



SURREY  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021-22



# Foreword by Clare Curran

As Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Lead Member for Children's Services, I am pleased to introduce the 2021 Annual Report of Surrey's Corporate Parenting Board.

During the last year the Corporate Parenting Board continued on the improvement journey that was started after the 2018 Ofsted inspection and focussed upon delivering the changes needed in our services for looked after children and those who have left the care of the council.

After the county council elections in 2021, the Corporate Parenting Board had a majority of new members, all of whom share the ambition that all children growing up in the care of the council and care-experienced young people should be safe and healthy and lead happy and fulfilling lives. The impact of the pandemic continued to be felt, not least in the increased need for services to support young people's emotional health and wellbeing, so our collective ambition and drive to improve services at pace was undiminished.

It is important that as a Board we can all understand the lived experience of those children and young people and regularly hear their views. The User Voice & Participation Team has continued to play an essential role in linking us in with children and young people, so that their views can set our priorities, shape what we do and how we tackle challenges and embed improvements into practice and we are grateful to all of the young people whom we have met and for their honesty and openness in their conversations with the Board.

We are particularly proud that 2021 was the year in which the Board secured an exemption from Council Tax for all care leavers in every district and borough in Surrey. This is an example of the scale of our ambition as a Corporate Parenting Board to spread our influence widely across Surrey and to work with all our partners for the benefit of our young people. We are also encouraged that we are well on the way to an agreement of a leisure offer for looked after children their carers and for care leavers.

The Board is comprised of Members, Officers and Carers dedicated to improving the lives of children and young people and keep us focussed on the lived experiences of children in care and young people that have left care. I would like to thank them for their help and contribution to the work of the Board and their commitment as corporate parents.

This annual report provides a summary of the business of the Board and includes an overview of the themes we have focussed on throughout 2021/22 and the core values we bring to our work.



**Cllr. Clare Curran, Cabinet  
Member for Children, Young  
People & Families  
Chair of the Corporate Parenting  
Board**

# Contents

<b>Foreword by Clare Curran</b>	<b>2</b>
Contents	3
1 SURREY CORPORATE PARENTING	4
2 OUR VISION AND VALUES	7
2.1 Corporate Parenting Vision	7
3 SURREY CONTEXT: CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS	10
3.2 Impact of Covid-19	13
4 SPONSORED CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMES	15
5. OUTCOMES FROM THEMED CORPORATE PARENTING MEETINGS	18
Preparation for Independence	19
Health and Wellbeing	21
Education, Employment and Training (EET)	24
Permanence, Planning and Sufficiency	26
Leisure, Culture and Life Skills	28
Safeguarding of Looked After Children & Care Leavers	31
7. LOOKING FORWARD	33
7.1 Summary	34
Annex1. Glossary of Acronyms	35



# 1. SURREY CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

## 1.1 Purpose

The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) provides robust assurance of the whole corporate parenting system, ensuring Surrey is the very best corporate parent to its children; and that all looked after children and care leavers can achieve their full potential.

It does this by putting children at the centre of everything we do. CPB members will inquire and understand, set ambition, champion and challenge our collective care of looked after children and care leavers. It is strategic, forward thinking, informed by our experts, practitioners, children and carers, and has high expectations for the quality and experience of support and services children and carers receive.

The CPB ensures that Surrey County Council and its partner agencies uphold the highest corporate parenting principles. The foundation of our work across our system is the **Corporate Parenting Strategy** and **Sufficiency Strategy**. Part of our Looked after Children and Care Leavers Strategy is our Pledge to children and young people. These are the commitments we make to looked after children and care leavers about how we will care for and support them.

The CPB may inquire into any service for looked after children or that contributes to outcomes for looked after children and care leavers across the system including social care, education, health, policing, housing, leisure, transport and more. The CPB will respond to specific issues, blockages and challenges raised by the Corporate Parenting Operational Group (CPOG) or any other stakeholders as needed.

## 1.2 Membership

The Board has [cross party membership](#) and is chaired by the Lead Member of Children's Services (LMCS).

Name	Role
Cllr Clare Curran	Chairperson, Cabinet Lead for Children & Families
Cllr Denise Turner-Stewart	Cabinet Lead for Education & Learning
Cllr Fiona White	Member
Cllr Jonathan Essex	Member
Cllr Catherine Powell	Member
Cllr Steve Bax	Member
Cllr Julia McShane	Member
Cllr Rebecca Paul	Member
Cllr Maureen Attewell	Member
Jane Porter	Foster Carer
Cindy Morris	Care Experienced Foster Carer
Linda Grover	Foster Carer
Joanna Killian	Chief Executive
Rachael Wardell	Executive Director
Tina Benjamin	Director – Corporate Parenting
Jo Rabbitte	Assistant Director – Children's Resources
Anwen Foy	Headteacher Surrey Virtual School
Jessica Clark	User Voice & Participation Team Manager

The LMCS has a statutory role that was established in the Children Act 2004. The LMCS has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of Children's Services.

The LMCS is responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed.

The LMCS is not involved or responsible for operational management of Children's Services and Education.

The role is to provide strategic leadership, support and challenge to both the Director of Children's Services and the senior management team, as appropriate. It is a requirement for the LMCS to provide an annual update to Members on how we are meeting our Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

### 1.3 Relationship with CPOG

The Corporate Parenting Operational Group (CPOG) meets six times per year, meetings shadow themes of the CPB. The role of CPOG is to take forward issues and decisions arising from the CPB which require the engagement of operational services in and outside the council. CPOG is accountable to the CPB and the Director of Children's Services for the operational delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The group is also accountable to our children in care, care leavers and their carers. Unlike the CPB, CPOG has broad membership of officers from across the council, membership consists of foster carer representatives and senior Children's Services' leads with representation from key partner agencies including the NHS, police and health, enabling direct multi agency working and involvement.

### 1.4 Format of CPB meetings

A sequence of pre-meetings enables six annual Board meetings to run efficiently during a 12-month reporting period.

The table below demonstrates how we effectively plan and implement CPB meetings.

Item	Deadline	Responsible Owner(s)	Purpose
<b>1. Forward Plan meeting</b>	8-wks before CPB	DCS, Lead Cabinet Member, Director, AD, PM	Agree agenda, discuss report content & contributors
<b>2. Draft Report meeting</b>	3-wks before CPB	DCS, Lead Cabinet Member, Director, AD, PM	Review draft reports, make recommendations & additional requests
<b>3. Pre-meet with CYP</b>	Evening before CPB	All Members of the CPB, looked after children & care leavers	Listen to the views of service users on the CPB theme
<b>4. CPB</b>	Every 2-months	CPB Members & small number of senior officers	Corporate Parenting Board meeting makes recommendations & monitors action-tracker
<b>5. CPOG meeting</b>	1-month after CPB	Multi-agency officer membership	Implement actions & recommendations from CPB

### 1.5 CPB meetings held in 2021/22

In 2021 the reporting period of the CPB was changed to align with the financial year, this change resulted in 7 CPB meetings being held during 2021-22. A Board Forward Plan sets out the theme and dates for 6 CPB meetings during a 12-month period.

**In 2021-22 7 themed CPB meetings were held**

CPB date	Theme	Reports
22 April 2021	Preparation for Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving Towards Independence</li> <li>- Independence Skills</li> <li>- Children's Homes Annual Report</li> </ul>
22 July 2021	Health & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Health Report</li> <li>- Emotional Wellbeing &amp; Mental Health (EWMH) for looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>- Hope/Extended Hope Service</li> <li>- Link Member Scheme</li> </ul>
02 September 2021	Education, Employment & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education, Employment, Training &amp; Apprenticeships for care leavers</li> <li>- Looked after children with Special Education Needs &amp; Disabilities (SEND)</li> <li>- Surrey Virtual School Annual Report</li> </ul>
21 October 2021	Placements, Sufficiency, Permanence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption Southeast Annual Report</li> <li>- Fostering Service Annual Report</li> <li>- Independent Visitors Annual Report</li> <li>- No Wrong Door Implementation</li> <li>- Sufficiency Annual Report</li> <li>- Thresholds and Outcomes for looked after children</li> </ul>
09 December 2021	Leisure, Culture & Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rights &amp; Entitlements</li> <li>- Leisure Enhanced Offer</li> <li>- Financial Independence for looked after children</li> </ul>
27 January 2022	Safeguarding of Looked After Children and care leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exploitation &amp; Missing</li> <li>- Contextual Safeguarding (policing)</li> <li>- Safeguarding &amp; Mental Health of looked after children &amp; care leavers</li> <li>- Surrey's Approach to Anti-bullying &amp; Implications for looked after children</li> </ul>
31 March 2022	Preparation for Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ILACS Ofsted Inspection report</li> <li>- Independence Skills feedback from the pilot</li> <li>- Moving Towards Independence</li> </ul>

The CPB will scrutinise thematic reports from a range of services, such as education, health, leaving care service, adoption and fostering services. The CPB has several standard agenda items, the only themed standard agenda item is 'views of children and young people' (C&YP).

#### CPB standard agenda items:

Standard Item	Purpose	Author(s) amend
Views of C&YP on the CPB theme	To understand what is & what is not working well in relation to themes. To listen to the recommendations and suggestions for service development from C&YP with care experience	Participation Officer

<b>Performance Report</b>	To understand current data & trends in relation to children looked after & care leavers	Strategic Analyst
<b>*Directors Update</b>	Provides regular updates on key areas for the services delivering Corporate Parenting across the county. It provides a summary of the Alerts and Escalations raised on behalf of children by the Independent Reviewing Service.	Director of Corporate Parenting
<b>‘Getting to Good’ Improvement Update</b>  <b>Renamed ‘Achieving Excellence’ following Ofsted ILACS inspection</b>	To provide information & awareness of the various transformation projects & improvement activity currently underway across Surrey’s children’s services. To provide an update on the improvement of corporate parenting services supporting children in care and care leavers.	Senior Programme Manager
<b>CPB Action Tracker</b>	To provide a status update on CPB actions.	Corporate Parenting Project Manager

\*The Directors Update provides assurance to the CPB through providing updates on serious incidence and reporting on vulnerable groups of C&YP, including:

- Missing and exploited
- Young people in secure hospitals
- Number of children in secure accommodation Section 25
- Young people looked after in custody
- Missing and exploited children
- The number of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) alerts are reported, included the reason and resolution of the alert
- UASC, EU Settled Status for Looked After Children, care leavers and support for children affected by the Afghanistan crisis

## 1.6 Action Tracking

An action tracker is maintained by the corporate parenting project manager and progress is reviewed at each CPB meeting. Many CPB actions are allocated to CPOG members, a combined action-tracker enables CPB actions to inform CPOG agenda planning.

# 2. OUR VISION AND VALUES

## 2.1 Corporate Parenting Vision

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.

## 2.2 The values we bring to help us realise our vision

- 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.

## 2.3 Pledge Promises



The work of the CPB is underpinned by the Seven **Corporate Parenting Principles** that are enshrined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 below.

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of 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 the 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 those children and young people for adulthood and independent living



## 2.4 Corporate Parenting Strategy

This strategy has guided our priorities throughout the year, it outlines our vision for children and young people looked after by the council, or formerly in care, and the values which inform the way we meet our corporate parenting responsibilities. Drawing on the requirements of the [Social Work Act 2017](#) and the seven corporate parenting principles, it sets out our priorities and the actions we take to ensure that no child looked after by the council is 'left behind'. The Strategy was developed in consultation with children and young people, carers and staff both from the County Council and from partner agencies, a young person version is available.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy is currently under review.

## 2.5 Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2025

Surrey County Council is legally required to consider sufficiency and the term is defined in the [Children Act 1989](#) which is the primary legislation in which all Children's services operate. The act requires all local authorities to take steps that secure, as far as reasonably practicable, enough accommodation within the authority's area that meets the needs of children that the local authority is looking after. Aside from being a statutory duty however, we also know that working to secure the right amount of appropriate provision, in the right places and at the right time, makes a massive difference to Surrey's looked after children and care leavers, and is a key part of how we can enable them to achieve better outcomes. Our aim in producing our [Sufficiency Strategy](#) is to enable the system of support to realise better outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

## 2.6 Listening to Service Users



The CPB utilises a range of methods to actively listen to C&YP, listening to service users provides Members with a deeper understanding of the reality of life as a looked after child or care leaver. The User Voice and Participation (UVP) team create a Microsoft Form based on a specific CPB theme, relevant feedback from participation groups and targeted consultations/events from the previous 12-months are collated into an impactful report and presented to the Board. Presentations include videos, audio and quotes from young people that are framed around what is working well and what needs to be improved. We ask the question *'if you were in charge what would you do differently?'*. These

presentations are shared in the agenda pack before the CPB and discussed in the meeting to ensure that the Board have the views of young people at the centre of their decision-making.

In addition to a written report, a virtual meeting with C&YP is held in the evening prior to the CPB meeting. Evening meetings allow C&YP to return home from work, school or college. C&YP tell us they are happy with the format of pre-board meetings because they enable a comfortable opportunity to share experiences with Board Members online from home. Approximately 4 to 8 C&YP attend these meetings, due to different C&YP joining virtual meetings, a prep meeting is held with the UVP Participation Officer to review Board Member Profiles and discuss themed findings from the report.

We previously held CPB away days for Care Council members and CPB Members to build relationships. It was not possible to do this in person this year due to Covid-19, however with the relaxation of restrictions, we plan to hold a fun face-to-face event with C&YP in Summer 2022 in conjunction with the review of our **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019 - 2022 and Pledge Promises**.

We have created an **Action Card database** with feedback from our looked after children, young people and care leavers. Action Cards are raised by young people or CPB members to raise an issue they would like to be resolved. There is a clear process and CPOG is responsible for ensuring actions are resolved and practice is improved. Action Cards are allocated to senior leaders and should be responded to within 2 months.

**The Big Survey** is an annual consultation survey sent to all looked after children and care leavers, the findings tell us C&YP's views on a range of issues such as placement stability, education and leisure activities. Findings were presented to the CPB and CPOG members, where action cards were agreed to improve practice. A total of 179 children and young people completed the Big Survey 2021 which was an increase from 2020. The Leaving Care Service and the Looked After Children Service are participating in the [Coram Bright Spots Survey](#). This survey aims to evaluate the lived experience of C&YP with care experience and provide a national benchmark that will assist Surrey to prioritise service development.

Members of the CPB participated in the **Foster Carer Winter Event** held at Silvermere Golf Club with over 100 foster carers in December 2021, the most heart-warming award recognised 37-years of service by one Surrey foster carer. The Chair of the Foster Carer Executive (FCE) is a CPB Member and in 2022 the Corporate Parenting Project Manager will attend bi-annual Foster Care Executive Meetings to provide updates on the CPB forward plan and gather views and comments from foster carers on key CPB themes, such as 'preparation for independence' and 'sufficiency'. The Chair of the CPB and Director of Corporate Parenting have scheduled regular meetings with the FCE to listen to foster carers and respond to challenges, these findings will be fed in to the CPB to ensure the Board listens and responds to the views of our foster carers.

### 3. SURREY CONTEXT: CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

**Data varies throughout this Annual Report 2021/22 because themed reports were presented to the CPB at different times throughout the year. All data in this section is accurate from March 2022.**

Surrey Children's Services were recognised by Ofsted as 'Requiring Improvement to be Good' in March 2022 following an **ILACS inspection**, this judgment acknowledges the significant improvement since our earlier May 2018 inspection judgement of 'Inadequate'. The inspection took place over 1-week 'off-site' and 2-weeks 'on-site', inspectors met with hundreds of professionals and reviewed hundreds of documents and children's records. A great deal of work took place 'behind the scenes' with colleagues preparing Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) on the request of inspectors. Ofsted highlighted 6 key priority areas for improvement, 'task & finish groups' have since been established and comprehensive improvement plans will be implemented. At each CPB meeting a progress report will be shared with members. Other positive Ofsted inspection news from this reporting period includes HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection of Surrey Youth Offending Service, this resulted in a rating of 'Good' overall and 'outstanding' in three areas.

Surrey County Council have **8 in-house residential homes**; 4 community homes, 1 solo provision, 1 emergency mental health respite care and 2 specialised services for children with disabilities. Due to Covid-19 Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020, assurance visits were carried out instead. These visits did not result in a graded judgement and

instead of a report each home was sent an outcome letter. All homes, with the exception of Ruth House, received positive feedback on their progress. One community home was closed following an Ofsted inspection.

In March 2021 two Residential Skills Audits were undertaken based on the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCIFF). The audit found that children's homes were good at offering stability and 'stickability' and had begun to offer quite specialist care which reflected the needs of the wider cohort of young people, such as those young people with mental health needs, those who were emotionally dysregulated or in crisis, vulnerable to or at risk of criminal exploitation, and those with involvement with the criminal justice system. Occupancy of the community homes remains consistently high at a minimum of 95% with the average length of placement for C&YP at approximately 15.5 months. In 2021 Council approved a spend of 1 million to update and modernise the current portfolio of Surrey children's homes. A further **capital fund investment** of over 3 million was approved, this exciting development will contribute significantly to SCC achieving its sufficiency ambitions.

### **Looked After Children Totals**

The number of children looked after has increased over the last 3 months from 1,029 in January 2022 to 1,050 in March 2022. The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) has also increased over the same period. This data reflects a national trend of increasing numbers of children, including unaccompanied minors, entering the care system.

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

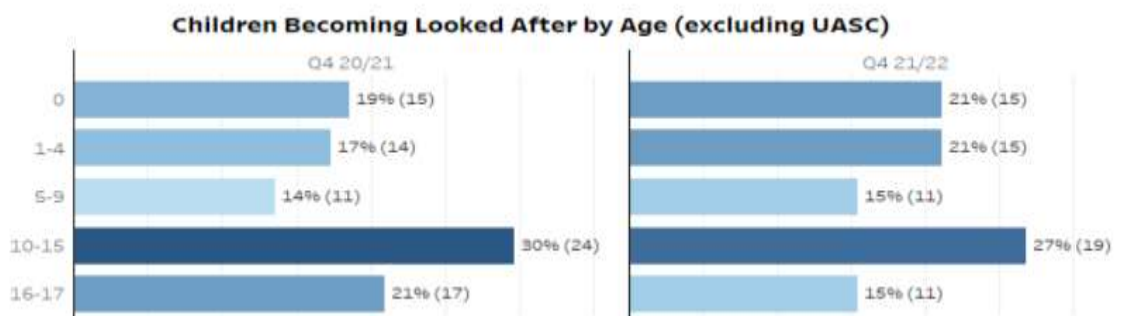
Approximately 13% of Surrey's under 18 looked after population are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Approximately 35% of Surrey's care leaver population is asylum experienced with 99.94% of the population male and 0.06% female. Surrey has participated fully in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and has continued to accept new arrivals alongside young people that may present within Surrey not linked to the scheme. Surrey currently has 136 young people under the age of 18 and 307 18 plus asylum experienced care leavers whom Surrey is corporate parents to.

### **Age Breakdown**

Surrey's age profile of looked after children is broadly in line with the latest national figures. 5% of children are aged under 1-year, 14% are aged 1-4 years, 19% are aged 5-9 years, 39% are aged 10-15 years and 23% are aged 16 and over.

### **Age Profile of Children becoming Looked After**

The age group breakdown of children becoming looked after in the last full quarter (1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022) is shown below along with the same period last year for comparison. This data excludes unaccompanied asylum seeking children.



### Looked After Children Distance from Home

For current looked after children with a home and placement address recorded, 64% (569 children) have been placed within 20 miles of their home address, an increase when compared to the same period 12 months ago (62%). **We are making progress against our ambitious target of 80% of C&YP living in county.** 16% (140 children) of looked after children are placed more than 50 miles from their home address.

### Placement Category

The table below shows placements by type of provision.

Placement Type	Mar 2021	Mar 2022	Change
Fostering - Total	703	669	-34
	71%	64%	-7%
Of which Internal	491	458	-33
	49%	44%	-5%
Of which External	212	211	-1
	21%	20%	-1%
Placed for Adoption	18	24	6
	2%	2%	0%
Other Placements	273	357	84
	27%	34%	+7%
<b>Total Placements</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>+56</b>

\*Other Placements accounts for 34% in March 2022, this includes Independent Living, Children's Homes and Residential Placements.

### Placement Stability

The long-term stability of placements has surpassed our target of 70% for the last 12 months (75% for March 2022).

### Looked After Children Leaving Care (including UASC)

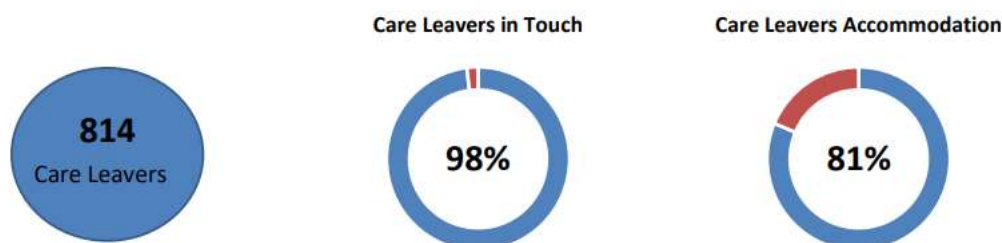
Coupled with the increase in the number of children becoming looked after in recent months; a lower number of children leaving care has contributed to more children being looked after.

The number of children leaving care has decreased over the last 3 months from 49 in January 2022 to 20 in March 2022.

### Care Leavers in Touch and In Suitable Accommodation



There are currently 814 care leavers supported by SCC; 798 (98%) are currently in touch with us and 662 (81%) are recorded as living in suitable accommodation.



The largest two groups of care leaver accommodation type are **semi-independent accommodation** (27%) and **independent living** (24%).

### 3.2 Impact of Covid-19

Despite continuing to drive improvement, the Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably had a major impact on the delivery of frontline services, high numbers of Covid-19 affected a number of our Children's Homes and significantly impacted on staff sickness. **We continued to restore services and meet our statutory requirements through 2021/22**, the Service did not return to virtual visiting during the second national lockdown, and contact centres remained open with some moderations to ensure adherence to public health advice. During this period the demand for services increased dramatically with an increase in children coming into care during lockdown, specifically teenagers on section 20 (voluntary) agreements.

In March 2021 an **Ofsted Monitoring Visit found that Surrey responded well to Covid-19**, whether by managing the increased demand at the front door, returning as soon as possible to face-to-face visits, working hard to promote contact between children in our care and their families, or securing additional staff to keep caseloads relatively low.

**Schools re-opening** on 08/03/21 was a significant date for children and young people. Whilst around 50% of our children were attending school during lockdown, the remainder were experiencing home schooling. The Ofsted Monitoring visit in March 2021 found 'virtual school provides effective support to enable children in care to attend school. The attendance of children in care and those with a social worker has been good. During the pandemic, additional funds have been used by the virtual school to provide devices to enable children in care to access education remotely'. (Ofsted)

Central Surrey Heath (CHS) commenced **the vaccine programme** in schools on 22/09/2021. The NHSE target for vaccine take-up is 75% and the immunisation programme for children continues to be rolled out successfully. Surrey-wide 957,789 first doses have been administered to those aged 12+ between 8th December 2020 to 27th February 2022. Benchmarking data shows that 85% of individuals in Surrey aged 12+ have received first dose Covid-19 vaccinations. This is the same as Southeast average (85%) and above the England average (80%). In total, 904,222 second doses have been administered to those aged 12+ (80% of individuals aged 12+) in Surrey. 739,916 individuals aged 18+ (72%) in Surrey D&Bs have received a booster or third dose of a Covid-19 vaccination (data obtained from the Surrey Covid-19 Mass Vaccination Intelligence Report dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 provided by Surrey Heartlands).

All visits to children and care leavers continued to be offered face-to-face unless the worker or family/children's home were required to self-isolate following contact via the track & trace system.

It was acknowledged that the full impact of the Pandemic on the emotional well-being of children and care leavers is yet to be understood. The CPB was informed that some children responded well to increased time with foster carers and residential staff and whilst this was rewarding for many carers and staff, it was also a significant pressure on those that provided home schooling due to shielding.

### Key principles have continued to underpin our work during these exceptional times:

- Child-Centred - Promoting children's best interests: nothing is more important than children's welfare; children who need help and protection deserve high-quality and effective support as soon as a need for help is identified
- Risk-Based - Prioritising support and resources for children at greatest risk
- Family-Focused - Harnessing the strengths in families and their communities
- Evidence-Informed - Ensuring decisions are proportionate and justified
- Collaborative - Working in partnership with parents and other professionals
- Transparent - Providing clarity and maintaining professional curiosity about a child's wellbeing

The Big Survey 2021 asked Surrey C&YP about the health and emotional effects of Covid-19. Listening to the lived experiences of C&YP in our care has helped us to shape the combined response to improve mental health services and provision.

### Impact of COVID-19 on Care Leavers

☹️ Negatively impacted: *social life (37%), wellbeing (35%), relationships (31%), ability to access services they need (25%)*

😊 Positively impacted: *ability to access services they need (24%), support network (21%)*

😐 Not at all impacted: *finances (51%), employment (51%), education (47%), support network (31%).*

### Impact of COVID-19 on Looked After (primary and secondary) Children

The survey asked about the effects of COVID-19 in primary aged children

😊 Good way: *attending school and learning (53%), seeing/speaking with people who support/look after them (47%) and wellbeing (46%)*

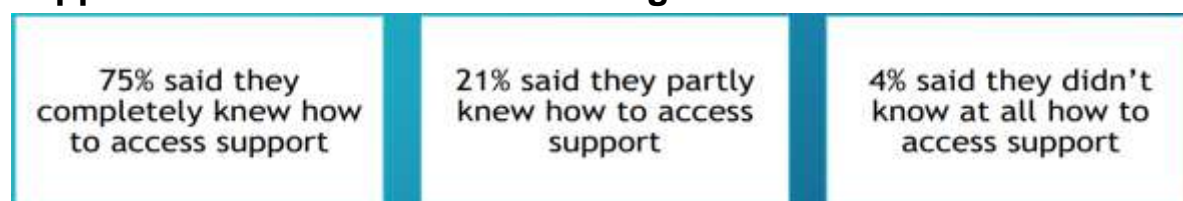
☹️ Bad way: *doing things I enjoy (46%), seeing friends/family (37%)*

The survey asked about the effects of COVID-19 in secondary aged children

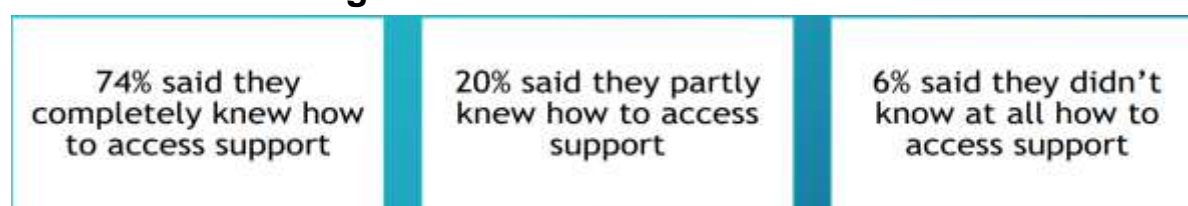
😊 Positively impacted secondary children: *services they need (28%)*

☹️ Negatively impacted: *education (38%), social life (38%), relationships (28%), wellbeing (26%)*

### All school age Looked After Children told us the following about accessing support for their emotional wellbeing



## Care Leavers told us the following about accessing support for their emotional wellbeing



## 4. SPONSORED CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMES

To enable Members to promote and celebrate achievements of children and young people and to understand operational challenges faced by children & young people and their workers/carers, Members actively participate in a number of corporate parenting programmes and projects.

The CPB sponsors specific activities and member-led projects including:

- The Celebration Fund
- Link Member Project
- Bicycle Scheme
- The Corporate Parenting Offer for CYP (driving lessons, laptop scheme, leisure offer, council tax exemption)
- Member Practice Conversations
- Member Skills Profile
- Care Leaver Covenant

CPB Projects are coordinated by the Corporate Parenting Project Manager in partnership with Members and C&YP.

### 4.1 Member Practice Conversations

We established a programme of 'Member Practice Conversations' in 2018 to support the CPB to listen, understand and act upon the experiences of children, young people, parents, carers and front-line practitioners. The conversations provide opportunities for those people to further understand the role of CPB members and for CPB members to identify and explore wider system issues impacting on the care, support and experience those people receive and/or deliver. Member Practice Conversations provide evidence of child, carer, parent and practitioner insight and experience, and are used to inform discussions at future CPB meetings, and shape assurance and decision-making that improves services and support for children. In 2021 Member Practice Conversations were stopped due to Covid-19, we are excited to announce plans to relaunch this programme in 2022 due to the lifting of restrictions.

### 4.2 Link Member Scheme

As part of ongoing quality assurance arrangements CPB Councillors undertake regular visits to Surrey Children's Community Homes. Each CPB Member is 'buddied' with an individual home, and one CPB Member makes regular visits to secure accommodation. The visits help us to further understand the experiences of staff, carers and children, and the quality of practice children receive. They also enable staff, carers and children to raise good news stories and general concerns independent of the operational service. Members often use their local connections to champion on behalf of homes, for

example, one Member coordinated with borough council colleagues and arranged for residents to receive free Rugby training from a local coach.

In May 2021 SCC held local elections resulting in many new county councillors joining and leaving their role within the county council. In June 2021 six new Members joined the CPB and opportunities were created to buddy seven link Members with Surrey Children Homes. Due to visit stagnation caused by Covid-19 and Member changes we took the opportunity to complete a review of the scheme, the aim being to identify the benefits and highlight opportunities for development. The timing of this review and re-launch were planned to coincide with new CPB membership and training.

### 4.3 Celebration Fund Panel

All councillors at SCC are committed to being good corporate parents and this means supporting C&YP in care and leaving care to achieve their full potential. To help with this there is a small, discretionary fund that corporate parents have set aside to:

- Support a child/young person pursue a hobby or interest
- Participate in a one off activity that will really benefit a child/young person's overall wellbeing
- Provide a child/young person with some additional 'equipment' to help be independent/achieve a goal and to engage in a sports activity
- Go on a visit, trip, or excursion (e.g., school trip)
- Celebrate personal achievements (no matter how small or large)

#### Feedback from young people

"Allowed me to continue with a hobby I have loved since I was young and wouldn't have been able to continue with it otherwise."

"I was very happy when I heard you had given me the award. It made me feel special."

#### Feedback from Keyworker

"T is very happy, as he can explore different things with his friends. The award will enable him to expand his social skills and at the same time his education".

For the year 2021/2022 Members were asked to contribute to the fund from their community allocation funds, **we are extremely grateful to 29 Members that contributed.** During this year the [Celebration Fund](#) worked with external agencies and private companies, this resulted in additional funding from [Active Surrey](#) to support specific requests for health and wellbeing including gym membership and sports equipment. A further donation was received from [ICG Medical](#), a multi-national company originating from Tandridge borough council.

The Celebration Fund Panel understand the needs of children and young people in care and leaving care, the fund uses its experience to influence further provision. For example, a standard offer for computers, driving lessons and bicycles has been agreed. This year Panel agreed 133 awards to the total of £17,564.91, below demonstrates some awards made during this period.





## 4.4 Bicycle Scheme for Looked After Children & Care Leavers

In June to September 2021 Surrey Children's Services launched a Bicycle Scheme pilot where 93 individual awards enabled looked after children and care leavers to purchase a bike. The total budget of £10,612.50 was sponsored by Active Surrey and Corporate Parenting (Children's Services). The success of this pilot made it clear there was a need to establish a long-term Bicycle Scheme to benefit a cohort looked after children and care leavers.

Due to the high number of applications received from care leavers during the pilot scheme and limited funding for the re-launch, we decided to undertake a survey to help us understand the picture a little better. Also, with rolling out a long-term scheme we thought it pertinent to understand if looked after children had any specific training needs in relation to road safety and cycling proficiency.

Over 115 supervising/children's social workers responded to our online survey, this pleasing response represented approximately 12% of the Surrey looked after children population.

### Some highlights from February 2022 online survey:

- ✓ 87% of C&YP can ride a bike
- ✓ Over half (51%) of C&YP do not have adequate skills to ride safely on the road
- ✓ 43% do not have access to or own a bike
- ✓ Of 115 C&YP in the sample only 37% (41) own their own bike
- ✓ 63% of C&YP that own their own bike do not have adequate road safety skills
- ✓ Of the 41 C&YP that own a bike – 75% of bicycles were purchased by foster carers

Funding for the 2022 [Bicycle Scheme for Looked After Children and Care Leavers](#) re-launch was sponsored by Active Surrey. An initial £20,000 is secured and the scheme plans to generate future funding through third and fourth (corporate) sector sponsorship and by exploiting local Social Value relationships. Below is a picture of a one of three specialist tricycles funded by the pilot scheme, these tricycles were provided to **Applewood and Ruth House** residential and respite homes for children with disabilities.

**Surrey's Bike Scheme**  
For those in care or care leavers

**Are you a looked after child or care leaver (living in or outside Surrey)?**  
You can get help to buy a bike!

- For ages 5-25
- See application form for rules
- Amount of funding you get depends on your age and if the bike is new or fully refurbished
- Includes money towards a helmet
- FREE Bikeability training to improve your road safety
- Speak to your Key Worker/Social Worker for more information, or email [celebration.fund@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:celebration.fund@surreycc.gov.uk)

"The bike is helpful. B feels happy to have his own bike. It is helping B to keep fit mentally and physically."

Apply by 19 April To apply visit <https://bit.ly/Surrey-bikes-2022>






## 4.5 The Corporate Parenting Offer

In recent months the Board have worked with D&B leisure operators to improve corporate parenting responsibilities towards looked after children and care leavers. In January 2022 a Member of the CPB took a Motion to council that was unanimously agreed by county councillors. A universal leisure offer and council tax exemption are examples of corporate parenting campaigns currently being championed by the CPB. The Board advocate to improve services and provision for C&YP, examples include the establishment of an offer of financial support for driving lessons and a 50% discount for care leavers in county when purchasing second-hand furniture and flooring.

### Local Offer for care leavers



**Your financial support and entitlements**  
The care leavers local offer - our support for you



**Get your voice heard and events**  
Ways to get involved



**Useful contacts**  
Useful contacts for care leavers



**Your employment**  
Helping you find a job



**Your health, wellbeing and relationships**  
Stay fit, healthy and happy



**Life skills**  
Helpful information and useful tips



**Your personal adviser and pathway plan**  
Helping you achieve your goals



**Your accommodation**  
Your options as a care leaver



**Your education**  
Education and work opportunities

We have developed a strategy for the provision of gym membership for out of county C&YP through the Celebration Fund. We are having conversations with large private gym operators, such as 'Pure Gym' with nation-wide coverage to provide discounts for our C&YP living in the UK.

### PURCHASING SECOND HAND FURNITURE

If you're moving into your own accommodation talk to your PA to find out more about local charities who can offer up to 50% discount on second hand furniture and flooring (rugs and carpets). Woking Community Furniture Project also offer 10% off electrical items.

## 4.6 Care Leaver Covenant

The [Care Leaver Covenant \(CLC\)](#) have not worked with such a large county council before, therefore SCC signing the Covenant provides a unique and exciting opportunity to create opportunities for Surrey care leavers. Having CPB and senior officer approval for signing the Covenant at this early stage of the process is another unique SCC feature.

## 5. Outcomes from Themed CPB meetings

The CPB held meetings under 6 key themes, as noted in Section 1. Below are six Board themes.

Theme
Preparation for Independence
Health & Wellbeing
Education, Employment & Training
Placements, Sufficiency, Permanence
Leisure, Culture & Life Skills
Safeguarding of Looked After Children and care leavers

## PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENCE

### 5.1 Surrey Context

'We made a Pledge Promise to C&YP to tell them about options to them and involve them fully in making plans about their life'. The Leaving Care Service has worked to increase the number of Personal Advisors (PA's) with the majority now being in permanent employment. PA's have received up to date training around Housing and Welfare Benefits to ensure they can confidently discuss entitlements with young people. In the past year there has been considerable focus on the allocation of PAs to care leavers, approximately 60% of 16-year-olds now have a PA allocated at 16 with 90% allocation at 17 years.

Ensuring children & young people learn independence skills and are prepared for adulthood is a key role for any good parent. Following feedback from the annual consultation with looked after children and care leavers (Big Survey 2020) the below Action Card was presented to the corporate parenting service:

#### Action Card 103

*'As care leavers we would have appreciated and recommend more opportunities to expand our independence and finance/budgeting skills in our foster homes, placements or at workshops before reaching adulthood so that we feel ready and supported to take steps to becoming independent when turning 18'.*

In response to the Action Card an independence guide was developed and a residential worker and co-ordinator for the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) programme implemented a pilot in the North-West (NW) Quadrant with C&YP in residential and foster care. This programme was reviewed in August 2021 where it became evident that this approach to delivering independent skills through the AQA programme was not resulting in the best uptake by our young people. The pilot found that



evidencing skills was time consuming and it took a lot of encouragement from residential/foster carers to engage C&YP.

In December 2021, it was agreed to establish a steering group to develop an innovative video library of clips added to YouTube for young people aged 13 – 18 years. The ‘**Surrey, how do I .....?**’ clips are led by young people and topics cover what young people feel is important, such as ‘Money Management, Healthy Relationships, and Healthy Eating’. The Virtual School currently run ASDAN which offers sixty short courses aimed at developing skills for young people aged 11+ years, because ASDAN does not require a trained assessor, the skills learnt can be signed off by a key worker/carer/trusted adult to confirm that work has been completed. Surrey has a large cohort of UASC and young people with additional needs, therefore offering ASDAN and ‘Surrey, how do I .....?’ video clips will provide a comprehensive supplementary offer of support. This is in conjunction with a range of independence support and guidance provided by social workers and PAs as C&YP travel through the care system.

**Surrey Grandmentors** was launched in 2021 to provide bespoke mentoring for a cohort of 30 care leavers. Grandmentors is a mature organisation with a proven track record and infrastructure around mentoring Care Leavers and other young people from vulnerable groups. This scheme is part funded during its first year by the Virtual School, and future funding for the next two years has been secured.

## 5.2 Key themes from Surrey Looked After Children & Care Leavers

The User Voice and Participation (UVP) team reached out to participation groups, the Care Council, Care Council Juniors and used feedback from the BIG Survey to understand young people’s feelings about preparing for independence. 30 young people aged between 12 and 23 years old who lived in foster placements, residential homes, supported accommodation and independent living contributed their thoughts to the presentation

### The top three skills that C&YP told the Board they needed were:

- a. Support with completing important paperwork
- b. Cooking on a budget and healthy eating
- c. Money Management

## 5.3 Key CPB actions in response to feedback from C&YP

Actions from CPB – theme Preparation for Independence	
<b>CPB action</b>	Make a clear ask of foster carers to ensure consistency in preparing C&YP for independence
<b>Response</b>	The AQA Independence Pilot was opened to children living with foster carers, experienced carers have been asked to speak to fellow carers about the benefits of AQA & workers are encouraged to maintain a placement plan that covers a range of independence skills as C&YP get older. Including conversations about Staying Put/Shared Lives/Supported Lodgings at the age of 14 which in turn encourages conversation’s about independence
<b>CPB action</b>	Work with the third sector to negotiate a furniture & flooring offer for care leavers moving into independent accommodation



<b>Response</b>	Surrey Reuse Network (3 of the 4 charities covering Surrey) now offer a 50% discount on second-hand furniture & flooring
<b>CPB action</b>	Mobilise corporate parents to share their experience and skills with C&YP
<b>Response</b>	A project to map the skills of (81) county councillors was drafted & is being consulted on at present
<b>CPB action</b>	Work with the 2 remaining borough councils (BC) to ensure Council Tax Exemption is provided by all 11 BC
<b>Response</b>	From April 2022 all 11 BC provide 100% Council Tax Exemption to care leavers living in-county
<b>CPB action</b>	Support the join up between education and social care around participation in EET
<b>Response</b>	The Virtual School have increased staffing in the post 16 team & are funding an Employment Education & Training coach within the team.
<b>CPB action</b>	Identify funding to continue the GrandMentor Scheme for care leavers
<b>Response</b>	Funding has been secured to run GrandMentors for a 3-year period
<b>CPB action</b>	Personal Advisors (PAs) to receive adequate training to enable them to provide appropriate level of advice & guidance
<b>Response</b>	PAs access training in respect of pathway planning, welfare rights & entitlements, housing legislation with training being commissioned SHELTER on specific areas for example tenancy management. We have an ongoing contract with SURREY WELFARE RIGHTS who can respond to any financial queries arising for care leavers
<b>CPB action</b>	Look into more financial support for care leavers, in addition to 'Setting Up Home Allowance'
<b>Response</b>	The Local Offer was reviewed to increase finance benefits & practical support to care leavers, including savings on furniture/flooring and floating support for vulnerable YP to manage their tenancy
<b>CPB action</b>	Review the Independence Skills Pilot
<b>Response</b>	In 2021 the pilot was reviewed & replaced with a project called 'Surrey how do I ....?'

\* Actions from the second Preparation for Independence Board meeting held on 23 March 2022 have not been included, as these actions are still in the early stages of progress when writing this report.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

### 5.4 Surrey Context



2021-22 has been a complex and transformational year for Surrey with Covid-19 continuing to shape health services for looked after children and care leavers. The implementation of [MINDWORKS Surrey](#) will improve emotional wellbeing and mental health (EWMH) outcomes for C&YP. At the same time the procurement process has been completed for the new

EWMH contract which started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, this new Alliance contract includes circa £6m of additional investment (equally provided by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the County Council) over a 7-year period. The service has a new focus on early intervention and prevention under the [Thrive Framework Surrey](#).

Ofsted commented, “Children’s health needs are identified well. When there is delay for children accessing CAMHS, including those who self-harm, many children are offered packages of support for their emotional health and well-being through alternative specialist provision. The health needs of care leavers are well understood, and personal advisers work well with care leavers and health professionals to ensure that specific health needs are addressed. The emotional and mental health needs of some care leavers are met through bespoke packages of support, but some care leavers do not receive help promptly when they need it”. (Ofsted ILACS 2022)

National benchmarking data shows that Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has experienced a 22% increase in demand above the same time last year. Despite this assessment waiting times for looked after children and care leavers in SCC have improved from 2019/20 to 2020/21. A new dedicated out of county role currently sits within the care experienced team within the Surrey and Borders Partnership to support care leavers placed more than 20 miles from the Surrey boundary line.

Guidance for virtual health assessments for Looked after Children during Covid-19 was produced. Following an initial risk assessment, most children received telephone or video non face to face consultations. Risk stratification was developed to identify children who would also require a face to face follow up where clinically indicated and safe to do so. The virtual approach has received positive feedback from some C&YP who find face to face contact uncomfortable. Initial Health Assessments (IHA) have been closely monitored by the CPB and figures continue with an upward trajectory for completion within statutory timescales. The Lead Member escalated a concern regarding low numbers of dental checks due to Covid-19 with the CCG, this resulted in the establishment of a new dental pilot which has increased capacity of dental care appointments for C&YP.

Hope is a unique service in Surrey with an experienced multi-agency team, the service rated outstanding by Ofsted works in partnership with Health, Education and Children's Services to provide support to young people in the community and through day programme provision. The Hope service works with young people aged 11-18 who are experiencing complex mental health, emotional, social and behavioural needs which could cause a placement breakdown or lead to a psychiatric hospital admission. Hope Foster carers is a new model where young people can be placed for up to 12 weeks, foster carers are embedded in the Hope service. A Hope carer recently had the first young person placed with them which has been a success and prevented the young person being placed out of county.

C&YP raised concerns regarding the automatic referral of care leavers to children's services during pregnancy. This resulted in the designated health team and UVP reviewing Pre-Birth Pregnancy guidelines. A new child friendly version of this document has been shared amongst health, social care colleagues and care leavers.

## **5.5 Key themes from Looked After Children & Care Leavers**

The C&YP views on Health, Wellbeing and CAMHS included feedback from 28 young people aged between 12-24 years who live in foster placements, residential homes, supported accommodation and independent living. The presentation included quotes from looked after children and care leavers, and results from the Big Survey 2021.

## Key Priorities from C&YP

- A need for professionals to have a better understanding on the different health and wellbeing support services available for young people
- Most young people know who to contact for support with their emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Long waitlists for young people to access mental health and emotional wellbeing services such as talking therapies
- Young people have felt supported throughout the Pandemic by a range of people, including professionals, carers, and family members
- Young people do not feel supported by the mental health and emotional wellbeing services they receive

### Children and young people were positive about:

- Their support networks during the Pandemic** - young people stated that they were supported by a wide network including parents, carers and professionals.
- Children and young people reported that they liked the flexibility** of being able to have health assessments undertaken virtually.

### Children and young people felt that the following needed improving:

- Accessing support.** Young people reported that they struggled to access emotional wellbeing and mental health support during the pandemic. This included waiting times for appointments.
- Relationships with health professionals.** Young people wanted to build better relationships with the workers undertaking assessments to help them open up about what was happening to them.

## 5.6 CPB actions in response to feedback from C&YP

Actions from CPB – theme Health & Wellbeing	
<b>CPB action</b>	Share summary of positive feedback received from young people regarding the support they received during the Pandemic, and send to social workers, residential staff and carers
<b>Response</b>	Feedback was shared with front line workers & published on JIVE
<b>CPB action</b>	Work with D&B colleagues to provide gym concessions for C&YP
<b>Response</b>	A universal leisure offer is being established with D&Bs that agrees in principle to offer free leisure for C&YP & 50% discount for foster carers & birth children
<b>CPB action</b>	CPOG to explore approaches to integrating health passports with the NHS app on behalf of the CPB
<b>Response</b>	This action was added to the Healthy Outcomes Sub-Group (HOSG) & is in progress
<b>CPB action</b>	Ensure that professionals have up to date knowledge regarding access to services, resources, and support for children and young people
<b>Response</b>	The Local offer was revised for care leavers and a Finance Policy developed for looked after children, both documents are accessible to C&YP and their workers
<b>CPB action</b>	Consult with young people on App development

## Response

A T&F group developed a proposal, consultation with C&YP found that not all would utilise an App, developing existing platforms and improving accessibility would be more effective

# EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (EET)

## 5.7 Surrey Context

We made an important Pledge Promise 'to support C&YP with education and to help them grow with good skills for life'. During the Pandemic in 2020-21 a total of 734 laptops were provided to Surrey C&YP to support their learning, including some in years 12 and 13. Surrey virtual school (SVS) worked in partnership with two care leavers to create a fun [SVS Video](#) to help C&YP understand the role of their Virtual School. As of 3rd June 2021, there were 1049 children in the care of Surrey on the roll of the SVS with 71% in good and outstanding schools. The SVS reported improved Key Stage 4 results (Year 11) in the percentage of children achieving both English and maths s 9-4.

A striking feature of the post-16 cohort is the number of young people who have been recently taken into care, meaning that SVS has not had the opportunity before this point to influence their education. SVS has a dedicated Education Support Officer for UASC who works closely with schools, colleges, social care teams and outside agencies to offer support for new to care and looked-after UASC. SVS funds a specialist assessment from REMA (the council's Race Equality and Minority Achievement Service) for each UASC which includes profiling of first language and English skills to support planning around English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs.

Not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures have reduced, the SVS work in this area has impacted most positively on young people in Year 12, where only 10.4% were NEET as of January 2022 compared with 27.3% in January 2021. As of January 2022, there were 356 young people in Years 12 and 13 cohort (16–18-year-olds) of whom 80 or 22.5% were NEET. *This compares to a cohort size of 304 in January 2021, of whom 88 or 29% were not in education, employment or training, a reduction of 6.5%.* Although this is in line with our statistical neighbours and consistent with the wider picture of NEET looked after children across England, the SVS works determinedly to reduce this. Recent measures have included the establishment of an Education Lead in all children's community homes and SVS registering as a Functional Skills exam center.

All Care Leavers in Further and Higher Education are in receipt of the relevant bursaries, £1200 per annum for those aged 16 – 19 years in further education and £2000 per annum for those attending university. The below table demonstrates the high number of care leavers that have started their university course from 2017 to the current year.

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-2
20	10	7	15	9

There are currently 31 young people engaged in apprenticeships across the council, some applicants choose not to disclose their care leaver status which can impact accurate reporting. There are three levels of apprenticeship on offer, intermediate, advanced, and higher varying between 15 months and



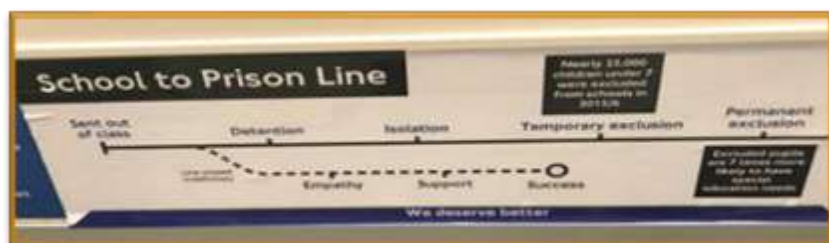
36 months to complete with apprenticeship opportunities. Across the Children's and Quality & Performance Directorates there are 13 apprenticeship posts ringfenced for young people with care experience, experience of mental health services and those with experience of SEND services, with 6 young people in post.

National data indicates that 'looked after children are almost four times as likely to have a special educational need or disability (SEND) than all children and are almost nine times more likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) than all children.' (DfE 2019). SCC maintains 11,346 statutory Education Health and Care plans (EHCP) of these 302 are for young people who are looked after children which is 2.66% of the total EHCPs maintained by the council. The proportion of pupils who are not looked-after in England who have some form of SEND (15.14%) is almost the same as that for SCC (15.49%). This means that Surrey looked-after children are around four times as likely as other children to have SEND, at 60.93%. More SCC looked after children have SEND than those in England (55.74%) and looked after children in SCC are slightly more likely to have SEND than those in the Southeast.

A specific meeting ACME – Area Children Missing Education tracks children in each quadrant who are missing education or receiving an alternative education package. VSH report 2021 states:

'The Virtual School has secured a continued reduction of children missing education (CME) which has reduced from 33 in April 2020 to 3 in July 2021 – equating to 0.5% of the cohort. The percentage of children in 'education other than at school' is similarly low (0.5%). This reduction has resulted from SVS Education Support Officer advocacy supported by senior leaders, the monthly SEND – Virtual School – social care quadrant meetings where 'stuck' cases are resolved, and the support of Surrey's Corporate Parent Board around children with SEND'.

In 2019-2020 there were no permanent exclusions of Surrey's children looked after.



OFSTED noted that *"The virtual school provides effective support to enable children in care to attend school. The attendance of children in care and those with a social worker has been good."* (March 2021)

## 5.8 Key themes from Looked After Children & Care Leavers

16 looked after children and care leavers who are aged between 14-21 years and live in foster placements, residential homes, supported accommodation and independent living contributed to CPB feedback on the theme of education, employment and training.

### Themes from children and young people

- CYP would like more support from Surrey services to support them to prepare for and develop their careers and with finding and maintaining work
- Education is currently not flexible enough to support individual needs
- Most CYP feel supported in education and to reach their goals through support and guidance from allocated workers, the Care Leavers' Service, and their school

- EET to CYP means learning the skills they need for the future, gaining more knowledge in preparation for independence and being financially independent and ready for adulthood
- Employment and training has been impacted by Covid-19, with CYP struggling to find employment opportunities during this time

### Three top recommendations from children and young people

1. **Confidence & resilience:** C&YP to be given opportunities for work experience and mentoring to enable them to feel able to apply for more opportunities
2. **Support:** More specific guidance and action planning, for those who want it
3. **Communication:** More accessible information to be shared with C&YP regarding opportunities and experiences that will help their education and career pathway

## 5.9 Key actions in response to feedback from our C&YP

Actions from CPB – education, employment and training	
<b>CPB action</b>	Develop a formal strategy for education, employment and training for care leavers
<b>Response</b>	This work will be undertaken together with stakeholders and SVS/LCS aiming to be completed by Spring 2022.
<b>CPB action</b>	Provide further information on the impact of attendance on educational outcomes for children with SEND, particularly with regards to the impact of an attendance rate of 80% or less, and any particular issues for children with SEND
<b>Response</b>	An update report was added to the January 2022 agenda pack for Members
<b>CPB action</b>	Provide an explanation of what is included in 'other circumstances' in relation to young people not in education, employment or training
<b>Response</b>	The category of other is used for the purposes of statistical reporting to DfE. A request to the 'Change Board' has been made to explore how the category of 'other' can be explored
<b>CPB action</b>	Ensure child sexual exploitation is brought as an item to the Corporate Parenting Board in future, including information on how many children are at risk of child sexual exploitation
<b>Response</b>	An 'Exploitation and Missing Children' report was brought to the Board in January 2022

# PERMANENCE, PLANNING AND SUFFICIENCY

## 6. Surrey Context

Improving [sufficiency](#) of accommodation is a key strategic priority and in 2019 we made a Pledge Promises 'to do our best to make sure C&YP live in homes that are right for them'. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021, just over half of looked after children (51.6% or 515 individuals) were living within the geographic boundary of Surrey. This compares to the national average of 59%, for SCC this presents improvement when compared to a low point of 47.1% in county in April 2019. The latest data shows a continuing and increasing positive trend, with 54.2% of children who are looked after placed in the county (561) on 1 October 2021. SCC are actively reviewing and developing proposals to strengthen our in-house

offer of fostering and residential provision through children's homes, so capacity is maximised. Our working hypothesis is an ambitious goal of enabling 80% of looked after children to remain within SCC. Ofsted commented "A comprehensive sufficiency strategy is being implemented. The strategy is based on a detailed understanding of the gap between identified needs and resources. This is leading to an increased range of suitable accommodation options for children, although some gaps remain, especially for care leavers." (Ofsted ILACS 2022)

When fostering reported to the board in October 2021, it stated that 73.3% of looked after children were living with foster carers. Surrey Fostering Service has placed 502 (50.2% of the total looked after population) children with in-house foster carers. Of the total looked after children in foster care provision, 67% were placed with Surrey approved carers. This is an increase of 59 children with foster carers and 78 in Supported Lodgings or Staying Put arrangements since March 2020. The previous year has seen an increase in the number of fostering households approved from 393 in 2019/2020 to 398 in the reporting period 2020/2021. There were 286 general households which is small increase than the previous year and 112 connected persons households, an increase from 109 the previous year. This has been achieved against the backdrop of the Pandemic. In 2021 Surrey fostering service commissioned a Peer Review by Essex County Council, findings from the review are currently being implemented. It is important to note that in 2020-21 25 Surrey children were placed for adoption.

SCC officially launched the [Mockingbird Model](#), in conjunction with The Fostering Network, in October 2019. SCC Mockingbird has continued to develop, launching its third constellation on 10/8/2020. Mockingbird is an extended family model, with the aim of providing a community of support and relationships for foster carers, to reduce isolation and increase connection for both foster carers and children alike. The model provides for sleepovers and short breaks, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities. SCC Mockingbird group activity over the year included 32 constellation meetings and 62 social activities, this number has doubled since the last reporting year and was an important source of support during the Covid-19 lockdown. In 2020/21 50 Mockingbird connected person foster carers were approved thus demonstrating the scheme continues to grow.

SCC has committed to implement the No Wrong Door™ model which was pioneered by North Yorkshire Council, and which provides support (and if necessary flexible accommodation) from one multi-agency hub for the most complex teenagers. SCC has committed to develop two No Wrong Door Hubs by the end of 2022/23. Each hub will be able to work with up to 40 young people at any one time who are at imminent risk of becoming looked after. NWD hubs will also support up to 10 young people who are looked after and who would benefit from NWD accommodation as well as support. This will reach a total of approximately 150 young people a year and will also provide a 24/7 crisis response.

During the reporting period the Independent Review Officers (IRO's) undertook 2,831 reviews. This is an increase of 117 review meetings compared to the previous year. Reporting data indicates that 98% of all children's looked after review meetings were held in time, this is above the target of 95%. During the past year, the care planning alert process was triggered for 286 children, this is an increase on the previous year when it was raised for 261 children. Overall, the alerts raised for children were due to 470 different reasons. The number of alerts, including the reasons and resolutions are regularly reported to the CPB.

## **6.1 Key themes from Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

Responses were received from 13 looked after children and 7 care leavers aged between 14-21 years, these C&YP live in foster placements, residential homes, supported accommodation and independent

living. This section includes responses to the Big Survey 2021 from 179 looked after children and care leavers aged 5-25.

## Themes from C&YP

- C&YP reported that to them **‘Permanence’ is a very important concept**, it means being able to call the place in which they live ‘home’, without being afraid of having to move again; it’s somewhere where they feel safe and stable, and that gives them a sense of belonging. Some young people also referred to permanence in terms of stable education and employment
- **The majority of C&YP feel supported where they live**, they have good relationships and communicate well within the home, with some saying that it feels like family

## 6.2 Key actions in response to feedback from our C&YP

Actions from CPB – Placements, planning and sufficiency	
<b>CPB action</b>	Circulate a briefing on the Access to Resourcing panel pilot. The briefing is to include detail on the scale of the pilot, plans to become mainstream, frequency of meetings, scale of impact and detail on staffing and resourcing.
<b>Response</b>	TOR are being reviewed and will be shared with Members when available
<b>CPB action</b>	Circulate detail of the sufficiency modelling for Members outside the meeting
<b>Response</b>	Details of sufficiency modelling were shared in a Members Sufficiency Session (1) March 2022
<b>CPB action</b>	The Board agreed to circulate a briefing outlining the short and long term impact of the family court delays and any plans for mitigation
<b>Response</b>	An update was provided in March 2022 action-tracker
<b>CPB action</b>	Circulate a breakdown of the children that were being placed out of county, and the reasons why, to the Board
<b>Response</b>	Written update was shared with Members

# LEISURE, CULTURE AND LIFE SKILLS

## 6.3 Surrey Context

In 2017 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty on all local authorities in England to publish information about the services the local authority offers care leavers aged 18-25 years. The current Surrey Local Offer for Care Leavers was developed in 2019/2020 and in 2021 a series of meetings were held to review, amend, improve and expand the content of the Local Offer to ensure its relevance for care leavers. This activity listened and responded to feedback from care leavers via the Big Survey 2021. The Ofsted Monitoring visit in 2021 noted that “young people were provided with extensive information in both paper and digital formats and have accessible links and signposts to more detailed information and further sources of advice”. In addition to clear information on rights and entitlements for care leavers, a Young Person’s Finance Policy was developed for looked after C&YP aged 0-18 years, this policy covered finance for C&YP living in the various types of placement options, it addressed ‘out of policy’ requests, such as clothing for a school Prom and set out clear finance processes for workers and managers.

[The Care Leaver Covenant](#) (CLC) is a DFE funded initiative dating from 2018, the key aim of the Covenant is for organisations to commit to provide additional support for young people leaving care;



making available a different type of support and expertise from that which is provided by local authorities. A key aspect of the Covenant requires local authorities to sign a Proforma stating their county-wide commitments to deliver change across five strategic areas below:



1. Awareness raising of the Covenant within the LA
2. Training and employment opportunities within the LA
3. Council tax exemption
4. Social Value policy
5. Economic development

In 2021 the CPB made a commitment to sign the CLC and in Spring 2022 a consultation event is planned with care leavers and partners to establish a 'Wish List' which will help to shape SCC Care Leaver Covenant commitments. Commitments will be aligned with **Surrey Social Value Priorities 2021**.

SOCIAL IMPACT		ECONOMIC IMPACT		ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	
reduce INEQUALITY	promote INDEPENDENCE & WELLBEING	discover HIDDEN TALENT	think LOCAL	tackle ROOT CAUSES of climate change	invest in Surrey's GREENER FUTURE

In 2021 a working group was established to address a 'post code lottery' within SCC. Historically 5/11 borough councils provided a leisure offer for C&YP living in a county council comprising of eleven different borough councils. Live leisure offers varied greatly from borough to borough, for example one offered free swim only, many excluded care leavers post 18 years and only 1/5 provided leisure provision for Surrey foster carers.

## Views from Foster Carers on the historic leisure offer provided by 5/11 borough councils

**"In my home Borough, Offers have been inconsistent and very difficult to find. Foster Carers need to ask because any advertised Offers are in hiding. This is echoed across the County".**  
Jane Porter, Chair SFCA

**"From my point of view currently I do not know of any supported provision for leisure or cultural activities in my area, if it is out there it's not easily visible or known about".** Foster Carer

The working group, with support from senior officers and CPB elected members began a county-wide corporate parenting campaign to promote the adoption of a universal leisure offer. The working group engaged with borough council senior leisure officers and operators, in 2022 a free universal leisure offer was agreed in principle. This leisure offer will be available to all C&YP irrespective of the borough council in which they live. The offer specifically addressed children with additional needs and the existing barriers that prevent C&YP accessing leisure provision. [Active Surrey](#) have agreed to fund a P/T post to support D&B colleagues with administering the offer and to ensure provision is coordinated and monitored. An out of county leisure strategy agreed the Celebration Fund would support out of county gym membership applications.

**Below is the universal leisure offer agreed in principle by 11 D&Bs**

## The Leisure Offer for looked after Children, Care Leavers & Foster Carers 2022

- Free gym membership
- Swimming access at all times (*not Spectrum*)
- Classes and additional activities – 50% concession
- All bookable activities - 50% concession
- All looked after children under 16 years are entitled to one free **adult** admission
- Looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17 years entitled to one **friend** admission – (*does not include gym membership*)
- Care leavers aged 18-25 with additional needs entitled to one free **adult** admission
- Foster carers and their birth children (aged under 18 years) have a 50% concession on all leisure provision

In 2019 Cabinet agreed a recommendation made by the then DCS and Lead Member to provide council tax discounts to care leavers, subsequently 9/11 borough councils made provision to provide care leavers living in county with 100% council tax exemption. In 2021 a working group was established by the CPB to encourage all 11 borough councils to adopt a fair and consistent offer in respect of council tax exemption. The group worked to improve finance processes and monitoring. Due to the tenacious effort of the CPB elected members and DCS, all 11 borough councils now provide council tax exemption for Surrey care leavers.

During the past 18 months, SVS has worked with Surrey Arts to offer free music lessons to Surrey Looked After Children, Active Surrey to promote various opportunities for C&YP to improve their health and wellbeing, developed the SVS Summer Extravaganza as a summer holiday offer to improve 'soft skills' primarily for our Y6 children transitioning to secondary school. The Big Leaf Foundation ran a 3 night residential to Jamie's Farm for our UASC and promoted the 'family learning' offer from Surrey Adult Learning (SAL). Summer holiday events from different providers were captured in one leaflet produced by a care experienced SVS events apprentice.

Surrey's Fostering Service and Children's Community Homes enable children to access a wide range of community based and tailored leisure activities, both services promote the Celebration Fund as a useful source of funding for C&YP living in all placement types to apply for items such as, sports equipment, day trips and leisure activities.

## 6.4 Key themes from Looked After Children and Care Leavers

14 looked after children and 12 care leavers contributed their views to this section, C&YP represented placement types including children's homes, foster care and independent accommodation.

### Themes from C&YP

- **Most C&YP report going to the park fairly often** and a good proportion use the gym, Some young people mentioned that leisure activities are too expensive
- **7 C&YP reported being aware of the "leisure offer** for looked after children and care leavers"
- All looked after children and the majority of care leavers report **feeling supported by their carer/worker in developing life skills**. C&YP suggested funding activities, taking C&YP to do activities, listening and communicating better would be helpful

- Some care leavers suggest that the **barriers in accessing cultural and leisure activities are money, time, and not knowing the area in which they live in**

## Three top recommendations from C&YP

- **Communication** – workers and carers should be available, helpful, great listeners and promote consistent dialogue with their young people
- **Finance is a major barrier in accessing leisure and cultural activities** - we urge services to liaise with boroughs and districts to ensure that there are consistent offers for care experienced C&YP to access activities for free or at a discounted rate
- **Signposting** – inform C&YP and their carers about other schemes and concessions available in their local area

## 6.5 Key actions in response to feedback from our C&YP

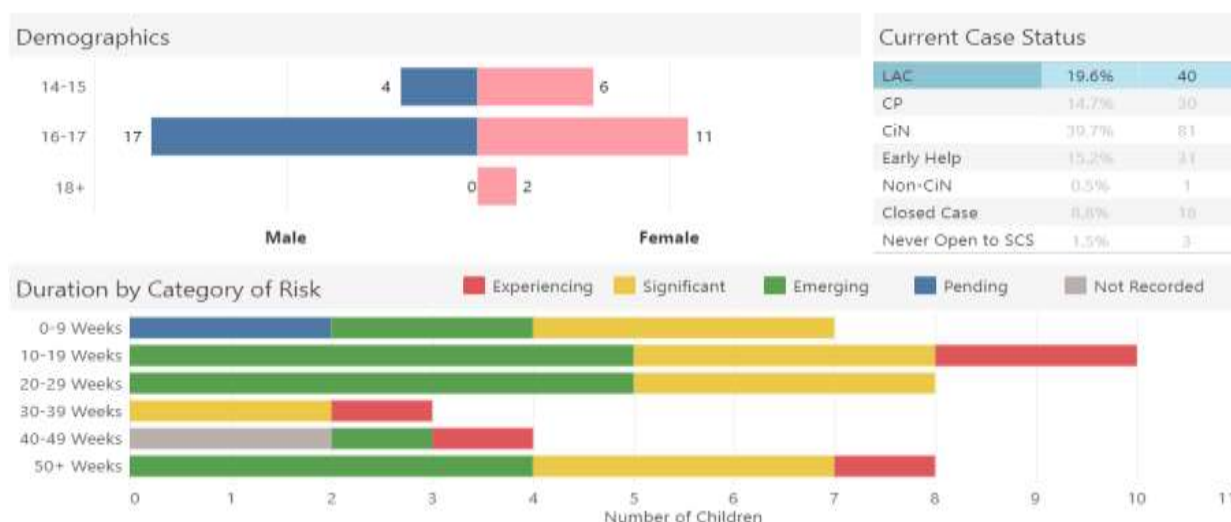
Actions from CPB – Leisure, culture & life skills	
<b>CPB action</b>	For Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Communication colleagues to look into streamlining information regarding leisure offers to improve communication
<b>Response</b>	Funding for a post holder to coordinate the universal offer has been secured
<b>CPB action</b>	For the SVS to make the information regarding the NCS and the University of Surrey courses available to foster carers
<b>Response</b>	Delayed due to Ofsted visit, action is being completed
<b>CPB action</b>	For the Director for Children's Services to look into foster carers accessing staff benefits
<b>Response</b>	This action is being progressed through CPOG fostering item
<b>CPB action</b>	The Chairman and Director for Children's Services to follow up connecting the work of social prescribing to the wider work of the directorate and Mind Works
<b>Response</b>	This action is being progressed through CPOG

# SAFEGUARDING OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS

## 6.6 Surrey Context

Exploitation and Children Missing from Home or Care has been identified as a priority area of work for Children's Services, 'keeping children safe and 'feeling safe' is a Pledge Promise we made to C&YP. As reported to the CPB in January 2022, there are currently a total of approximately 200 children identified as being at risk of exploitation across SCC, within these numbers our looked after children account for approximately 20% or 40 children with a large percentage being boys aged 16/17. Around 25% of these children are placed outside of Surrey.

**Below is a table to highlight the demographic of looked after children and care leavers at risk of exploitation**



Most children in care do not have any missing episodes. The proportion of looked after children and young people who are frequently missing is small and there is a comprehensive multi-agency risk management response for these children. Any child, whether looked after by SCC or supported by parents/carers gets a service if they are at risk of exploitation or go missing. There are a number of different systems in place to support SCC children and young people. As part of the newly refreshed and updated Terms of Reference for our Child Exploitation and Missing Teams, Surrey police have agreed a new process specifically in relation to children's homes, to ensure they are aware of any significant information involving any new child placed in the Home. Each children's home has a named SPOC (Single point of contact).

Surrey police developed a [Short Video](#) to highlight contextual safeguarding, this video has to date reached over 1 million accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube alone, with over 100,000 people watching, liking, sharing and commenting on it. A shorter version is planned that could be shared in local cinema's. Children's Services (UVP) with care experienced trainers have trained around 1,000 police officers and frontline staff across the Force to understand 'How to talk and engage with children and young people'.

## 6.7 Key themes from Looked After Children and Care Leavers

6 looked after children and 17 care leavers living in foster placements, supported accommodation and independent living contributed to a report on C&YP's views on safeguarding.

Themes from C&YP:

- **Support:** C&YP said they need a good support network of trusted people in their lives to encourage the feeling of safety. This can be workers, supported accommodation staff, carers, family & friends. Alongside being supportive, C&YP reported that this support network needed to actively listen to them and have regular communication with them
- **Security:** secure accommodation is key to ensuring C&YP feel safe in the places they call home. This includes secure entry into buildings, appropriate CCTV where necessary, staff on site where possible and other residents ensuring they keep buildings secure
- **Planning:** ensuring clear planning and timelines are in place for C&YP futures will help to decrease feelings of uncertainty and unsafety

The top three important areas identified by young people that would make them feel safer



- A good support network
- Having someone to talk to
- Activities to help with mental health

## 6.8 Key actions in response to feedback from our C&YP

Actions from CPB – Safeguarding of looked after children & care leavers	
<b>CPB action</b>	The UVP Officer to check the extent to which young people are consulted as a matter of course about their accommodation
<b>Response</b>	UVP Officer has contacted Chris Tisdall and Sarah Foster to identify any gaps, UVP will support CYP to participate fully
<b>CPB action</b>	For the Chair of the Board to raise the identification of dark alleyways in the county with the Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure
<b>Response</b>	The Chair has spoken with Cabinet Member for Highways & Cabinet Member for Community Protection about street lighting and personal safety concerns
<b>CPB action</b>	Member to email the Police Officer regarding training for voluntary organisations
<b>Response</b>	Cllr. Catherine Powell is working with a member of Surrey Police
<b>CPB action</b>	Associate Director to provide updated information on referral to assessment and assessment to treatment times in three months' time
<b>Response</b>	A paper update will be shared with CPB members in April-May 2022
<b>CPB action</b>	Ahead of the May meeting of the Board the Chair and Officers to set up a one-hour session to cover the Sufficiency Strategy and supporting data
<b>Response</b>	A sufficiency session was held with Members on 21.02.2022 and a further session is planned in May 2022

## 7 Looking forward

The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is to inquire and understand; set ambition; and to champion and challenge our collective care of looked after children and care leavers. This is an assurance role that sits alongside multi agency operational work and organisational scrutiny. It is informed by our experts, our practitioners, children and young people and carers.

Throughout the next year we will monitor our performance against the Pledge Promises and refresh our commitments to children in care and care leavers, this important activity will drive the creation of a fresh new Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2026. Working in partnership we will continue to drive change and model best practice corporate parenting behaviours. The Board will work with Children's Services to support the implementation of the six OFSTED ILACS improvements:

- The quality and effectiveness of assessments and plans for all children, including disabled children, homeless 16- and 17-year-olds and privately fostered children.
- Partnership work to secure support for children and young people's mental health and well-being.
- The provision of essential information to carers about children, and viability assessments to inform placements with friends or family.
- The sufficiency of suitable accommodation for young people, including care leavers.
- The quality and impact of supervision to ensure that decisions are timely and support the

progression of children's plans.

■ The proportion of permanent staff, to reduce turnover

We will champion the signing of the Care Leaver Covenant which will set ambitious commitments to create opportunities and improve outcomes for Surrey Care Leavers. Having recently reviewed the external corporate parenting website, we will focus on developing an internal corporate parenting website to demonstrate impact and increase visibility and accessibility of the Board and its sponsored projects.

We have a number of challenges in the year ahead, particularly related to the ongoing impacts from the Pandemic, but we are committed to tackle these head-on to ensure we continue to drive improvements in the way we support children and young people in SCC.

## 7.1 Summary

This has been somewhat of a transformational year for the Board, with a project manager now established in the role, the Board and its Members will continue to champion positive outcomes for 1,050 children and 814 care leavers in our care and we will be relentless in asking ourselves and others **'Is this good enough for my child?'**.

**"Children are not the people of tomorrow,  
but are people of today.  
They have a right to be taken seriously,  
And to be treated with tenderness and  
respect.  
They should be allowed to grow into  
whoever they were meant to be –  
'The unknown person' inside each of them  
is our hope for the future"**  
Janusz Korczak

# Annex 1. Glossary of Acronyms

ACME	Area Children Missing Education
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
ASE	Adoption Southeast
BC	Borough Council
C&YP/CYP	Children and Young People with care experience
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CLC	Care Leaver Covenant
CME	Children Missing & Exploited
CPB	Corporate Parenting Board
CPOG	Corporate Parenting Operational Group
CSH	Central Surrey Heath
D&B	District & Borough
DFE	Department For Education
EET	Education, Employment & Training
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
EWMH	Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health
FCE	Foster Care Executive
HOSG	Health Outcomes Sub-Group
IHA	Initial Health Assessment
ILACS	Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services
IRO	Independent Review Officer
IV	Independent Visitor
KLOE	Key Lines of Inquiry
LCS	Leaving Care Service
LCS	Liquid logic Children's Social Care System Software
LMCS	Lead Member of Children's Services
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NTS	National Transfer Scheme
NWD	No Wrong Door
PA	Personal Advisor
PEP	Personal Education Plans
PVO	Placement Value Outcomes
REMA	Race equality & Minority Achievement
SAL	Surrey Adult Learning
SCC	Surrey County Council
SCIFF	Social Care Common Inspection Framework
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SHS	Surrey Healthy Schools
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SVS	Surrey Virtual School
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
UVP	User Voice & Participation (team)
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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