to be welcoming and supportive of young people leaving their care to 'stay close'.
- Work with partners in district and borough councils; providers of registered social housing and third sector organisations to commission and provide a range of supported, semi-independent accommodation and permanent housing options for our care leavers.
- Provide leaving care financial support, grants (eg setting up home) and other forms of financial relief (eg from council tax) to care leavers in line with our financial assistance policies.
- Fully support any young person who wishes to pursue higher education to obtain places and apply for student loans. We will fund vacation accommodation for young people as necessary.
- Continue our work with further education colleges, employment training providers and Chambers of Commerce to help young people access high quality training and apprenticeships,
- Challenge ourselves and our partners to provide specific internship, apprenticeship and employment opportunities for our looked after young people and care leavers.

### **Success Measures**

Councils are accountable to central government for the outcomes for looked after children and young people and are required to submit data in annual collections. In Surrey, our managers and staff need 'real time' performance information on all aspects of their work, obtained through use of IT systems and the publication of monthly performance 'compendiums'. Senior managers and Elected Members need information to assist their strategic management and leadership roles, provided by regular reports to relevant management groups and committees. The LGA's publication 'Corporate Parenting - resource pack' (2018) advises that reports should

be published regularly on key indicators in relation to looked after children and young people including:

- Placement stability.
- Children in care placed out of area or at a distance.
- Health data.
- Educational attainment.
- Proportion of care leavers that the council has regular contact with.
- Availability of suitable accommodation for care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board will receive regular reports on these indicators and has decided that the following additional indicators will be reported:

- Entries into care, exits from care and length of time in care.
- Placement categories.
- Young people in care going missing.
- Young people in care at risk of exploitation.
- Proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training.

While data is an important source of information to manage performance and judge success, we also need to consider subjective and qualitative information to gain a more rounded view of how effective and 'good' corporate parents we are. This includes:

- Consistently and persistently seeking the views of children and young people about their care and upbringing – in day to day situations, in meetings, through surveys and at events.
- Regularly canvassing the views of our carers and staff.
- Undertaking routine quality assurance of casework with looked after children and young people.
- Examining escalations made by Independent Reviewing Officers and the wider content of their annual report.
- The board will review the impact it has on partner agencies and the contribution they make to Corporate Parenting in Surrey

## **Governance**

### **Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Board, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families will champion and monitor the corporate parenting strategy and help drive its implementation. The Board of cross party members and senior managers will meet regularly, receive reports including performance reports, undertake strategic and thematic enquiry into specific elements of the strategy and seek ways of resolving barriers to its success. Collectively and individually, Board members will engage regularly with children, young people, staff and carers to help their understanding of issues affecting our looked after children and care leavers.

The membership and terms of reference for the board will be reviewed regularly to ensure partner agencies are appropriately represented.

### The Corporate Parenting Operational Group

This group will take forward issues and decisions arising from the Board which require the engagement of operational services in and outside the council. The group will consist of senior managers in the council and, importantly, key partner agencies eg NHS; Police; schools, enabling their direct input into the implementation of the strategy.

### Children in Care Council

This is a self-selecting group of children and young people which, amongst other things, makes representations about issues which affect and interest them. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and top managers will routinely offer to attend CICC meetings and may be 'called in' to do so. The CICC should be informed of and involved in decisions and service developments affecting Surrey's looked after children and care leavers.

### Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

This select committee will consider and scrutinise the implementation of the council's corporate parenting strategy via an annual report to the committee and other reports as requested. Any comment and recommendations arising will be made to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the council's Cabinet.

-----

## **Appendix One – Key legal responsibilities towards looked after children and care leavers**

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally 'looked after' if, under the age of 18yrs, s/he is provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours; or is subject to a Care Order or Placement Order. In certain circumstances this includes disabled children in receipt of a series of 'respite care' placements.

The council's key duty towards looked after children is to 'safeguard and promote' their welfare and to 'make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the Authority reasonable'.

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 place a duty on the Local Authority to prepare a care plan for each looked after child and to review the care plan at statutory intervals. Before each placement, a placement plan needs to be prepared, and reviewed as part of the statutory review process.

The Children Act 1989 describes the accommodation to be provided to children looked after as local authority foster placements (including with family, friends and kinship carers approved as foster carers) or placement in a registered children's home. Such placements should, in most circumstances, be with siblings who are

also looked after; and as near to a child's home as possible to avoid disruption to contact with family members or with friends, or to education or training.

The Local Authority must ensure that a health assessment is undertaken for each child when they become looked after and a personal education plan is drawn up. These should be reviewed at least annually.

An Independent Reviewing Officer should be appointed for each looked after child.

Children cease being looked after when they return home; are adopted or made subject to Special Guardianship. Other young people cease being looked after on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when, in line with the Care Leavers Regulations 2010, they become young adults many of whom are eligible for support and assistance as care leavers until aged 21yrs or, if pursuing education or training, aged 25yrs.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a duty on the Local Authority to enable a looked after child to remain with their foster carer beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday subject to their wishes or those of their foster carer – known as 'staying put'. Although this duty does not apply to young people living in residential care, the council is committed to developing 'staying close' arrangements for young people to continue to receive support from residential homes.

## **Appendix Two - List of 'must dos' in respect of our actions and behaviours**

1. **Believe in us** - Believe in us always and help us to achieve our hopes and dreams.
2. **Be on time and reliable** - Turn up when you say you will. Keep us updated with phone calls or messages and always return our calls when we get in touch. If you promise something, make sure you keep it. Let us know and remind us when you are coming, we have lives too.
3. **Have an open and curious mind** - Ask us questions and talk to us about what we need. Look for creative ways to support us and get to know us, believe what we tell you.
4. **Have time for us** - The quality of the visit is more important than how long the visit is - Not everyone wants to sit and talk for an hour. Sometime we want to do an activity while we talk, the review does not count as a visit.
5. **Be honest** - Tell us why we are in care. Always tells us the truth and have honest conversations with us.
6. **Documents for life** - Always check to see if we have a passport and a birth certificate. Always clarify a child or young person's status. If this can't be done, make sure you tell us the reason why.
7. **Help us keep in contact** - Help us to keep in touch with family and extended family. We also want help with keeping in touch with extended family members. Support us to make contact as good as possible. If there is a reason why we can't have contact explain it, do not just say no.
8. **Listen to us** - Our views are important and it is important to listen to us and hear what we are saying.
9. **Let us know what we are entitled to** - Tell us what we are entitled to and remind us of this as we get older. We may not want to know when we are younger.
10. **Treat us like individuals** - We are all different and you need to get to know us to find out how we work and what we need. Take the time to get to know us as individuals.