



# Walsall Council

## Corporate Parenting Board

Meeting to be held on: **Monday 21 February, 2022 AT 6.00 PM**

Meeting to be held: Conference Room 2, Council House, Walsall.

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

Chair: Councillor Wilson  
Vice Chair: Councillor Worrall  
Councillor Ferguson  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor Murphy  
Councillor M Nazir  
Councillor Mazhar

### **ADVISOR**

Alison Jones (NHS Walsall CCG)

**Note:** Walsall Council encourages the public to exercise their right to attend meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees. Agendas and reports are available for inspection from the Council's Democratic Services Team at the Council House, Walsall (Telephone 01922 654369) or on our website [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk).

## ITEMS FOR BUSINESS

1.	<b>Introductions and Apologies</b>	
2.	<b>Substitutions</b>	
3.	<b>Minutes</b> To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022.	<u>Enclosed</u> <u>Pages 5-11</u>
4.	<b>Young People Engagement</b> To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the activities of the Children in Care Council.	<u>Enclosed</u> <u>Pages 12-21</u>
5.	<b>Walsall Children's Services Corporate Parenting Board Quarter 3</b> To consider performance monitoring information for quarter 3.	<u>Enclosed</u> <u>Pages 22-30</u>
6.	<b>Update Report – Children in Care and Care Leavers Website and App</b> To provide an update on the work to date and confirm future actions.	<u>Enclosed</u> <u>Pages 31-56</u>
7.	<b>Update on Actions and Recommendations of Housing Report</b> To provide an update to the Board.	<u>Enclosed</u> <u>Pages 57-68</u>
8.	<b>Work programme</b> To review the work programme of the Corporate Parenting Board.	<u>Enclosed</u> <u>Pages 69-70</u>
9.	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> 4 April 2022, 6 p.m.	

**The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012**  
**Specified pecuniary interests**

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Prescribed description</b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

## **Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

### **Access to information: Exempt information**

#### **Part 1**

#### **Descriptions of exempt information: England**

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
  - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
  - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
  - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
  - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

## **Corporate Parenting Board**

**Tuesday 11 January 2022 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Conference room 2, Walsall Council House**

### **Board Members Present:**

Councillor T. Wilson (Chair)  
Councillor Worrall (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Elson  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor K. Ferguson  
Councillor F. Mazhar

### **Officers Present**

Mark Burrows	Group Manager Provider Services
Elise Hopkins	Director, Customer Engagement
David Hughes	Children and Young Persons Champion
Alison Jones	Designated Nurse LAC (Clinical Commissioning Group)
Helena Kucharczyk	Head of Performance Improvement and Quality
Colleen Male	Director, Children's Social Work
Jivan Sembi	Head of Service (Children in Care, Provider and Care Leaving Services)
Debra Silvester	Group Manager
Lorraine Thompson	Head of Virtual School

Peshva Sharif      Team Leader, Black Country, Telford and Wrekin Independent Visitor Service.

Kaiya Caines      Black Country, Telford and Wrekin Independent Visitor Service

Young person representing the Children in Care Council.

### **Welcome**

At this point in the meeting, the Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. He also noted that the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage. It was noted that a Shadow Board was held directly prior to the meeting to seek the views and experiences of young people.

### 23/21 **Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Murphy.

### 24/21 **Substitutions**

Councillor Elson substituted on behalf of Councillor Murphy for the duration of the meeting.

### 25/21 **Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the meetings held on 15 November 2021, were submitted.

(see annexed)

### **Resolved (Unanimous)**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021, copies having previously been circulated to each Member of the Board, be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Hicken as present.**

### 26/21 **Young People Engagement**

The Children and Young Persons Champion described some of the highlights of Children in Care Council (CICC) since the last Board, and provided an update on the activities of the CICC. Members were informed that the CICC had been involved with face to face interview panels. The number of young people participating in face-to-face sessions at the Council4Kids had increased.

Members were informed that a WhatsApp peer support group had been established and was a positive way for children in care to keep in contact and for care leavers to receive support in relation to mental health and well-being. In addition to this seven referrals had been made to the Independent Visitor Service, this was as a result of its promotion at the Council4Kids meeting. A Member suggested that the Independent Visitor service should be promoted to Head Teachers through Schools Forum, Officers agreed to progress this.

The Committee were provided with details in relation to the project 'Language that Cares'. A report on this could be provided to the Board in the future.

Future dates for Total Respect training were shared, however this was conditional on securing venues. Members agreed that Council owned venues should be provided free of charge for this purpose.

The Young Person in attendance described the Care Leavers Group, and noted that the group was made up of local young people. She suggested that it would be beneficial if the group contained young people who had moved out of the area to ensure that they were part of a community.

Resolved

1. That the Young People Engagement Report is noted
2. That the Board request that Council buildings are provided free of charge for Total Respect training.

**Resolved**

That the Young People Engagement report was noted.

#### **27/21 Fostering Annual Report**

The Group Manager introduced the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The Board were informed that the report summarised the activity of the Fostering Service from 1 April 2020 to 231 March 2021. An overview of the achievements of the service in 2020/21 was detailed.

A Member questioned how new Foster Carers were recruited, and how the service ensured that this reached a wide audience. The Group Manager stated that the service advertised on a range of media, such as a targeted radio campaign, social media, twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Challenge was provided to question how new people were encouraged to engage with this form of advertising. In response Members were informed that the Council's social media accounts were used and all options were considered, and it was noted that it had not been possible to meet physically with people and it was hoped that this could be developed once again.

A Member questioned if it was considered detrimental to the Council's fostering service for independent fostering companies to advertise on traffic islands. The Group Manger stressed that the service worked in a mixed economy and that the service worked well with individual fostering agencies, but acknowledged the issue. The Director of Customer Engagement stated that she would raise this at the relevant Proud (programme) working group and provide them with the opportunity to explore this issue further and ways that advertising could be developed to benefit the service.

In response to a query from a Member, the Group Manager provided more information on training provided to Foster Carers, including an improved online offer, although physical sessions were offered with support for childcare.

A Member suggested that in the future, compliments were also included within the report, and the Group Managed noted this, informing Members that Ofsted had recognised that Foster Cares felt well supported.

**Resolved**

1. That the Fostering Service Annual Report 2020/21 be noted.
2. Walsall Council review the advertising of independent fostering agencies on traffic islands
3. Walsall Council identify advertising space for the Council fostering service (free of charge).

## 28/21 Independent Visiting Service Annual Report

The Team Leader (Independent Visitor Service) presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). A short video was played to the Board which detailed the role of the Independent Visitor, this was a trained volunteer who “befriended and supported children and young people in care”. The recruitment process, sessions and activities of the independent visitors were described. The Board were informed by the Group Manager that the service had been quick to provide alternative activities during the lockdown period.

A Member stated that the service was beneficial for young people and questioned the funding to the service. The Group Manager stated that where necessary the Director was able to approve additional expenditure over budget. A Member suggested that the number of young people accessing this service could be higher, and that the target number of children should be increased. The Board agreed that it was important that there should be an ambition to increase numbers of young people accessing the service year on year.

The Director stated that this was discussed at the Shadow Board, and stressed that Participation with young people was a key priority. It was acknowledged that the target for the number of young people accessing the Independent Visitor service had not been sufficiently ambitious, and there was an intention to raise the profile of this service and for Children’s Services to be assured that the commissioned arrangements and capacity were sufficient. Work on this would be considered within the participation strategy to ensure that arrangements were robust, and this would be bought back to the Board.

The Board were informed that a different provider had been previously used, however performance had improved under ‘Change Live Grow’.

A Member asked for more information in relation to the promotion of the service, and the Board were informed that face-to-face promotion had not been possible in the same way since the pandemic. However not all awareness raising was done online, live events and relevant forums were attended.

### **Resolved**

That the annual target of 10 children (accessing the Independent Visitor Service) was reviewed and that the revised target is reported back to the Corporate Parenting Board.

## 29/21 Performance Monitoring Quarter 2

The Head of Performance Improvement and Quality presented the performance monitoring report and highlighted the salient points (annexed).

The Young Person in attendance asked why 30% of young people were not attending their reviews, and questioned if this was due to their age. Officers responded to explain that some young people did not want to attend, and that there should be no children who wanted to attend and were not able to. However for those that choose



not to attend there are different ways in which their voice can be represented at the meeting.

A discussion was held in relation to 4% of care leavers who were not in suitable accommodation, the Board were informed that 7 of these were in custody and 1 was in supported accommodation.

The Young Person in attendance asked how the Council was encouraging Looked after Children and Care Leavers to stay in education. The Head of the Virtual School provided further information on this which included a 'aspire to university' course, and exposure to university. Work was done with careers advisors to ensure that young people were provided with the right support. This was also considered as part of staying put arrangements, to ensure young people had a home to return to during holidays.

The improvement in the number of Looked after Children attending dental appointments was noted, and Officers and the Health representative were congratulated for this.

The Young Person challenged the number of social workers that a child may have, and the Director responded to stated that as a child moved through the system they would have more than one social worker. However reducing this as much as possible this was a priority for the service.

### **Resolved**

That the Performance Monitoring Report was noted.

### **30/21 Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The Head of Service (Children in Care, Provider and Care Leaving Services) presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The previous Council Corporate Parenting Strategy was published in 2017. Building on the foundations of the existing strategies vision, aims and priorities, the council had developed a proposed corporate parenting strategy which aligned with the Corporate Plan and the changed legislative and national policy context.

To achieve this vision 5 key strategic priorities had been identified. These were:

1. Safety and Permanency.
2. Mental and Physical Health Wellbeing.
3. Education and Employment.
4. Transitions and Independence.
5. Influence and Involvement.

The Board discussed the priorities, and the revised strategy. A Member questioned if the target of 95% of 'pathway plans up to date' was sufficiently ambitious when performance was sitting at 98%. The Head of Service stated that, in consideration of this, this target would be reviewed.

**Resolved**

1. That the Corporate Parenting Strategy be noted.
2. Agree the priority areas and action plan for the delivery of the strategy.
3. Agree that the delivery of the strategy is monitored through the work plan of the Board.
4. A programme of mandatory training for Elected Members is developed, to include:
  - Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
  - Front door of Childrens social care.
  - Total Respect training.

31/21 **Work Programme**

The Board considered the work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year.

**Resolved**

**That the work programme was noted.**

The date of the next meeting was 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 8.15 p.m.

Signed .....

Date .....



## **Young Peoples Engagement**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Council4Kids, the “Children in Care Council” (CICC), is the forum where Walsall’s looked after children, young people and care leavers are able to shape and influence the parenting and support that they receive.

This report describes some of the highlights of the CICC since the last Corporate Parenting Board on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

### **Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:**

To provide the Corporate Parenting Board an update on the activities of the CICC which will allow the Board to offer any support to the children, in partnership with strategic management as corporate parents for looked after children.

We are keen to ensure that the CICC is encouraged to share highlights and raise any issues and concerns they may have on behalf of care experienced young people in Walsall with a view to improving services and outcome for children in the care of Walsall Council.

The Shadow Board has been put in place to ensure that the young people are fully involved in the Corporate Parenting Board and that their views are considered as part of this process

### **Recommendations:**

The Board notes the activity and events of the Children in Care Council.

### **Background papers:**

Previous Young People Engagement reports.

### **Corporate Parenting Pledges**

The Walsall Promise for all Children in Care and Care Leavers

### **Resource and legal considerations:**

Walsall is committed to ensuring that children and young people are involved in decision making and processes that directly affect their lives through.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced seven Corporate Parenting Principles and 2 of the principles focus on the involvement and participation of children and young people:

- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Take account of a child or young person's views, wishes and feelings

Article 12 United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child says that children and young people have the human right to have opinions and for these opinions to be heard and taken seriously and taken seriously.

### **Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

### **Citizen impact:**

The services and the improvements play a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall. The Council and its partners as Corporate Parents make critical contributions to improve outcomes.

### **Environmental impact:**

None.

### **Performance management:**

The Children's Champion works with children in care and our care experienced young people to ensure that our CICC is a rich and engaging forum. Regular reports are provided to the Director of Children's Services and the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **Reducing inequalities:**


The children in care council seeks to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

### **Consultation:**

The CICC is one of the key forums through which services for children in care and care leavers seek to consult on service delivery and where children and young people are able to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level.

### **Contact Officer:**

Full Name – David Hughes

 01922 650555/ 07787 284682

Email: david-j.hughes@walsall.gov.uk

# Report: Young People’s Engagement and Children in Care Council

## 1.0 Introduction

The following items are some of the highlights that have happened since the last Corporate Parenting Board in November 2021.

### 1.1 Willenhall Litter Pick

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January we went out in force to do our bit and help clean up the local community. This incredible project all started with a truly wonderful letter from one of our members of the Children In Care Council Maria age 11. Last summer she wrote the following letter:

*Dear sir or madam*

*My name is Maria and I’m 11 years of age I know that I am only young but I feel we as children are not getting heard. You may be wondering in what way, we feel we need more jobs doing to help the environment and for children’s well being for example we could give each school a environment representative or get a committee to go out each day or weekend to pick up litter, also you could put more bins around the Area.*

*But I also feel that children like me are not getting heard in the way we are supposed to be well I think you should put more children’s ideas into thought*

*I hope you put these ideas into consideration thank you*

*Yours sincerely Mxxx*

We had a great turnout of volunteers and collected over 50 bags of rubbish. We had some wonderful feedback on the day from local residents saying how kind our volunteers were in helping keep their local town clean and tidy. It was a real joint effort and on behalf of all of us in the CICC and Care Leavers group and staff working for the council we would like to say a special thanks to Maria, her sisters and her Foster Carers. We have attached some pictures to show how well the day went.







**1.2 Interview panel at end of January for the *Director of Early Help and Walsall Right 4 Children Partnership***

We started off the year as we mean to go on by getting three of our Care Leavers involved in a very important interview panel. In total they interviewed five candidates and really put them through their paces giving them some really challenging questions. The interview panels went well and each of our care leavers got the chance to take it in turns asking different questions and taking a lead helping build their confidence and self-esteem. Their feedback on the panels was recorded and used in determining who should get this important role.

**1.3 New virtual care leavers group**

At the last Corporate Parenting Board meeting one of our long standing and committed care leavers Catherine had asked about us setting up and running a new virtual care leavers group. Catherine requested this due to studying at university far away from Walsall meaning she is not able to attend most of our face-to-face meetings. Our Care Leaver Ambassador Sophia is taking a lead role in this and has asked our Transition Leaving Care service to advertise and promote this group to all of our care leavers, hoping that this will help people feel more connected if they are not able to join us in person. Our initial plans will be



to hold one per month and then to review it after a three month period. For details on the dates please see the schedule at the end of this report.

#### 1.4

##### **Total Respect Training**

*Total Respect training is run by children in care and care leavers (in partnership with staff). This training provides a valuable insight into the lives of children in care and care leavers.*

Total Respect is a training course for anyone who works with children in care, or makes decisions affecting their lives, including social workers, foster carers, residential workers, participation workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Team Managers, Senior Managers, Directors and Elected Members. Total Respect will help develop practical strategies for ensuring children's effective participation. Our vision for Walsall is that all staff working with children or working in fields that affect their lives, attend this training which will help give a valuable insight on how your actions impact on the lives of children.

##### **It aims to**

- encourage participants to be aware of and challenge the assumptions that are made about young people;
- allow participants to understand the experiences of young people who use their service (get participants to walk in your shoes);
- give participants time to think about young people as individuals (not as cases/ numbers);
- concentrate on skills needed when working with children who use services (active listening; effective communication; observation; report writing);
- support participants to know how to promote participation for individual young people in their care planning, and in wider policy and service development;
- provide knowledge of children's rights and advocacy.

As requested by the chair at the board meeting in January we have now secured cost free venues to deliver this training from. We will continue to do this for the remaining dates of the training for the rest of this year.

#### 1.5

##### **Video from Young People for Social Worker Induction**

A meeting is scheduled with the Principle Social worker to discuss how we can raise the profile of Children in Care Council in the induction of all new social workers. The current proposal is that we produce a video explaining what CIC is all about and to include comments directly from children and young people about how the CIC Council has helped them. We have made a start with this at our Council 4 kids meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February and hope to start coproducing this with some of our children. This will be an important project for our young group as it will help set out the voice of our children which should help improve practice across our Directorate.

#### 1.6

##### **Good news stories**

During the first week in February I received a message from a care leaver: "Is there any new care group leaver meetings this year I am very lonely." I responded immediately, added him to the care leaver's WhatsApp group and continued to message him. The response he had from the group and the new connections he built as a result of this small yet transformational act has made such a big difference to him. He now feels connected to care leavers/ young adults within Walsall which we hope in turn will build his social circle as he has no family in England and very few friends.

1.7

### **Other news**

#### **Care Leavers Covenant - South Staffs Water (update)**

I wanted to share with you a recent offer developed by South Staffordshire Water for care leavers in our area but also how it is developing.

This came about initially when in Walsall we invited Alex Latham from the Covenant to share a presentation with us so we could review our current commitment to the covenant. Walsall are classed as a trail blazer and have had some real positive engagement with this service which is nationwide.

As a result of Bernard Cysewski (Interim Team Lead, Money Home Job) being present at the meeting, the Covenant, in partnership with contacts passed on through Bernard made some real positive steps in helping our care leavers when managing their own tenancies and bills.

This is what it now looks like:

- Discounted two-year tariff. 60% in the first year and 40% in the second.
- Financial Literacy Training Sessions. Held within your area, with up to ten young people at any time by South Staffs focusing on managing bills and understanding their water bills.
- Advanced notice of employment opportunities published on the Covenant's website and sent directly to young people signed up to [Connects](#).

#### **How to access the offer:**

To access the discounted tariff, a care leaver or their personal advisor can complete the attached one-page form, returning it to the freepost address. To check they're with SSW they can search using:

<https://www.water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier/>

If your leaving care team would like to request a financial literacy training session, then please email [NicholaClarke@south-staffs-water.co.uk](mailto:NicholaClarke@south-staffs-water.co.uk) directly.

If we can have such success like the example above imagine what else could be possible if we continue to strive forward and seek out new initiatives for our care leavers.

1.8 **Dates for the diary**

**Council 4 Kids group dates:**

<b><u>Date/Time:</u></b> 4:30 – 6:30	<b><u>Venue</u></b>	<b><u>Any other info (Activity, Guest Speaker...)</u></b>
10 <sup>th</sup> February	TLC Hub	
24 <sup>th</sup> February	TLC Hub	
10 <sup>th</sup> March	TLC Hub	
24 <sup>th</sup> March	TLC Hub	
7 <sup>th</sup> April	TLC Hub	
21 <sup>st</sup> April	TLC Hub	
5 <sup>th</sup> May	TLC Hub	
19 <sup>th</sup> May	TLC Hub	
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	TLC Hub	
16 <sup>th</sup> June	TLC Hub	
30 <sup>th</sup> June	TLC Hub	
14 <sup>th</sup> July	TLC Hub	
28 <sup>th</sup> July	TLC Hub	
11 <sup>th</sup> August	TLC Hub	
25 <sup>th</sup> August	TLC Hub	
8 <sup>th</sup> September	TLC Hub	
22 <sup>nd</sup> September	TLC Hub	
6 <sup>th</sup> October	TLC Hub	
20 <sup>th</sup> October	TLC Hub	
3 <sup>rd</sup> November	TLC Hub	
17 <sup>th</sup> November	TLC Hub	
1 <sup>st</sup> December	TLC Hub	
15 <sup>th</sup> December	TLC Hub	

### Additional events

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Any other info (Activity, Guest Speaker...)</u>
21 <sup>st</sup> Feb 10:30 – 4:30	Woodlands Adventure and Outdoor Learning	5 spaces available for care leavers. Several forms to be completed. Will need to be able to get dropped off and picked up. Food and drink provided. Will need spare clothes.  <b><u>Attendees:</u></b>

### Care Leavers Group 2022

<u>Date/Time:</u> 4.30 to 6.30	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Any other info (Activity, Guest Speaker...)</u>
3 <sup>rd</sup> March	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	<b>TLC Managers</b>
31 <sup>st</sup> March	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	<b>TLC Managers</b>
28 <sup>th</sup> April	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
26 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
21 <sup>st</sup> July	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
18 <sup>th</sup> August	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
15 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
13 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
10 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	
8 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>TLC Hub</b> (May change)	

### Additional events

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Any other info (Activity, Guest Speaker...)</u>
21 <sup>st</sup> Feb 10:30 – 4:30	Woodlands Adventure and Outdoor Learning	5 spaces available for care leavers. Several forms to be completed. Will need to be able to get dropped off and picked up. Food and drink provided. Will need spare clothes.  <b><u>Attendees:</u></b> Jordan (confirmed via WhatsApp) Kayden Jukes (confirmed via WhatsApp)

### Virtual Care Leavers Group

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Any other info (Activity, Guest Speaker...)</u>
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> March 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> April 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> June 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> July 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> August 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> September 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> November 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> December 5:30 – 6:30	<b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	

# Walsall Children's Services Corporate Parenting Board February 2021 Quarter 3

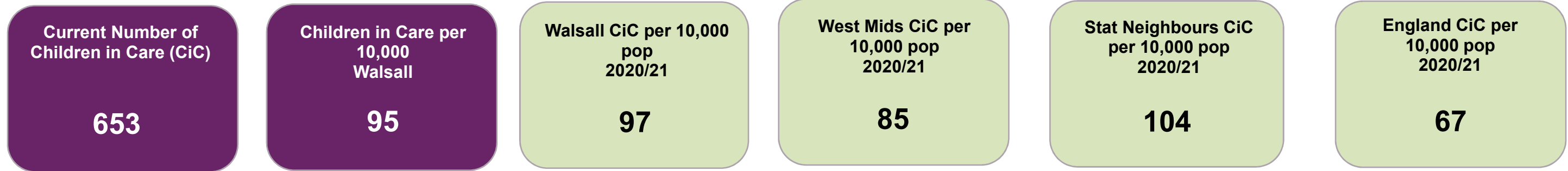
Please Note: 2020-21 benchmarking data has now been added  
where applicable.



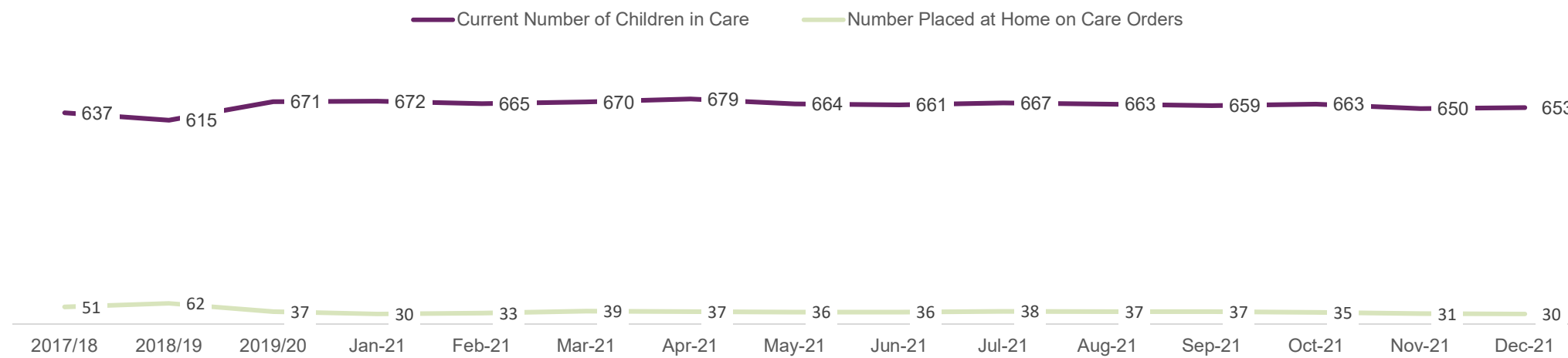
Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

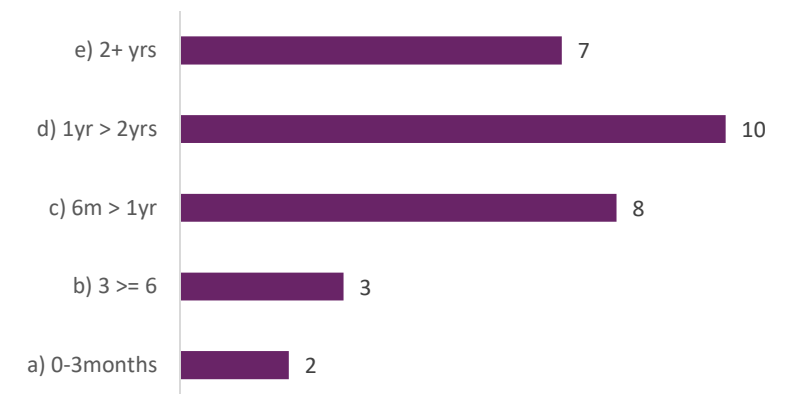
## Current Children in Care (CiC) Profile



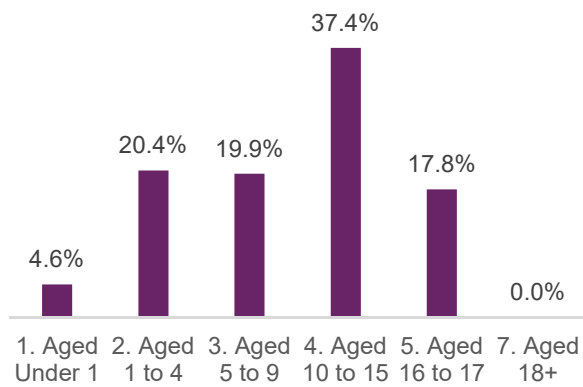
Number of Children in Care in Walsall (12 Month Rolling)



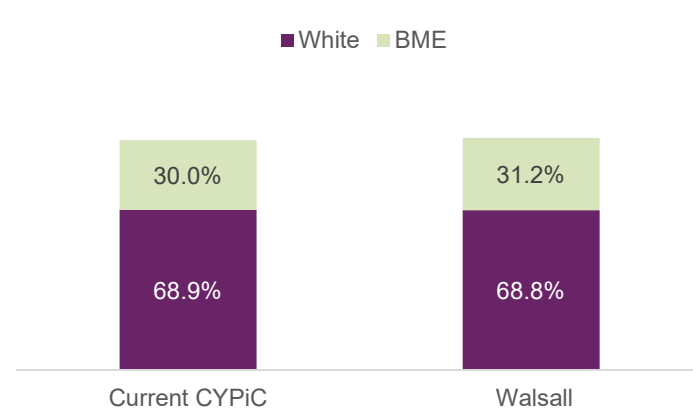
Length of Time placed at home on full care orders



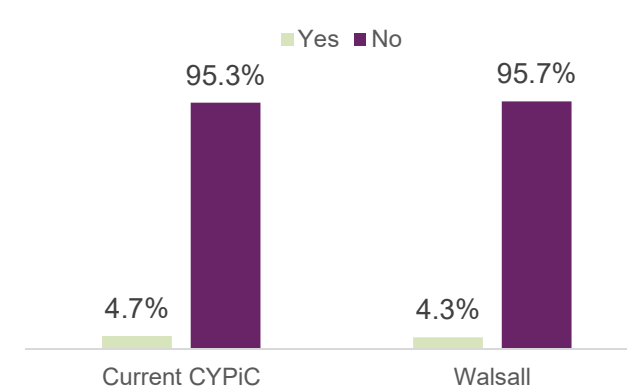
% of current CiC by age



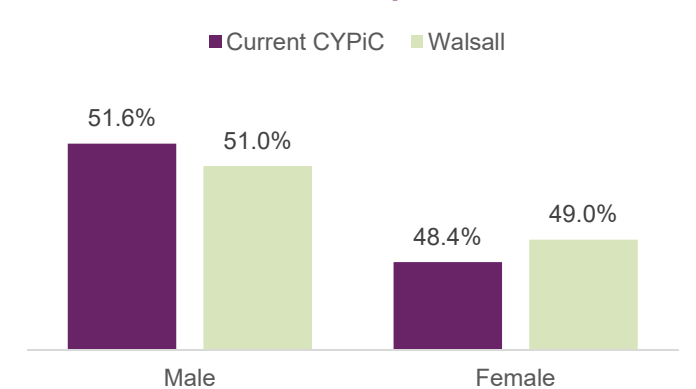
Ethnicity Comparison



Disability Comparison



Gender Comparison



## Commentary

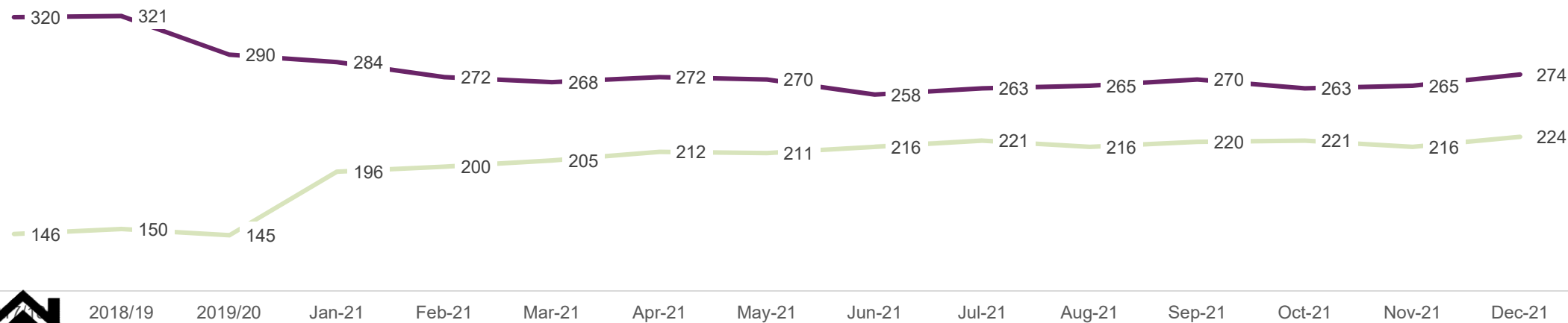
Demographic data has been taken from the 2020 mid-year population estimates. A slightly lower proportion of Children in Care are from BME backgrounds compared to the Walsall Child and Young Person population (0-17s). A slightly higher percentage of Children in Care have a disability (5.2%), compared to the overall 0-17 population (4.3%). A slightly higher percentage of Children in Care are male (51.4%) compared to the overall 0-17 population of Walsall (51.0%).

The current Children in Care population has continued to decrease slightly from 670 at the end of 2020/21 to 653 at the end of Q3 of the current year (2021/22). The current rate of 95 per 10,000 remains below that of our statistical neighbours but is still higher than the 2019/20 England and West Midlands averages. We currently have 30 children placed at home on full care order, this is a decrease from 37 at the end of Q2. 17 of the 30 have been placed at home for over a year. Work is continuing with the courts to revoke care orders for children who are placed at home where appropriate.

**CiC Placement Analysis**

**Breakdown of Foster Placements (12 Month Rolling)**

— In House Foster Carers — Independent Foster Carers (IFAs)



The number of CiC placed with in house foster carers and IFA's has increased but remains fairly stable.



**% CiC placed 20 mile+ from home, outside of LA boundary**

**89**  
**13.9%**

2020/21 Walsall = 11.0%  
2019/20 Walsall = 10.0%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 14.0%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 16.3%  
2020/21 England = 16.0%

**% CiC 3 or more placements in a year**

**49**  
**7.5%**

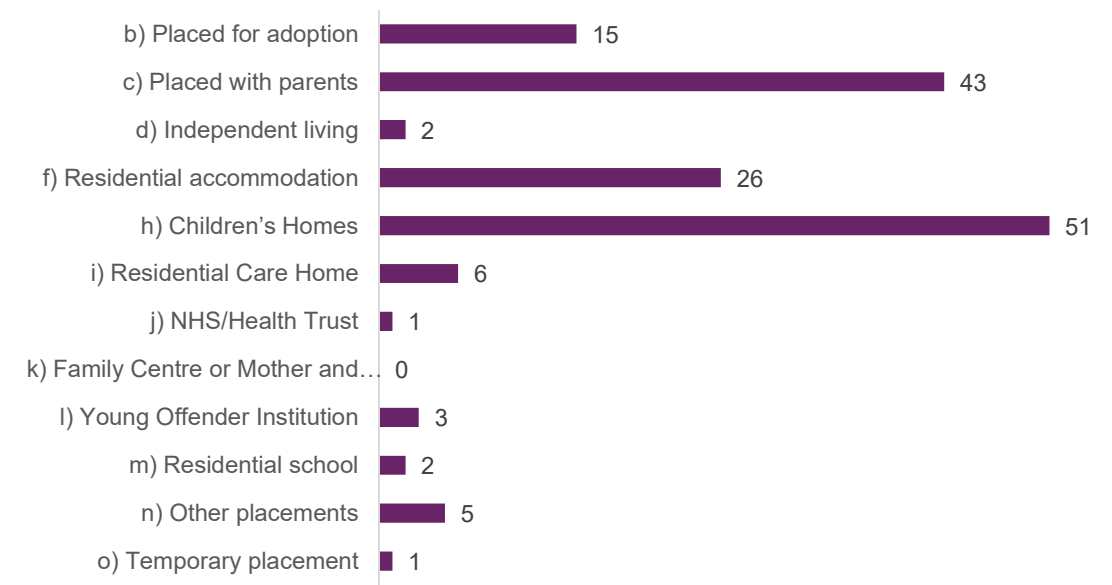
2020/21 Walsall = 7.0%  
2019/20 Walsall = 9.0%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 8.0%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 7.1%  
2020/21 England = 9.0%

**% of CiC in same placement for over 2 years if CLA for over 2.5 years**

**207**  
**62.3%**

2020/21 Walsall = 67.0%  
2019/20 Walsall = 66.0%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 71.0%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 71.5%  
2020/21 England = 70.0%

**Current CiC by Placement Type (non-fostered)**



**Commentary**

Trends for children placed with in house foster carers have increased during the third quarter of 2021/22. Currently Walsall has 274 children placed with in house foster carers, lower than the out-turn for the previous three years. Walsall has 224 children placed with independent fostering agencies. This figure has increased slightly during quarter 3, but has remained fairly constant during the reporting period.

13.9% of Walsall's CiC are placed 20 plus miles from their home address and 7.5% of the CiC population have had 3 or more placements within a year. This is an increase on the 2020-21 out-turn and better performance than comparators in 2019-20. The percentage of CiC in the same placement for over 2 years if CiC for over 2.5 years (62.3%) is also improving but remains slightly lower than regional and statistical neighbour averages for 2020/21.



Statutory Visits and Reviews



**% Visits undertaken to timescale**

Where a statutory visit has been undertaken to timescale in accordance with the child's plan.

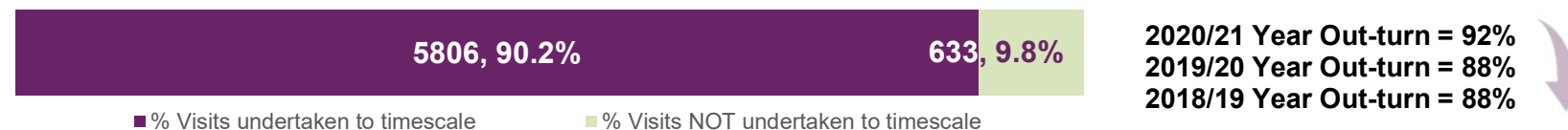
Time Since Last Visit Undertaken	Number	%
a) 0 - 6 weeks	597	91.4%
b) 6 - 12 weeks	50	7.7%
c) 12 - 18 weeks	1	0.2%
d) 18+ weeks	1	0.2%
No Visit Recorded - new in last month	4	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**Reviews carried out within timescale (12month Rolling)**

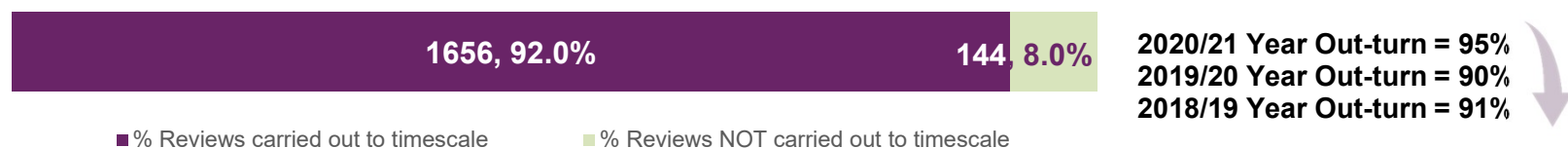
Where reviews for children looked after are carried out within timescale

Time Since Latest Review	Number	%
a) 0 > 3 months	376	57.6%
b) 3 > 6 months	256	39.2%
c) 6 > 9 months	7	1.1%
d) 9 > 12 months	0	0.0%
e) 1 year or more	0	0.0%
No review	1	0.2%
No Review - new in last month	13	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



2020/21 Year Out-turn = 92%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 88%  
2018/19 Year Out-turn = 88%

**% of children in care by time since last visit**



2020/21 Year Out-turn = 95%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 90%  
2018/19 Year Out-turn = 91%

**% Time Since Latest Review**



Commentary

The proportion of CiC where a statutory visit has been undertaken to timescale in accordance with the child's plan is 90.2% with 91.4% seen within 6 weeks of the previous visit or coming in care. There were 4 CiC with no visits recorded at 31st December 2021, these are new children who have entered into care during the month.

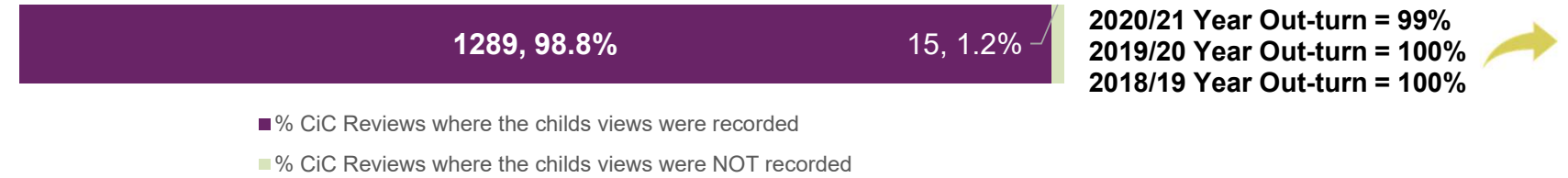
92.0% of reviews have been undertaken within timescales. This is good performance. 96.8% of current Children in Care have had a review within the last 6 months. 1.1% (7) children currently have overdue reviews, however, a proportion of these reviews will have been completed on time and will be in the process of being recorded (IROs have 20 working days from the date of review to write their reports).

**Views of the child**



**% CiC Reviews where the child's views were recorded (12 month rolling period)**

The proportion of CiC reviews where the child's views were recorded (this is where the review took place and a "PN" code has been selected)



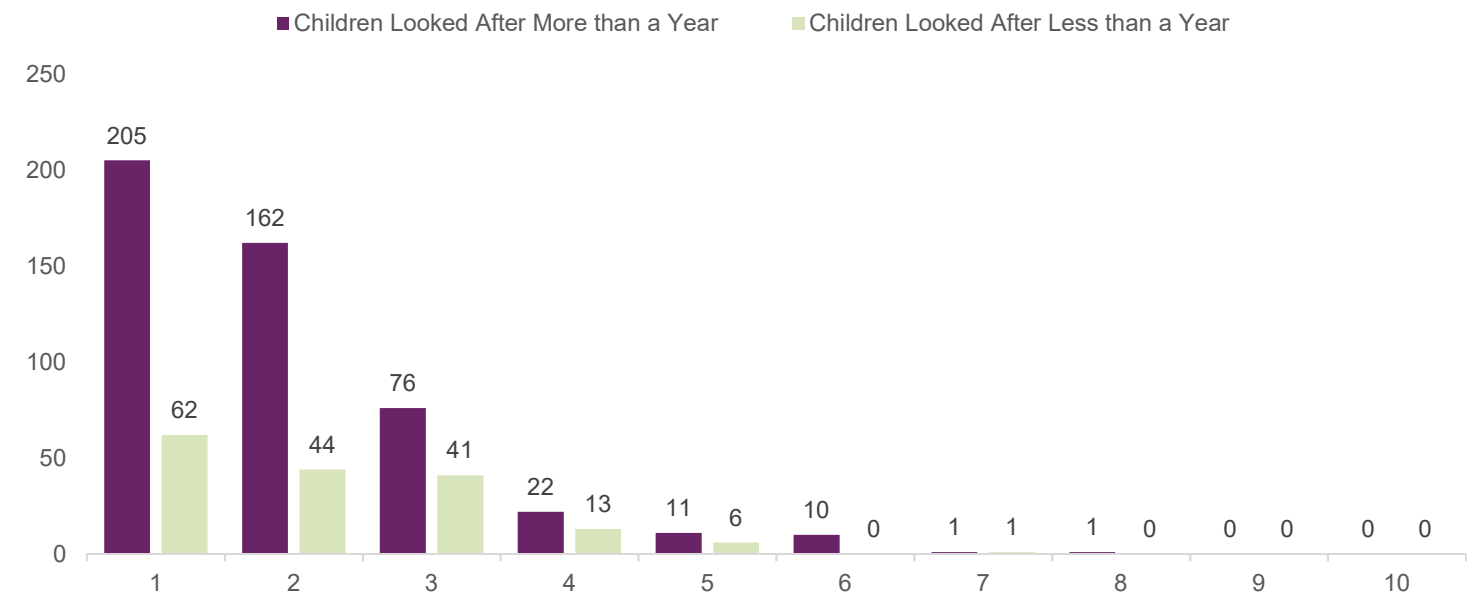
**% CiC Reviews where the child attended their review (12 month rolling period)**

The proportion of CiC reviews where the child's physically attends their review.



**Number of Social Workers children have had in the past 12 months**

Type of Participation at Review (12 month rolling period)	Number	%
PN0 - child under 4 at time of review	428	N/A
PN1 - child attends and speaks for themselves	826	64.2%
PN2 - child attends and an advocate speaks for them	32	2.5%
PN3 - child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	14	1.1%
PN4 - child attends; does not speak for themselves / convey their views	28	2.2%
PN5 - child does not attend but asks advocate to speak for them	74	5.7%
PN6 - child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the conference	267	20.7%
PN7 - child does not attend nor conveys their view to the conference	25	1.9%
<b>Total Reviews</b>	<b>1715</b>	
No Participation Code Reported	22	1.7%



**Commentary**

The child's views were recorded at 98.4% of CiC reviews. This is slightly lower than the out-turns for the previous three years, but remains very positive performance.

69.9% of children attended their review in the previous 12 months. This is a significant increase compared with previous years and has been supported and enabled through the increased use of technology.

It is positive that the number of children experiencing a change of social worker has decreased slightly compared to the previous quarter. The number of CiC for more than 1 year who have remained with the same social worker for the past 12 months is 205. This has increased slightly from 226 at the end of the previous quarter.

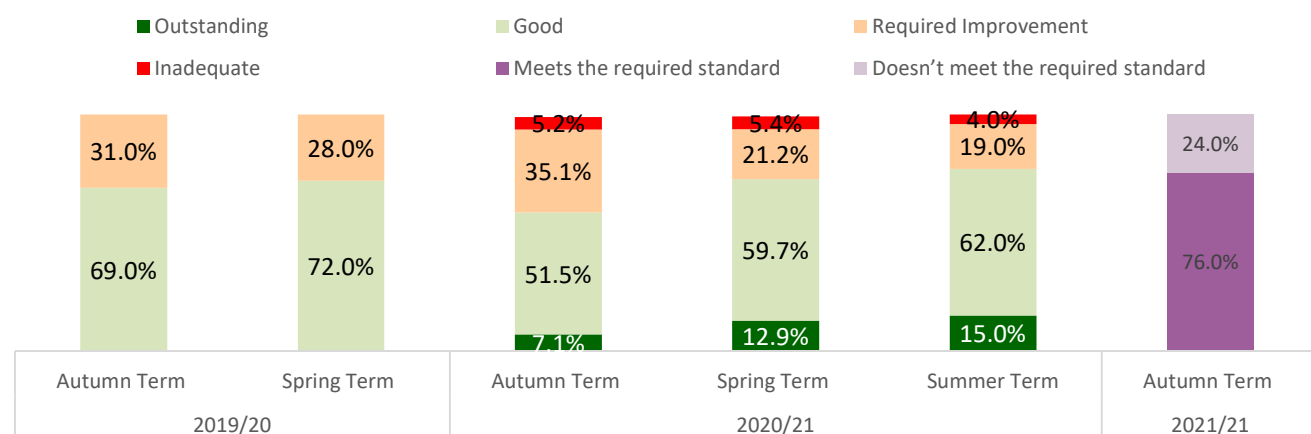
## Education



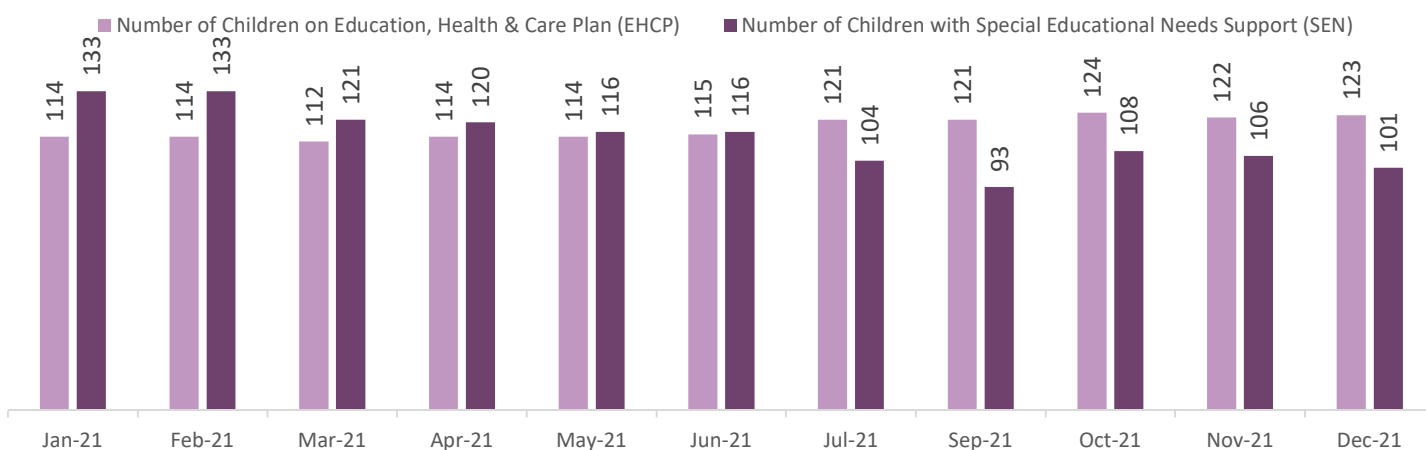
### RAG Ratings of PEPS

The quality assurance process changed in 2020/21 from PEPs being rated good and requires improvement to being rated inadequate, requires improvement, good and outstanding, this enables us to distinguish between very good and very poor PEPs'.

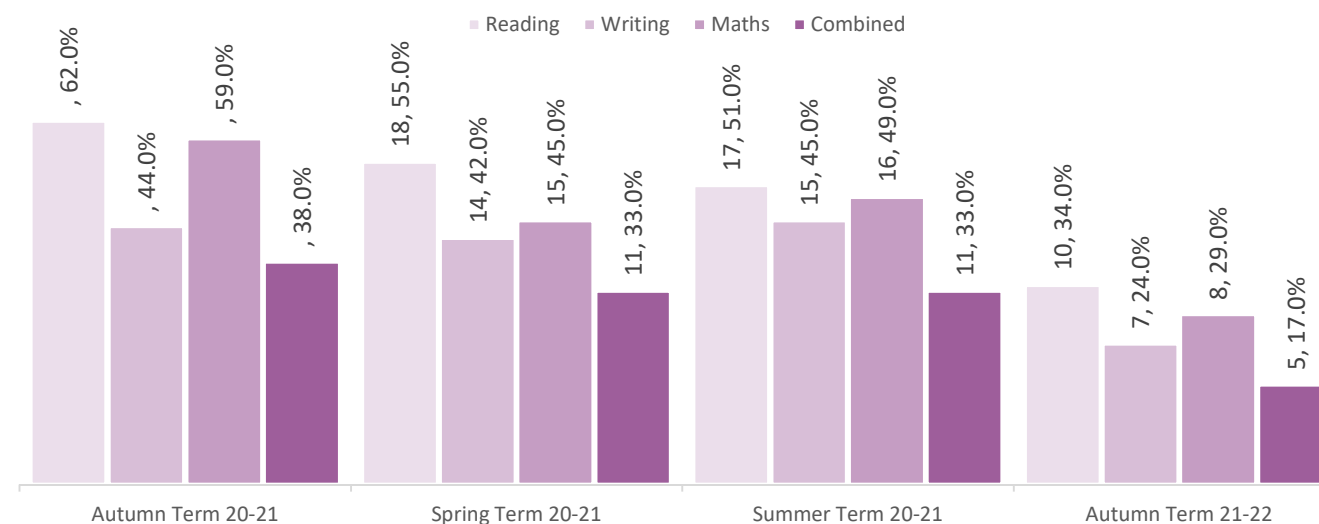
### RAG Ratings of PEPS



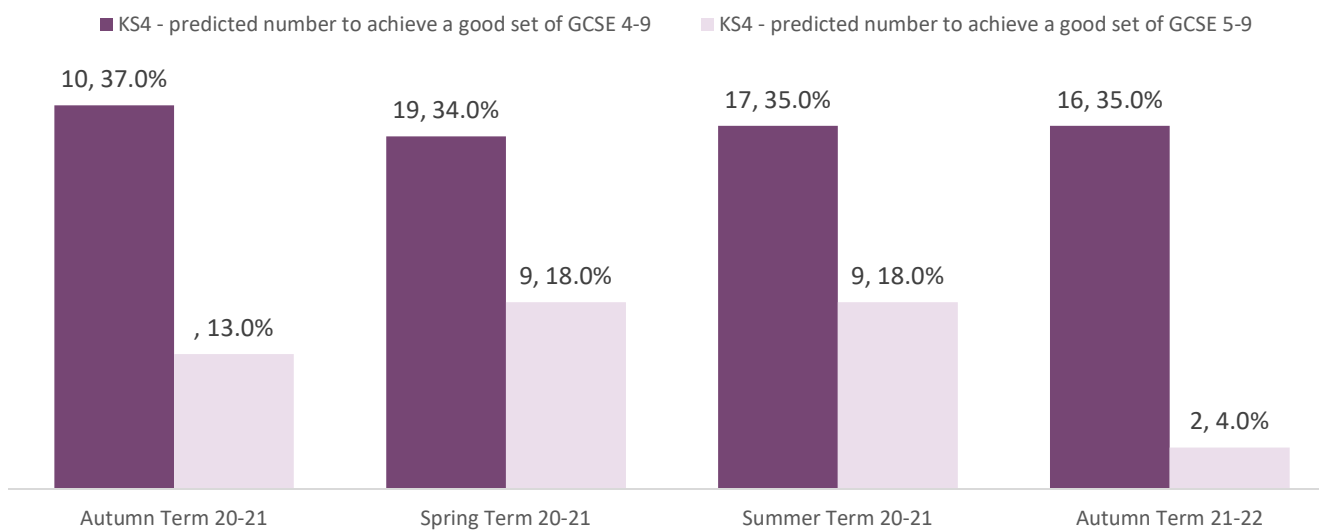
### EHCP and SEN Support



### Attainment Predictions Key Stage 2



### Key Stage 4 KS4 - predicted number to achieve a good set of GCSE 4-9 & 5-9



## Commentary

**Please Note** - The quality assurance process for the rating of completed PEPs has changed from a "RAG" system to "Meets the required standard" and "Doesn't meet the required standard"

KS2 - The percentage of children predicted to achieve the expected level of attainment for KS2 combined in reading, writing and maths in autumn 2021-22 was 17% which is a significant decrease compared to autumn 2020-21 (38%).

KS4 - The percentage of children predicted to achieve a good set of GCSE (4-9) reported in autumn 2021-22 was 35% which is a decrease compared to autumn 2020-21 (37%). The percentage of children predicted to achieve a good set of GCSE (5-9) reported in autumn 2021-22 is 4% which is a significant decrease compared to autumn 2020-21 (13%).

The number of children with an EHCP has remained static between July 2021 and September 2021 at 121, compared with September 2020 this has increased from 116. October has seen the number of children on an EHCP increase to 124 which is slightly higher when compared with October 20 (117). November saw a decrease in the number to 122 with December increasing again slightly to 123 which is higher compared with December 2020 (123).

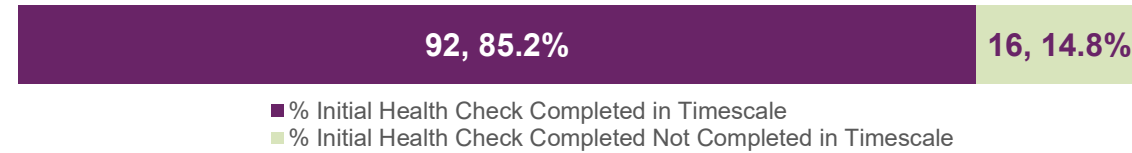
The number of children with SEN support has increased from 104 in July 2021 to 110 in September 2021, compared with September 2020 (116) this is slightly lower. October has seen the number of children with SEN support decrease to 108 which is significantly lower when compared with October 20 (118). November and December 2021 have followed the same decreasing trend with December having 101 children with SEN support which is less compared with December 2020 (118).

## Health and Well-being



### % Initial Health Check Completed in Timescale

Assessments in timescale of CiC admission for those in care for 28 days or more

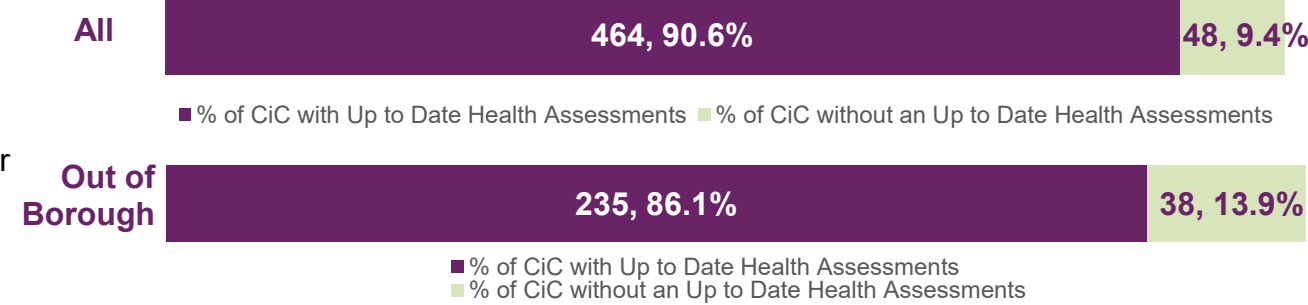


2020/21 Year Out-turn = 75%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 49%  
2018/19 Year Out-turn = 75%



### % of CiC with Up to Date Health Assessments

Where the child is over 5 and has been in care for over a year

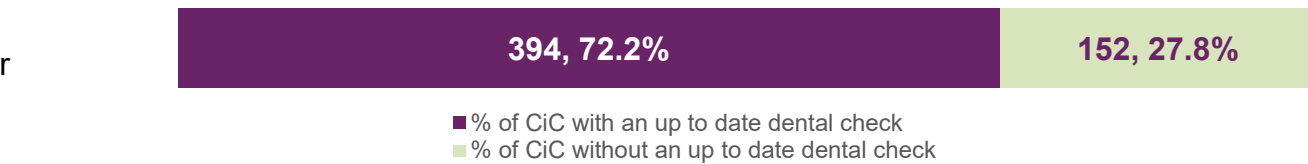


2020/21 Walsall = 85%  
2019/20 Walsall = 80%  
2019/20 West Midlands = 87%  
2019/20 Stat Neighbours = 90%  
2019/20 England = 90%



### % of CiC with an up to date dental check

Where the child is over 5 and has been in care for over a year



2020/21 Walsall = 43.0%  
2020/21 Walsall = 92%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 33%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 33%  
2020/21 England = 40%



## Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

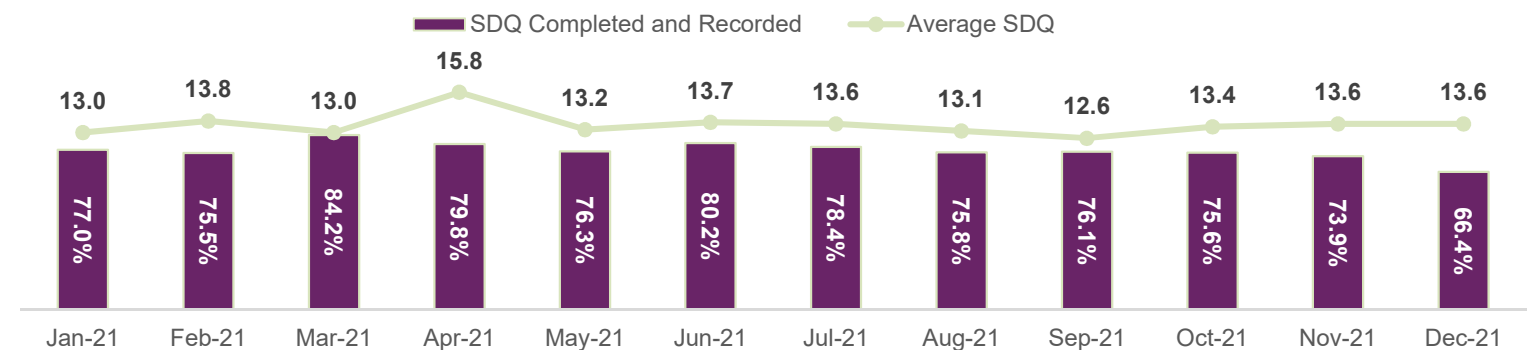
The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire should be completed for every child looked after for at least 12 months and aged 5 to 16 years-old.

Average SDQ Score  
**13.6**

### Breakdown

Score	Considered	Number	% of those eligible for SDQ	% against all Children
Score 0 - 13	Normal	210	52%	33.4%
Score 14 - 16	Borderline	49	12%	7.8%
Score 17 - 40	Cause for Concern	145	36%	23.1%

### Number of children looked after for at least 12 months aged 5 to 16 with an SDQ score (Rolling 12 months)



## Commentary

Performance shows that the vast majority of children in care have up to date health checks. There has been a positive increase in the percentage of children whose initial health checks are done on time 85.2% currently compared to 69.9% at the end of Q2. Social Care and Health colleagues continue to work closely together to ensure that processes for notifying health when a child enters care are robust and the finalisation of health assessments is timely.

Similarly a high and climbing proportion of children have up to date dental checks. This is a significant improvement on 2020-21 and indicates that the backlog in dental checks as a result of Covid is being cleared.

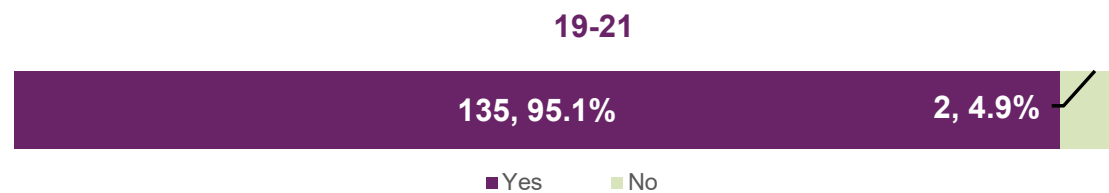
The proportion of SDQ's completed and recorded has decreased slightly to 66.4%, compared to 76.1% at the the end of quarter 2. The average SDQ score is currently 13.6. This has increased since the previous quarter but a Lower number is better. 145 children currently have an SDQ score that suggests there may be a cause for concern in their emotional and mental well-being based on the answers they gave to the questionnaire.

## Care Leavers



### Care Leavers in touch

Care Leavers where the local authority is in touch aged 19-21

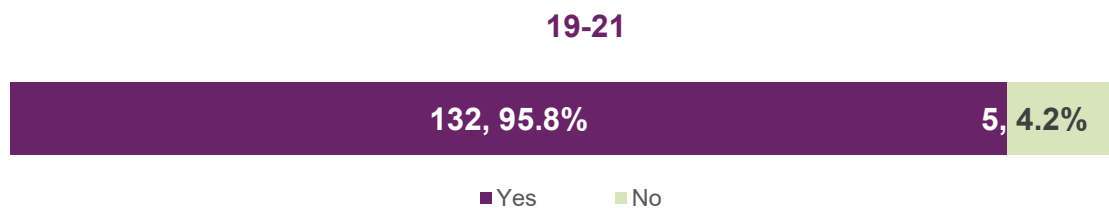


2020/21 Year Out-turn = 94%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 95%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 95%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 96.7%  
2020/21 England = 95%



### Care Leavers in suitable accomodation

Care Leavers whos accomodation is classed as suitable for ages 19-21 (excluding 'gone abroad', 'deported' and 'residence not known')

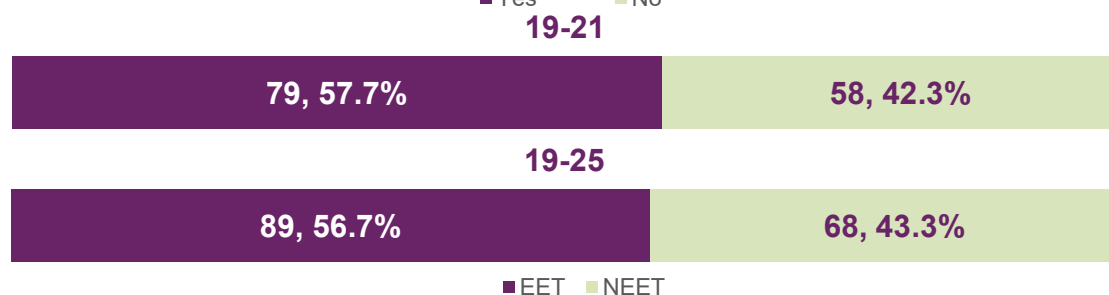


2020/21 Year Out-turn = 89%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 89%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 87%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 89.5%  
2020/21 England = 88%



### Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers aged 19-21

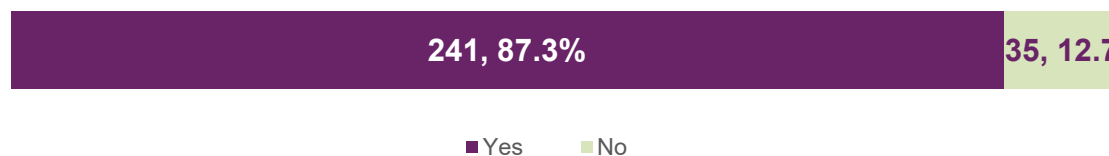


2020/21 Year Out-turn = 50%  
2020/21 Year Out-turn = 54%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 50%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 46.4%  
2020/21 England = 52%



### Care Leavers available to work - All Ages

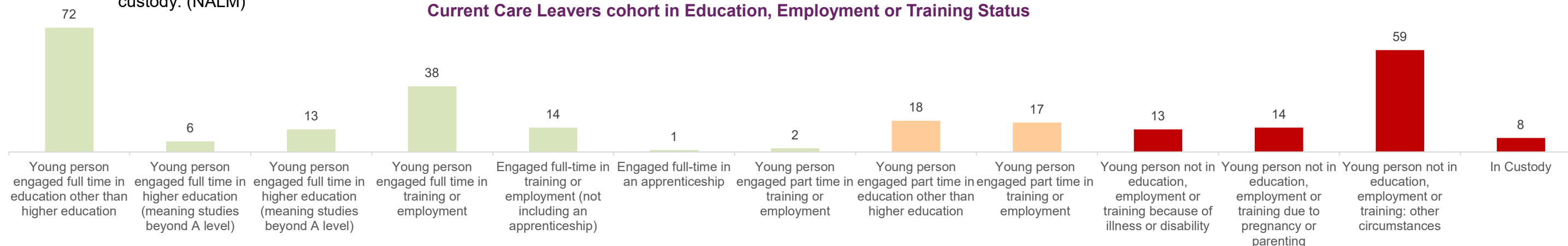
Care Leavers who are available to work this excludes all those that are not available for the labour market due to illness/disability, pregnancy or young mothers or being in custody. (NALM)



2020/21 Year Out-turn = 54%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 74%  
2018/19 Year Out-turn = 63%

2020/21 Year Out-turn = 86%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 86%

Current Care Leavers cohort in Education, Employment or Training Status



## Commentary

The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training for the second quarter of 2020-21 was 57.7%. This has increased compared to 52.1% at the end of quarter 2. The 19-25 cohort has also seen an increase during quarter 3, with 56.7% care leavers in Education, Employment or Training compared with 52.2% at the end of Q2.

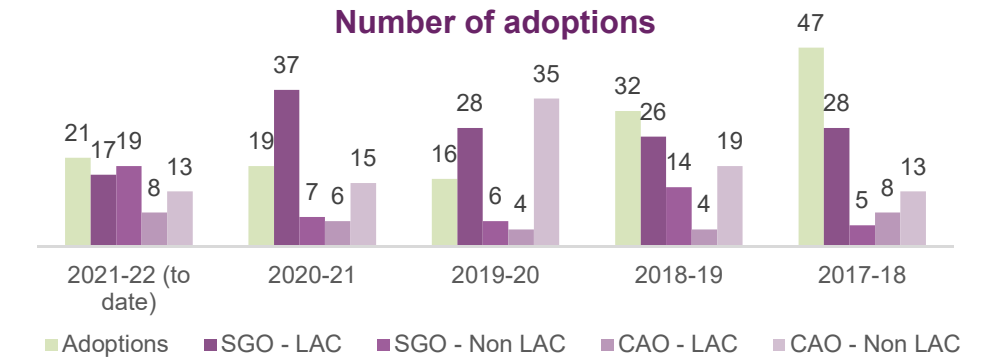
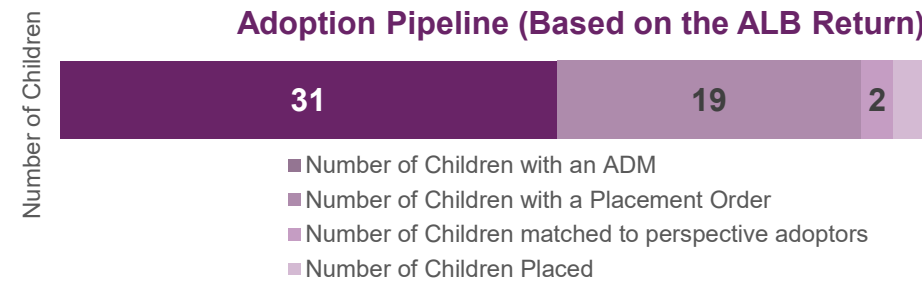
87.3% of care leavers are available to work - excluding those not available for the labour market (NALM) due to illness, disability, pregnancy or being a young mother or because they are in custody. 8 of Walsall's care leavers are currently in custody, an decrease of 2 since the end of Q2. The number of of care leavers in suitable accomodation remains high - of the five 19-21 year olds that are not in suitable accomodation, all 5 are in custody.



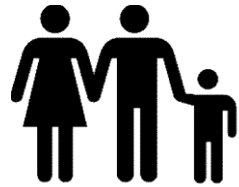
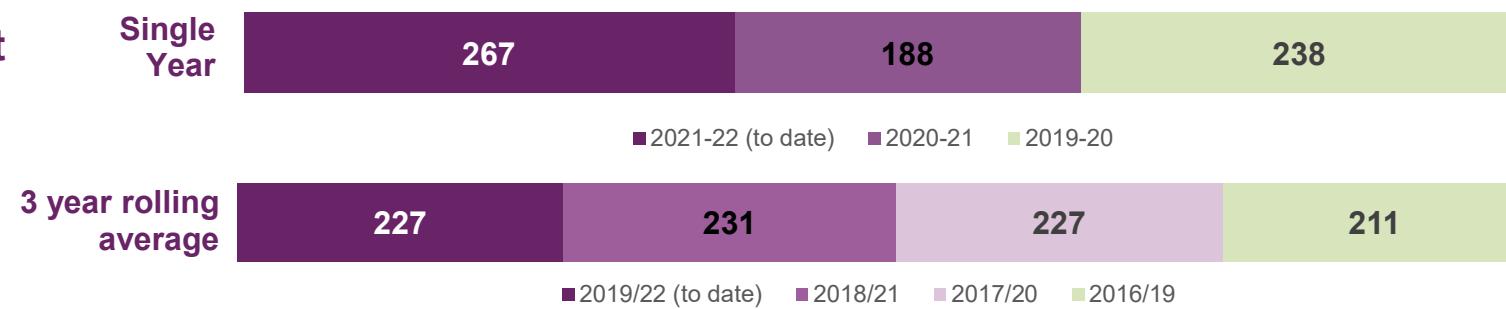
Adoption and Permanency



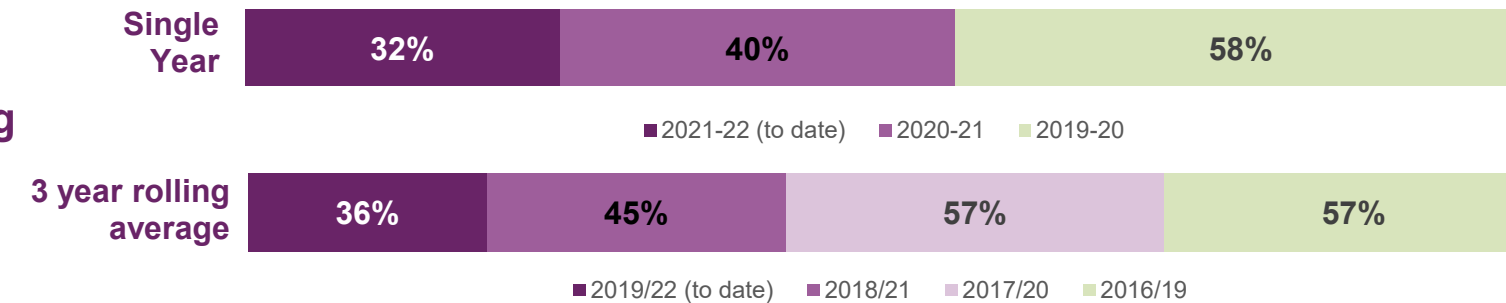
Adoption Pipeline



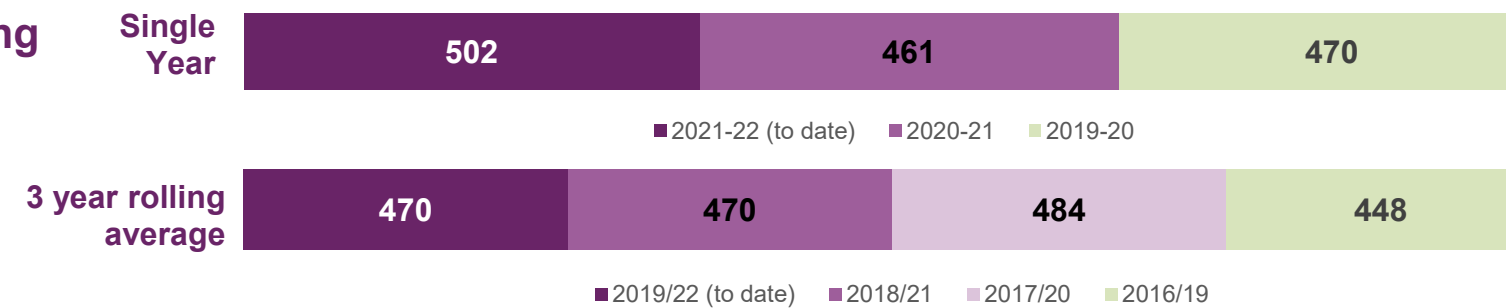
A2 - Average time between receiving court authority to place and finding a match



A3 - % Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family



A10 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (stopped at point of fostering for foster carers adoptions)



Commentary

There were 21 adoptions during the first three quarters of 2021/22, based on the latest ALB data. In 2020/21, 19 were children were adopted. This was an 19% increase compared to 16 during 2019/20.

So far during the current year, children had a longer wait than in 2020/21 between receiving court authority to place and finding a match - this was 267 days compared to 188 days in 2020/21. 32% of Children wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. Between April and December 2021, 36 Children have ceased to be looked after due to special guardianship orders (17 - LAC and 19 - Non LAC) and 21 due to child arrangement orders (8 - LAC and 13 - Non LAC). [Page 30 of 70](#)

## Update Report – Children in Care and Care Leavers Website and App

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Following the development of Our Promises for children in care and care leavers as well as our Care Leavers Local Offer, we have been reviewing how we can make this information accessible to children and young people so that they can access information more easily.
- 1.2. A key part of this work is the development of the website so that children in care and care leavers can access key information easily. We are also exploring the possibility of implementing an app to increase ease of access to the information at the request of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 1.3. This report seeks to provide an update on the work to date and confirm future actions.

### 2. Website Development

- 2.1. The council website is being updated with key information including:

**Our Promises** – these are our promises to our young people in respect of how we will support them in their education, keeping them safe, keeping them health and keeping in touch. They are split across three age groups (5-11, 12-15, 16-25) with each promise being drawn together in age appropriate language. These promises were developed with children and young people.

**How to get involved - Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum** – these pages provide details of how children in care and care leavers can get involved with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum, including the introductory video shown to the Board last year.

**FAQs** – Frequently asked questions from children in care and care leavers and the answers to those questions.

**Education, Employment and Training** – this page links to the [Walsall Virtual School Website](#) which contains information about the additional educational support that is available for care experienced children and young people. It contains information for parents, carers and professionals as well as a specific section with resources for children and young people at age appropriate levels. It also links to the Education, Employment and Training page on the Care Leavers Local offer.

**Care Leavers Local Offer** – these pages contain lots of information for Care Leavers, including where to seek advice and support and links to other websites on the topics of:

- **Who is a care leaver**
- **Your Personal Advisor**- information about what a personal advisor is and their role
- **Pathway Plans** – what a pathway plan is and how often it is reviewed
- **Housing** – what different housing options may be available to care leavers including staying put or seeking their own tenancy
- **Education, Training and Employment** – what options for education, employment and training may be available including lots of helpful links to jobs sites and apprenticeships.
- **Money Matters** – different types of financial support that may be available to care leavers including access to Junior ISAs, annual festival payments, birthday gifts, first

document support, setting up home grant and education financial support as well as helpful links to government websites relating to potential benefit entitlements.

- **Health and Wellbeing** – information about how care leavers are supported to look after their emotional and physical health as well as useful links.
- **Relationships** – information about how we will support care leavers in developing and maintaining relationships.
- **Participation in Society** – information to support care leavers to be active members in society including registering to vote and links to other organisations that care leavers may want to participate in such as the National Youth Advocacy Service.

2.2. At the time of writing this report, these pages are being finalised and quality assured prior to publication. The link will be circulated to Board members as soon as the pages are published and demonstrated as part of this report at the meeting.

### 3. Development of an app

- 3.1. As well as the development of the website, we are also exploring the implementation of an App for children in care and care leavers.
- 3.2. There are a number of Apps on the market that provide information for children in care and care leavers. Examples of two providers we are currently talking to are [Mind of My Own](#) (also see Appendix A) and [Focusgov](#) (see Appendix B and C)
- 3.3. We have been having conversations with these companies to understand the functionality that their apps provide and how this could be deployed in Walsall. We are also talking to them about the costs and the timescales in being able to set up their products to ensure that we are seeking value for money.
- 3.4. In addition we have been making contact with other Local Authorities who have implemented the apps to understand their experiences and whether children and young people have been making use of the apps.
- 3.5. We are also speaking to ICT council colleagues to see whether it would be possible to develop an app internally, potentially linking up with other projects aimed at children and young people which seek to do the same.
- 3.6. Finally before any final recommendations are made in relation to purchasing and deploying an app, we will share our findings about what is available with children and young people via the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum to ensure that any recommendation meets their needs and requirements.
- 3.7. We are aiming to bring a final proposal and recommendation to the Corporate Parenting Board on 04<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

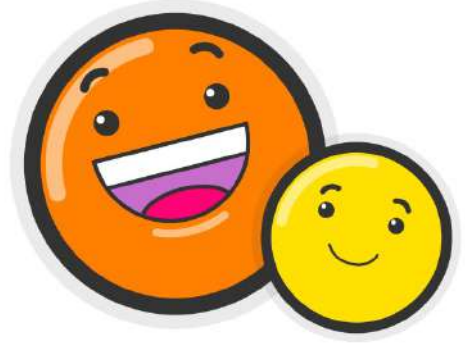
#### Author

Helena Kucharczyk

Head of Performance Improvement and Quality

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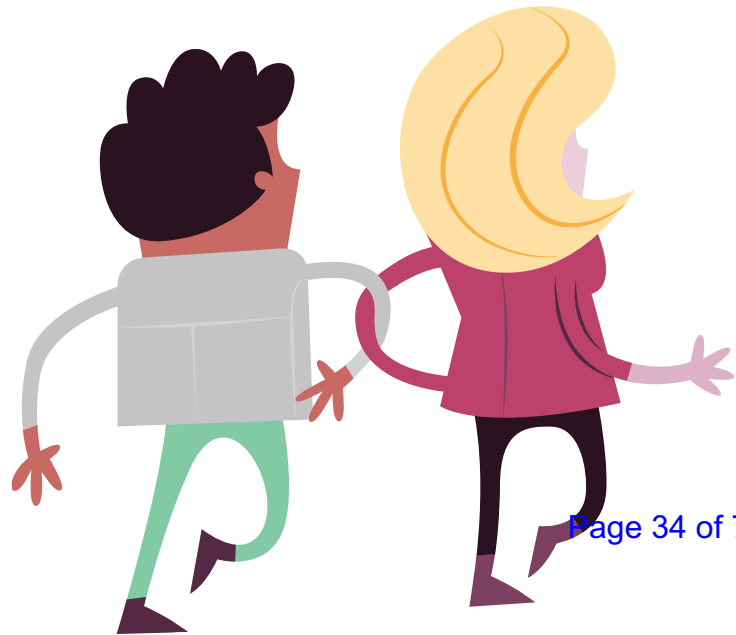


# Mind Of My Own

Better care and support happens when children are better listened to



**450+** councils, voluntary organisations, care providers and schools  
**60,000+** children's views heard  
Available in **100+** languages



Mind Of My Own enables young people and their workers to communicate better.

Our apps are so much more than a survey or feedback tool, They're a smart way to receive organic, uncontrived and authentic feedback from a diverse range of children and young people.

“ Mind of My Own apps have **revolutionised the way in which young people are able to communicate** with social workers, staff and other designated professionals ...This empowers young people to have a real voice and ensures their views , feelings and opinions are heard.

Moorside Children's Home' Ofsted inspection report ”

“ In order to prioritise **young people's voices** the recently introduced Mind Of My Own app was successfully helping looked after children and young people structure their thoughts and tell services what they want, whenever it suited them best.

Perth and Kinross – Care Inspectorate report ”

“ Many children participate in their reviews and the use of the communication app Mind Of my Own has increased, which ensures that IROs receive regular updates on children's views **prior to their review meetings.**

Lancashire– Ofsted inspection report ”

The Mind Of My Own suite of products are all conscientiously co-produced with users and enable services to reimagine the way they work using real time feedback from the young people in their organisation.



Young people can create their own accounts on the one app, which can be used on any device 24 hours a day. The One app helps young people communicate their views in a way that suits them.



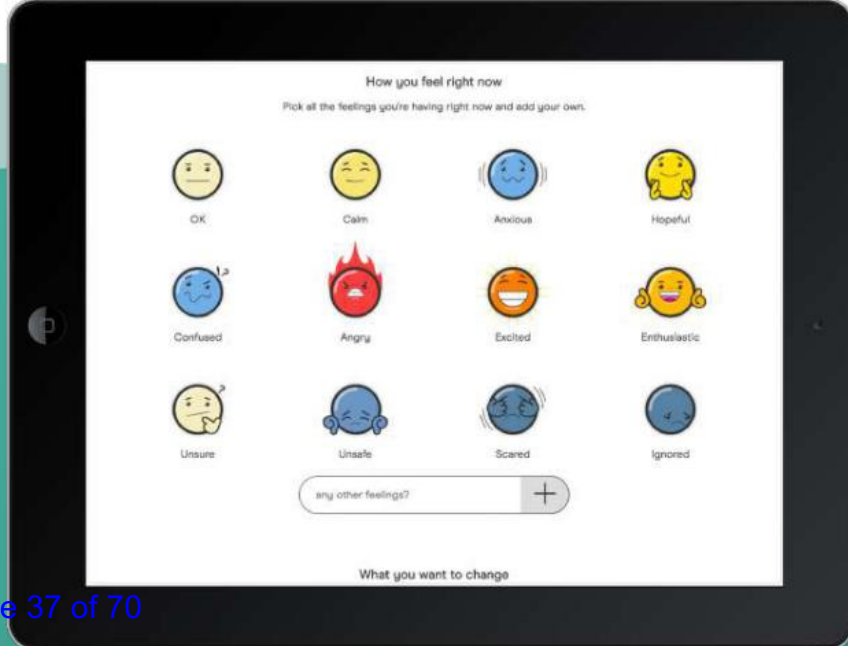
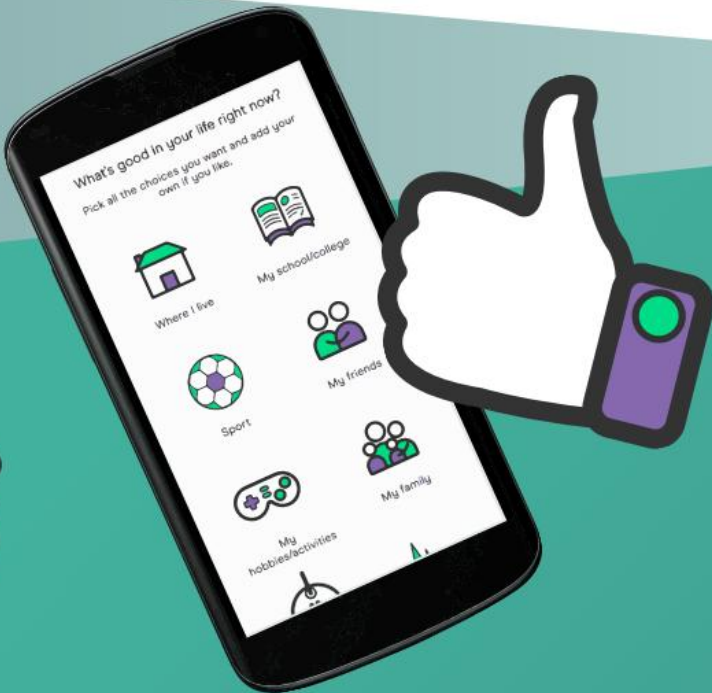
Younger children and those with additional needs sometimes struggle to make themselves heard clearly. Express helps them share their views, wishes and feelings in a fun way that's easy for workers to understand and evidence.



The Service portal is a comprehensive reporting portal, the data from which reflects the real thoughts of young people collected in real time. This information can revolutionise your decision making, whether at an individual, service or organisational level.



# Mind Of My Own ONE



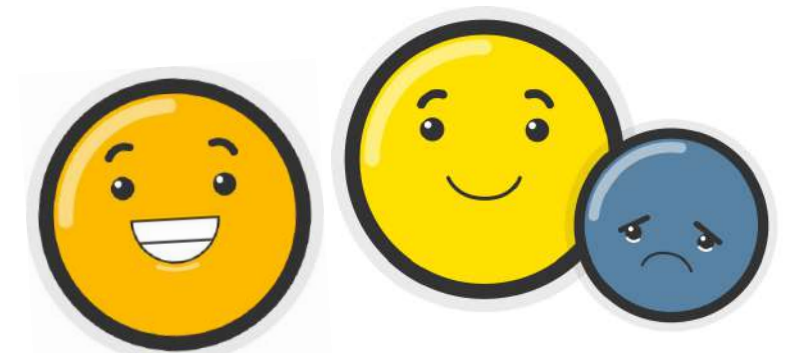
## What young people tell us

- Children more actively involved in their care planning
- Quicker than email, easier than phone
- Helps children with mindfulness and supports wellbeing
- Feels more empowering
- A safe channel to report abuse
- Accessible and inclusive



## What services tell us

- The voice of the child clearly heard within assessment, planning and intervention
- Enables services to deliver the active offer
- Better evidence of children's views
- Evidence of improving the quality of direct work
- Provides essential data
- Earlier reporting of issues
- Reduced paperwork – saving time





- **Solo scenarios** for young people to share information important to them, prepare for meetings, report problems and share their good news 24 hours a day
- **Co-use scenarios** for consultation, engagement and comprehensively evidencing views including those with additional learning needs



“I finally found a way to tell someone what was happening to me. I got help.”



**Ali, 10 yrs**

“I love Mind Of My Own. Mind Of My Own apps have helped me express my feelings. Thank you!”



**Thomas, 8 yrs**

“I find speaking in this way much easier. It’s revolutionary.”



**Kelly, 14 yrs**



A large black silhouette of a megaphone pointing to the right, with a lightning bolt symbol above its handle.

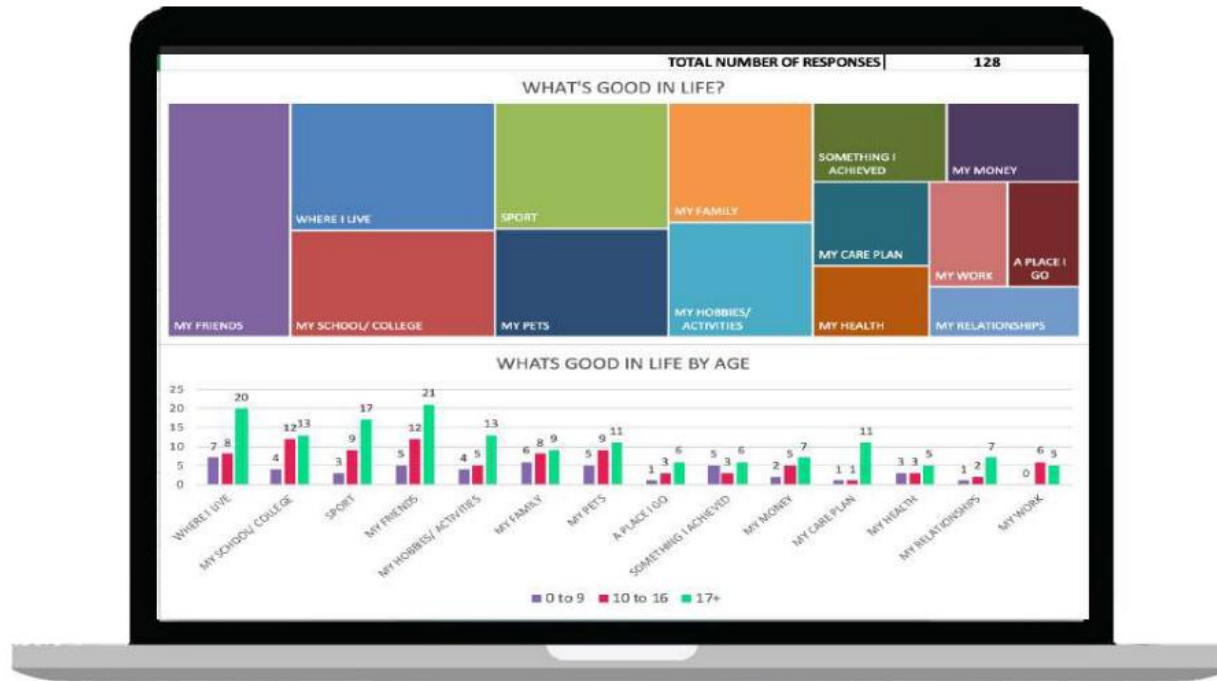
**Mind Of My Own**  
**SERVICE**

We believe that data serves little purpose unless it informs practice



- The Service portal is a **comprehensive reporting portal** where you can track statements, audit performance and monitor trends based on what young people are collectively saying about your service
- **Mind Of My Own data reflects the real thoughts of young people** collected in real time. Data that can revolutionise your decision making, whether at an individual, service or organisational level.
- **Rich local data** enables you to shape your services based upon intelligence gathered.

## Your gateway to better data on the collective views of your young people



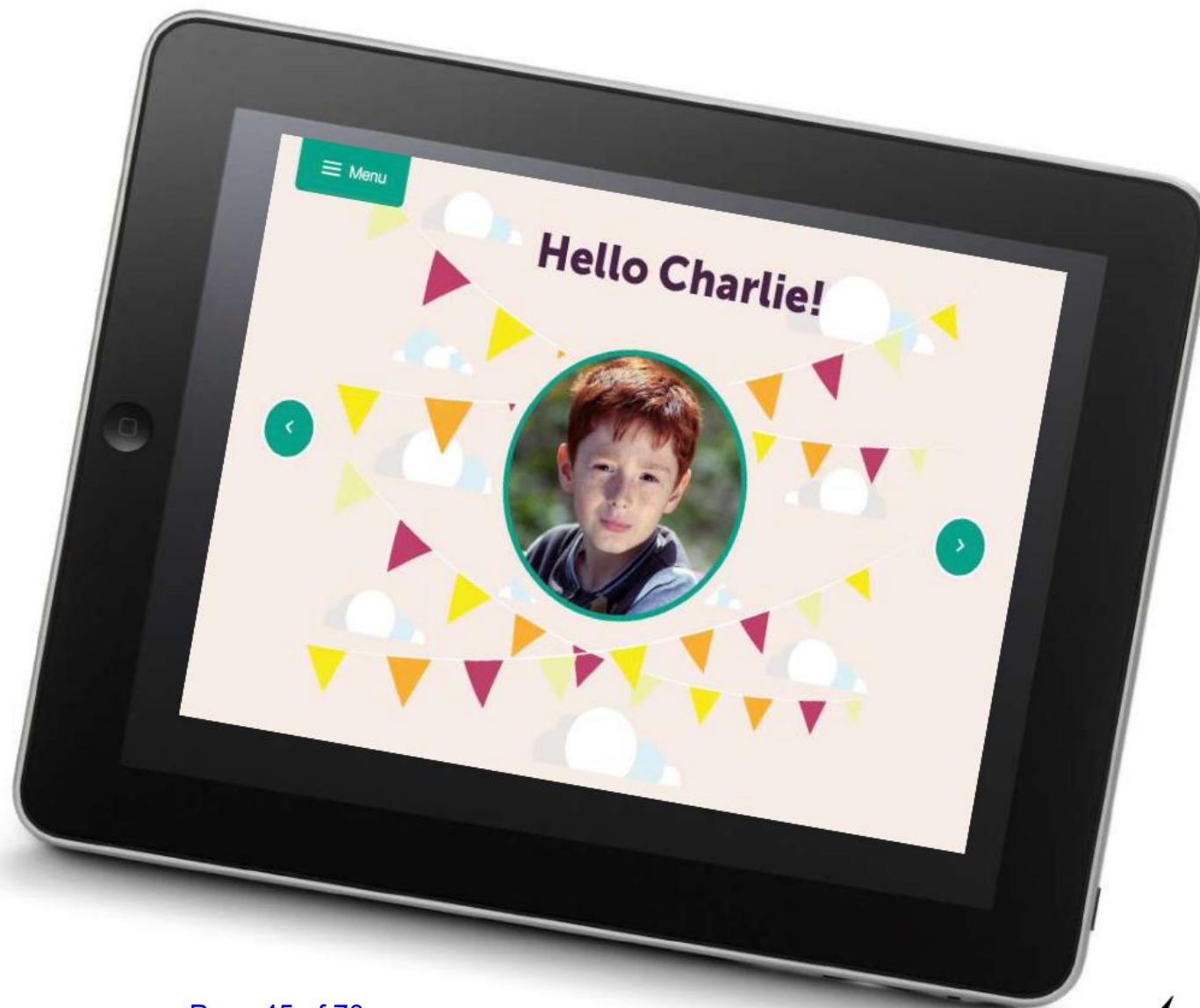
# Mind Of My Own EXPRESS





**An accessible app for younger children and those with additional needs to express their views.**

**Can be used effectively with children as young as two years old.**



- Co-produced bilingual fully accessible app for younger children and those with additional learning needs
- Enables children's participation in individual development planning and reviewing
- Creates a one-page profile in minutes
- Unique digital tool that helps safeguard children





- Help children express themselves – all children’s voices are important
- Enhance human contact and direct work
- Evidence a child’s views in their own words
- Help children develop mindfulness and understand their own emotions
- Help build rapport and understand the child’s lived experience














Image, word and free text options that support children to make choices and share their views



The best way to communicate with me is...

 Talk clearly	 Get me to look at you	 Give me simple choices	 Use pictures	 Use symbols
 Use Makaton	 In a quiet place	 Take time	 Look at my face	

Something else

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Save

Get in touch if you would like to know more or receive a quote.

We would love to hear from you.

[hello@mindofmyown.org.uk](mailto:hello@mindofmyown.org.uk)



# Care Leavers App

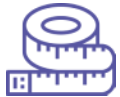
Engage with young people leaving care and meet duties by publishing information to help them live independently



# Care Leavers App

We are focusgov and we've been partnering with local authorities to deliver digital transformation for over 15 years.

Our Care Leavers App has been co-produced with care leavers allowing local authorities to deliver improved outcomes for these young people through publishing their care leaver local offer via an app.



Customised to your Local Authority



Secure, safe, encrypted messaging service



Content management system for 24/7 updates



Real-time feed of regional apprenticeships from Gov.uk



Available on iOS and android platforms



Publish events, activities and news articles



Accessible in hundreds of languages



Directory of services that support young people



WCAG2.1 compliant to support people with disabilities



Securely send encrypted pathway plans and documents

## Client Case Study

Client: Nottinghamshire Council

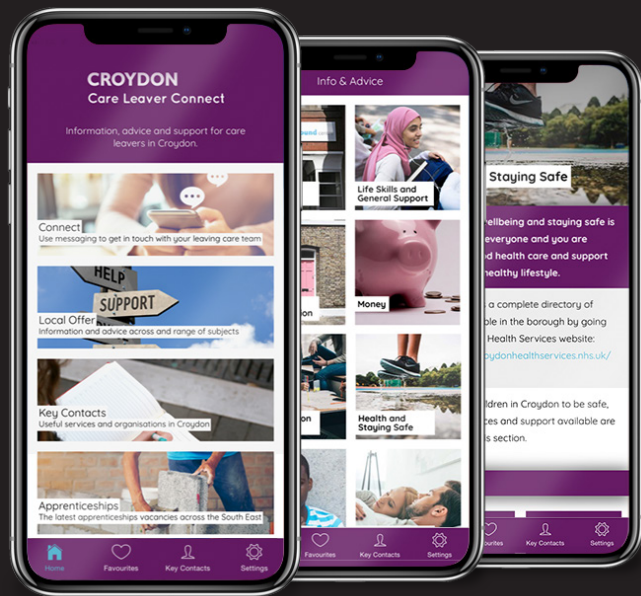
The Nottinghamshire App includes a 'discounts and offers' section, which came about from work we were doing to ensure the App is used again and again by young people. Not only is the most visited section of the App featuring discounts for care leavers from the likes of Nandos and local gyms, but local businesses have got in touch to ask how they can get their offers published.



Time saved with easy to use admin system



Engagement and opportunities with local businesses



“A partnership with focusgov is key to a more technologically fluent approach to engaging with our care leavers. What focusgov deliver is a platform to let our imagination loose and the promise of being involved with a growing company whose early plaudits and recognition are well deserved. Having control over the journey of our app and access to a team happy to develop it is the kind of tailored customer service we need and that competition on the market simply doesn't offer. Highly recommended.”

- Maximilian Hawker.  
Children, Families and Education Department. Croydon Council.

## Reasons To Be Happy

**Improving transition to adulthood** through providing information, advice and guidance on housing, benefits, managing finances, health and wellbeing and preparing to leave care.

**Engaging hardest to reach** with accessibility features like text-to-voice and seamless translation into 100s of languages.

**Increasing take up of services** through improving awareness of local organisations and support groups.

**Helping to reduce social isolation** through signposting to local events and organisations in the local community providing opportunity to socialise with other young people.

**Supporting reduction in NEETs** through providing real-time information on regional apprenticeships.

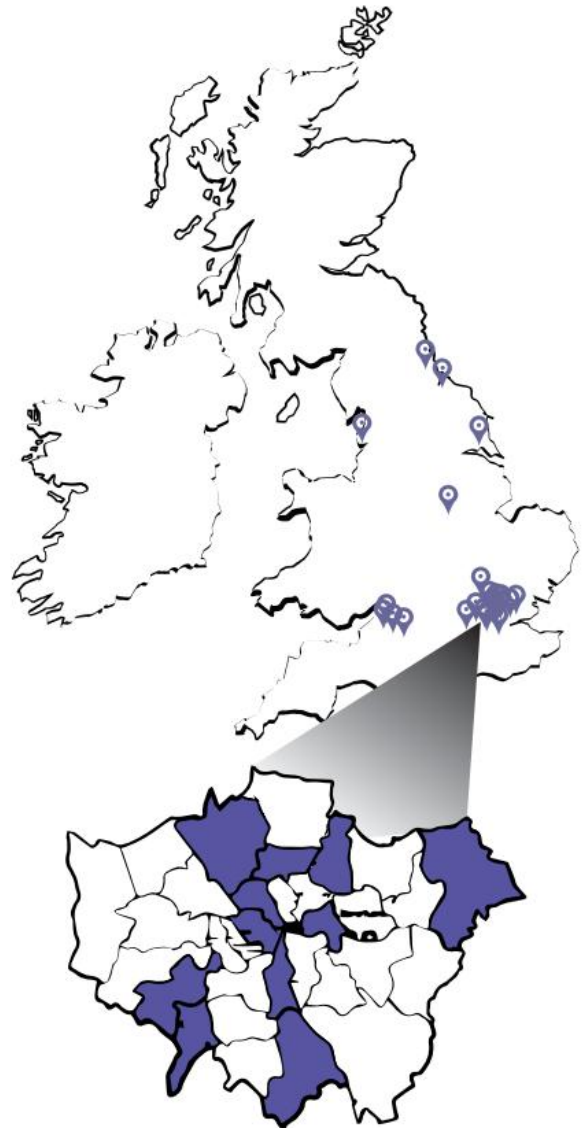
**Helping to keep in touch with care leavers** through secure 2-way messaging service.

**Involving care leavers in design of services** through using feedback from digital surveys to shape future provision.

## You're in good company

Proud to partner with local authorities across the UK

Barnet Council  
Bath & North East Somerset Council  
Blackpool Council  
Bristol City Council  
Camden Council  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
City of Westminster Council  
Croydon Council  
Gateshead Council  
Haringey Council  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Hull City Council  
Lambeth Council  
London Borough of Havering  
London Borough of Kingston  
London Borough of Richmond  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
Slough Borough Council  
South Gloucestershire Council  
Waltham Forest Council  
Wiltshire County Council



Other digital products available include

- SEND Local Offer
- Connecting Me
- Family Services Directory
- Special educational needs information, advice and support service (SENDIASS)

## Get in touch

E: [hello@focusgov.co.uk](mailto:hello@focusgov.co.uk)

P: 0117 949 8008





# CASE STUDY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NEXT STEPS APP

Care  
Leavers  
App

Nottinghamshire County Council and the county's seven district councils started their Care Leavers App journey in February 2020.

As of October 2021, Nottinghamshire has:

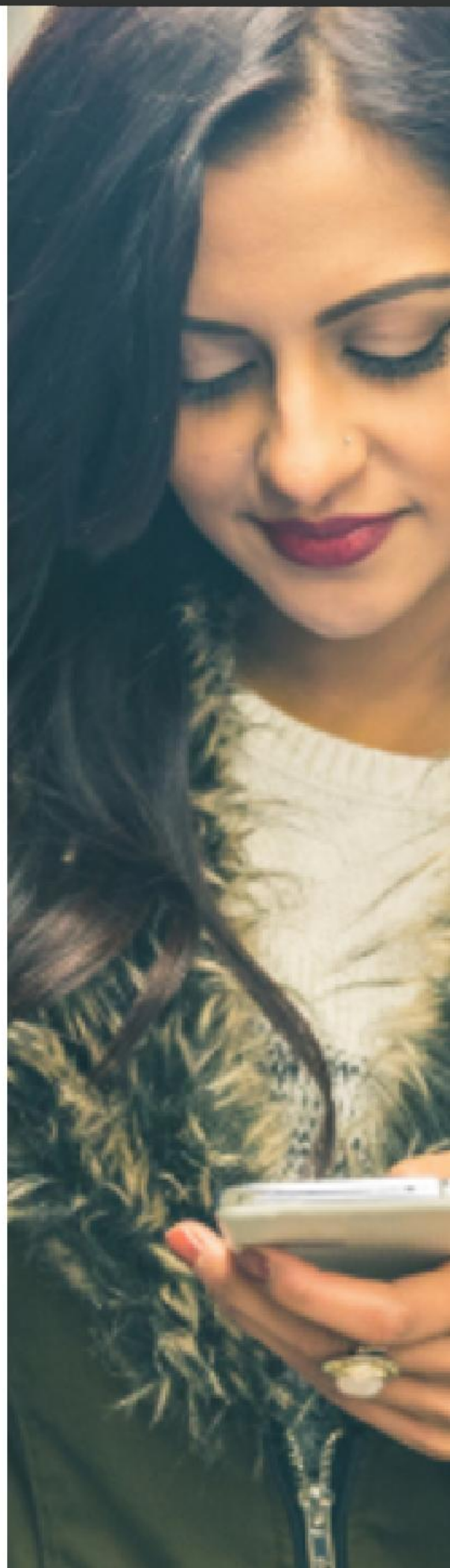
- 300 young people who are care leavers.
- 250 16–17-year olds who are looked after, and transitioning to Leaving Care at 18.
- 435 21Plus young people.
- A return rate of 70-80% of their 21Plus young people.
- A contact rate of 98% of all their Care Leavers.

Nottinghamshire launched its Care Leavers App at the same time as its Local Offer website, and wanted to ensure their Care Leavers had as many ways as possible to access their Local Offer, services and events.

By incorporating the Care Leavers App into their leaving care services, they were able to offer both easier access to communication, and also encourage their young people to make use of the local offer, support that is offered and to continue to act as a corporate parent to their children beyond their transition to adulthood.

Initial concern that anyone could download and view the App was unfounded and, by embracing this and understanding that there are other potential users for the Notts Next Steps App, such as professionals from partner agencies, this has encouraged further inter-agency working.

This includes contact from organisations to see if young people are accessing or able to access support and has therefore assisted young people who are identified as care leavers in Nottinghamshire.





# CASE STUDY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NEXT STEPS APP

Care Leavers App

One of the benefits the team has seen with the app is access to information and keeping in touch with their care leavers. This was proven especially positive throughout the pandemic as they needed to explore alternative ways to keep in touch and communicate with their young people.

In the future, the app will be used to identify the ever-changing and growing opportunities around employment, education and training as well as encouraging participation from young people.

As part of their Achievement Offer for young people aged 17-18, the team hold online sessions with Nottingham Trent University, to help those who are thinking about Higher Education within a university setting. By advertising the sessions, dates and information in the app, Nottinghamshire's young people can look at these events in their own time and do not have to be connected to the internet whilst browsing. Young people are then able to contact their Achievement Advisor to be included in the session.

Nottinghamshire County Council is looking at increasing the amount of information on the app about education, employment and training opportunities for young people and updating the app at least weekly with information and offers.

**" We have seen lots of benefits of having information available for our care leavers, but also for other professionals that support and engage with them. It helps us be clear on what is offered, who to contact and so we can ensure that we can work better together to achieve positive outcomes for our children and young people "**

Service Manager, Looked After and Leaving Care, Nottinghamshire



[www.careleaversapp.co.uk](http://www.careleaversapp.co.uk)

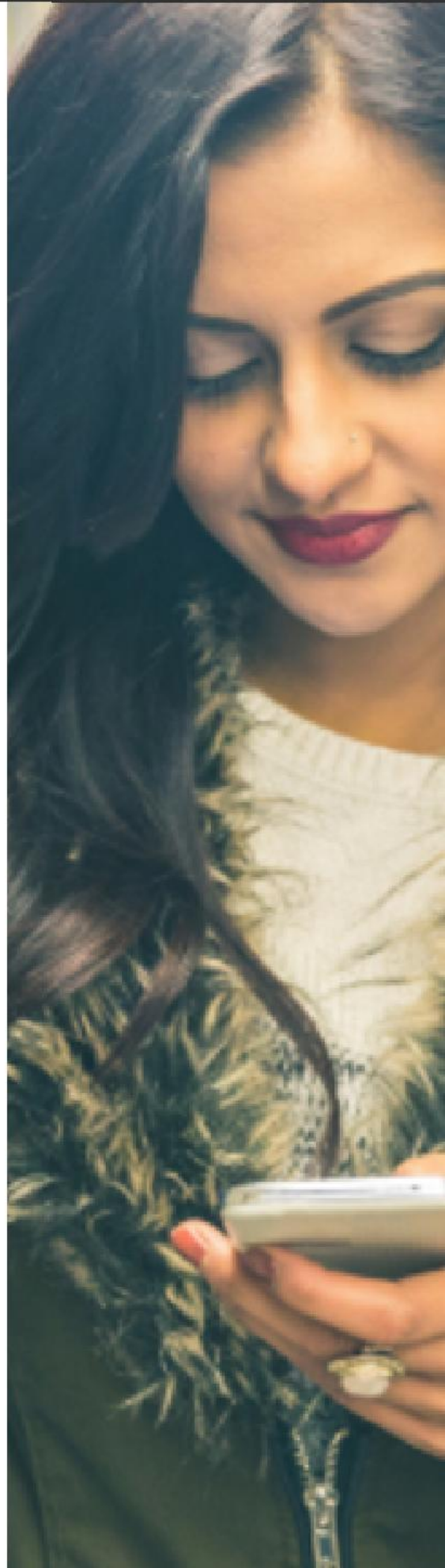
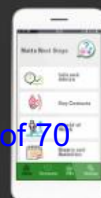


**" I downloaded it with my PA, and it has lots of information there. I think it will be useful when I am looking for work opportunities."**

Care Leaver, Nottinghamshire



[www.careleaversapp.co.uk](http://www.careleaversapp.co.uk)



# CASE STUDY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NEXT STEPS APP

Care  
Leavers  
App

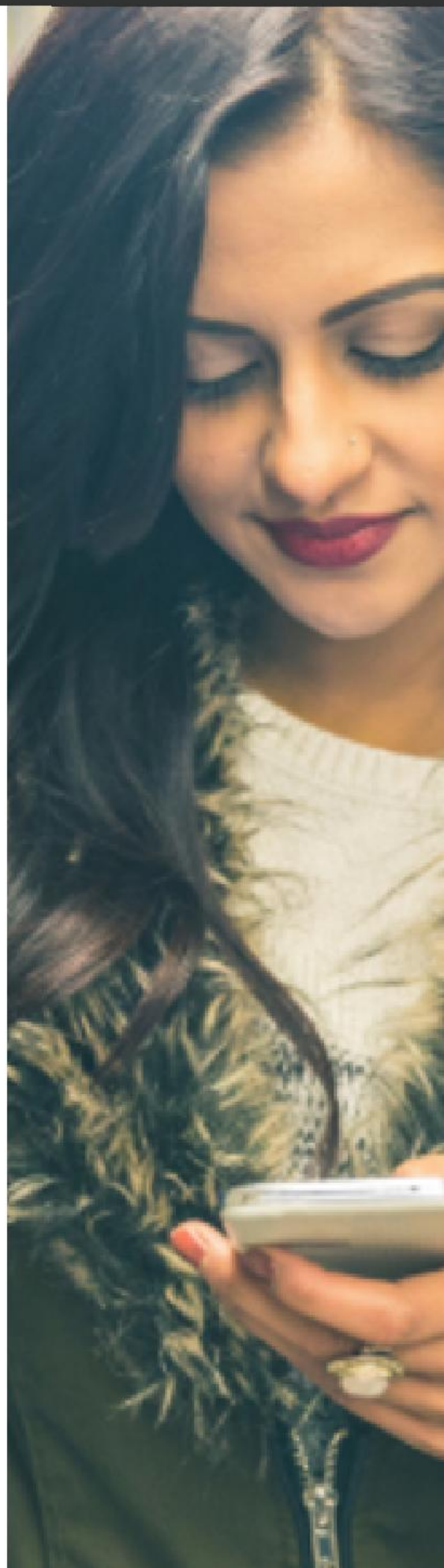
## ABOUT FOCUSGOV

focusgov are part of This is Focus – one of Bristol's longest established and trusted digital agencies.

We are working with local authorities throughout the UK helping them use digital to communicate with vulnerable groups. Our work includes websites and apps for looked after children and care leavers; SEND Local Offer websites; FSDs; directories and Apps for Adult Social Care teams.

A selection of local authorities we are currently working with include:

- Barnet Council
- Camden Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- London Borough of Havering
- Waltham Forest Council
- Royal Borough of Greenwich
- Hull City Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Gateshead Council
- Tower Hamlets Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- City of Westminster Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- London Boroughs of Kingston and Richmond





Update on Actions and Recommendations of Housing Report

### **Executive Summary**

This report sets out progress to recommendations and actions arising from the Report presented to the Board in January 2021 in respect of children leaving care and care leavers as they transition into adulthood.

### **Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board**

To update the Board of the progress of the actions and recommendations of Housing Report presented in January 2021.

### **Recommendations**

- To note the progress of the recommendations and actions as set out in the report.

### **Background papers:**

Housing Report presented to the Board in January 2021

### **Resource and legal considerations**

Local authority duties to young people and care leavers are set out in the following legislation:

Children Act 1989  
Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000  
Children and Social Work Act 2017  
Homelessness Act 2002  
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

**The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Homelessness Act 2002 (HA 2002)** seeks to ensure that local authority children's social care and housing departments work together to ensure that the accommodation needs of care leavers are met and care leavers have priority need status.

**The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000** sets out various duties that local authorities have towards young people in and leaving care, including those relating to accommodation. The duties are:

- plan with young people and involve them in decisions
- avoid moving young people who are settled
- assess young people's needs and prepare them for any move
- ensure that the accommodation meets any needs relating to impairment
- consider education, training and employment needs
- where practicable, offer a choice of accommodation
- set up a package of support to go with the accommodation
- have a clear financial plan for the accommodation and a contingency plan

**The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** introduced new duties so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as there are eligible for assistance:

- A new 'Duty to Refer' on named public bodies to ensure that services are working together earlier and effectively to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Improved advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness and services are designed to meet the needs of particular groups that are at increased risk of becoming homeless, including care leavers and people released from prison or youth detention accommodation
- Extension of the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days
- New duties to 'prevent' and 'relieve' homelessness for all eligible people, regardless of priority need and intentionality. Both duties last for up to 56 days. The 56 day period can be extended for anyone under the 'prevention' duty where homelessness is still a threat and could be extended for anyone who does not have a 'Priority Need' under the 'relief' duty
- Interim temporary accommodation will only be offered to people who are or may be: eligible, homeless and 'Priority Need'. Temporary Accommodation under the 'Main duty' is only offered to people who are eligible, homeless, 'Priority Need' and not intentionally homeless
- Assessments and creation of personalised housing plans, setting out the actions or 'reasonable steps' housing authorities and individuals will take to secure accommodation
- All care leavers under the age of 21 will be considered as having a local connection with an area if they were looked after, accommodated or fostered there for a continuous period of at least two years, which started at some point before their 16th birthday.

## **Reducing inequalities**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017- 2020 sets out the response to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families. By being effective Corporate Parents for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, we collectively seek to redress the disadvantage that looked after children and care leavers face.

## **Consultation**

We have undertaken consultation as part of our implementation of the actions and recommendations with practitioners across children's services and Housing as well as foster carers. The views of our young people have been central to our developments and these have been considered in the development of actions and recommendations.

Further consultation with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum is scheduled in March 2022.

**Contact Officer:**  
**Jivan Sembi**  
**Head of Service**

## Update on Actions and Recommendations of Housing Report.

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The journey out of care is a particularly important, and sometimes challenging transition. Most young people rely on their families for emotional and practical support when they make this transition, which usually takes place well into adulthood. When children become looked after it is important that they are helped to develop life skills from a young age so they can acquire independent life skills that enable them to be ready to make that transition.

1.2 When we are not able to engage with children effectively to implement a plan of transition, this can impact on their readiness for living independently. For transition planning to be effective, children need to be living in stable homes before they make their transition into adulthood. They need a robust plan of transition. For many young people, their transition to adulthood can be extended and delayed until they are emotionally and financially ready, or they have the qualifications they need and aspire to.

1.3 Securing suitable accommodation for care leavers is therefore much more than just finding them somewhere to stay. Care leavers need to be well prepared to live independently and their housing needs must be addressed before they leave care by effective pathway planning which considers their most appropriate accommodation options as they leave care. As corporate parents ensuring that we have the range of options including their housing needs requires effective partnership working across departments and agencies.

1.4 **Suitability of accommodation:** Local Authorities are required to report to Department of Education whether young people are living in suitable accommodation annually.

*“Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people. It would generally include short-term accommodation designed to move young people on to stable long-term accommodation, but would exclude emergency accommodation used in a crisis.”*

1.5 Range of accommodation options in supporting the transition of children young people

1. **Staying Put** arrangement is where young people remain with their existing foster carers until they are ready to live independently. A staying put arrangement is not the same as a foster placement. The young person staying put must be a former relevant child who is no longer a looked after child. The foster carer is no longer acting in the capacity of foster carer for that young adult; they are their ‘former foster carer’. The foster placement becomes a ‘staying put arrangement’ and is not governed by fostering services regulations.

2. **Supported Lodgings** provide a young person with a room of their own in a private home where they are a member of the household. The householder, or host, provides a safe and supportive environment, working alongside professional services to help and support the young person in gaining skills for independent adult life.

3. **Return back to their families:** Most young care leavers have contact with their birth family and for many of our children in care we would seek to secure this as part their planning before they leave care.
4. **Supported accommodation** is often seen as a stepping-stone towards independence and provides accommodation for young people aged 16 and 17 years to prepare them for their transition into independence and moving into their own accommodation. Young people may have on site support from staff or floating support which can be tailored to meet the young person's needs. Young people will be supported to develop life and independence skills. This form of accommodation is not registered with Ofsted.
5. **Transition to Assisted Living Arrangements or Shared Lives.** Many young people leaving care have a higher level of support needs. Some may have learning or physical disabilities or mental or physical health needs. They need for bespoke or specialist provision.

Shared Lives scheme have to be registered with the Care Quality Commission. Carers are trained and vetted by the scheme. Some young people can either remain with their former foster cares under the Shared Lives scheme or can be matched with an approved carer prior.

Young people are referred to the Adult Social Care Services to enable relevant assessments to be undertaken by Adult Services. Generally, Adult Social Care Services commence those assessments when the young person is aged 17 years and older. We recognise that there is a need to improve transition planning and in view of this there is a multi-agency review in progress which is developing a tool kit to support practitioners to improve the transition pathways with Health, Education and Local Authority partners.

6. **Social Housing accommodation** is provided at affordable rates, on a secure basis to people on low incomes or with particular needs. In Walsall, there are a range of Registered Social Landlords who own housing properties, with the largest providers being Walsall Housing Group and Accord.
  - a) The Council has developed Young Person's Housing Scheme in partnership with Walsall Housing Group which was first introduced in 2010. The aim of the scheme is to support young people to maintain independence and prevent future cycles of homelessness with the end goal being they are able to succeed in making their tenancy permanent. Support is provided by Housing and Welfare Officers located in Money Home Job and a Young Person's Temporary Accommodation Officer from WHG, who work in partnership to assist the young people to achieve goals, develop independent living skills, support with education/employment training, and all aspects that are required to enable a successful transition into independent living. This provides **60 units** to Young People who are at risk of becoming homeless.
  - b) Children's Services and Walsall Housing Group have a secured a further **16** units under the Young Person's Housing Scheme. The key difference is that Children's Services have access to housing which is targeted for care leavers who are ready to live independently prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. They

are supported by the WHG Young Person's Temporary Accommodation Officer and their Personal Advisor. In order to strengthen the support to our care leaver we have appointed 2 part-time Housing Support Workers in November 2021 who are located in the Transition and Leaving Care Service.

This housing option prepares young people for independence with support from their Social Worker and Personal Advisor. Young people are identified as being suitable at the Housing Pathway Panel and around 17 years and independent accommodation will be identified for the young person. They will move in with support, initially from both Children's Services and WHG or additional support from housing support workers. At some point after their 18th birthday, they take over the tenancy. The 'cliff edge' at 18 is minimised and support is on-going based on the young person's needs and they don't need to physically move in order to have their own tenancy.

Care leavers can access either scheme and their nomination is presented by their social worker or personal advisor to the Housing Pathway Panel which meets monthly with representatives from WHG, Money Home Job, Children's Commissioning and Children's Services.

7. **Temporary accommodation** - Care leavers who are vulnerable or at risk of homelessness have a 'priority need' and must be provided with temporary accommodation if this is needed. Temporary accommodation is provided whilst a full assessment is carried out. There are limited options for temporary accommodation within Walsall and that can mean that young people can be placed outside of the Borough either because there is limited capacity or their needs cannot be met locally. We would only seek to place care leavers in temporary accommodation as a 'last resort' and would always seek to provide young people with permanent accommodation based on their needs.

**Rivers House** is temporary accommodation (TA) provision which is owned by the Council and supports young people who are homeless and have made a homeless application in Walsall. This accommodation consists of 14 self-contained units, with 4 units being situated separately but on the same complex. The four units are utilised as temporary accommodation "move on" for our tenants as they have gained more independence and require a reduced amount of support. Rivers House has staffing cover for 24 hours a day over a 7 day week. The staff situated at Rivers House work alongside the young person whilst they are temporarily accommodated and support development in life skills, education, money management and becoming tenancy ready to enable them the best opportunity to have sustainable tenancies moving forward.

8. **Private Rented Accommodation:** private rented properties can vary hugely in quality and affordability for people on low incomes or benefits and as a service securing a accommodation in the private sector is not a preferred option and would only be utilised in exceptional circumstances.
9. **Bed and Breakfast:** Care leavers are not placed directly from leaving care into Bed and Breakfast accommodation. However there are some rare instances when young people have exhausted all other types of accommodation.



## 2.0 Progress against recommendations and actions agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2021

### 2.1 Recommendation 1

Scope the cost and development of a training flat and a report is presented to the Directorate Management Group for consideration.

**Update:** The cost of establishing a training flat was agreed, preliminary meetings have been held with housing providers and a specification has been developed. There has been some delay in progressing due to the pandemic and changes in staffing and this is now on track. We are currently reviewing best practice in neighbouring local authorities to establish how the flat will be used and possible locations are being explored. The appointment of housing support workers located in the service will greatly enhance the support to young people

The Training Flat will be integrated into the Local Offer in 2022/23.

### 2.2 Recommendation 2

The decision to evict a care leaver from local authority housing accommodation will only be made by the Director of Customer Engagement (or a delegated substitute) following consultation with the Director of Children's Social Work. Whenever safe, and practical to do so, these Directors will jointly develop a plan, with the aim of preventing the eviction from occurring.

**Update:** This recommendation was implemented and will be reflected in the revision of the protocol.

### 2.3 Recommendation 3

The Board asks Walsall Council to develop a rent guarantor scheme with Registered Social Landlord/s in Walsall and a report is presented to the Directorate Management Group for consideration.

**Update:** Money Home Job, Walsall Housing Group and Children's Services have considered the circumstances in which we would need to secure settled accommodation for young people prior to their 18th birthday. We anticipate utilising the Young People Housing Scheme in the first instance as it is able to meet the needs of most of our young people.

It was acknowledged and recognised that in the main, most young people would not necessarily require the support of the Guarantor Scheme as they would be signposted/supported with accessing relevant services in line with their needs. However, for some there are particular circumstances where this would be of assistance to those that would otherwise be at a disadvantage to that of their peers, for example, Young Parents or when leaving custody and sometimes young people wishing to live with another adult (namely a partner or an older brother/sister). The numbers of young people that this would apply to is not significant.

However, we agreed that in some circumstances, a rent guarantor scheme would be a better option. The young person would still have access to support tailored to their needs.

Following agreement of the Directorate Management Team in March 2021 Walsall Children's Services have developed a rent guarantor scheme with Walsall Housing

Group which was agreed and implemented in 2021. We would be able to put this in place with other Social Landlords should this be required.

This is included in our Local Offer since 2021

#### 2.4 **Recommendation 4**

Local Authority meets the first month's rent for young people to reduce the risk of young people entering debt and a report is presented to the Directorate Management Group for consideration.

**Update:** A report was presented to the Directorate Management Group 11 March 2021 setting out a range of options. When young people apply for their Universal Credit, Children's Service continue to support them financially until their claim is processed which can take between 3 to 6 weeks. This is backdated to their 18th birthday and we do not recoup the financial support they receive in the interim. Where young people are eligible for Housing Benefit this is also backdated to their 18th birthday and can covers up to 100% of their rent. This can take up to 2 to 4 weeks to be processed. This provides a financial buffer which reduces the risk of entering debt.

We can also support young people who have accrued debt through Discretionary Housing Payment but they would need meet specific criteria to access support from the fund.

On balance we felt that there were a number of measures in place to ensure that young people were financially supported in those first few weeks and on this basis this recommendation was not implemented.

#### 2.5 **Recommendation 5**

The Board asks the Housing and Welfare Team to explore the costs associated with improving the offer to young people leaving care to help support them with the expense of setting up and managing their home. A business plan will be developed, and taken to Cabinet, to seek approval for any additional funds that may be required to support the development of this scheme.

**Update:** In February 2021 a report was presented to the Directorate Management Team which agreed to increase the Setting Up Home Grant (SHUG) from £2,000 to £2,500 which applies to **all** young people leaving care from 1 April 2021 irrespective of where they choose to live.

This is included in the our Local Offer since April 2021

#### 2.6 **Recommendation 6**

We propose the Councillors as Corporate Parents visit the range of accommodation options we provide for our children leaving care and care leavers

**Update:** The restrictions related to the Pandemic has meant that this recommendation has yet to be implemented and will be progressed from March 2022.

#### 2.7 **Action: Review of Walsall's Staying Put practice guidance and process. This will be undertaken in consultation with the young people, their foster carers and practitioners.**

Staying Put - A staying put arrangement is not the same as a foster placement. The foster carer is no longer acting in the capacity of foster carer for that young adult; they are their 'former foster carer'. The foster placement becomes a 'staying put arrangement' and is not governed by fostering services regulations. For some foster carers who then stop fostering their individualised support from a supervising social worker ceases.

There are currently 32 young people living with their former foster carers and this has increased since January 2021 when there were 20 young people in staying put arrangements.

We have reviewed and updated the Staying Put Policy to bring it in line with national guidance and sets out clear guidance for staff in respect the roles and responsibilities of the Staying Put Host, the Young Person and the Local Authority. The Policy has revised the "Living Together Agreement" to better support such arrangements.

We have benchmarked the Staying put offer of £230 per week across a number of local authorities. Further work is in progress to consider if the offer can be improved and this requires work with the DWP at a national level to consider if a process can be set up where the Housing element of allowance can be applied without disruption of payments to Staying Put Host.

- 2.8 **Action: Task and Finish Group will be established to review our practice and approach to preparing young people for living independently and develop a structured toolkit and associated training for practitioners and carers. This will include the delivery of group based workshops with young people. Young people will be supported in building portfolio of achievement and attain certificates which evidences that they are tenancy ready.**

The Team Manager within the Transition and Leaving Care Service established a task and finish group in March 2021 and this has continued to meet and has involved service areas within Childrens Social Care and Housing.

The group has reviewed a range of independent living/skills toolkits across other providers and local authorities. The group concluded that the Catch 22 toolkit provides a solid foundation to build from and it is already embedded in practice.

The group has strengthen the Catch 22 tool kit in developing direct work sheets and collating resources which can be tailored to meet the individual needs of young people in preparation for independence. Once a young person is living independently we recognise the need for continued learning new skills in situ is just as important. The service have enhanced the 'tool kit' which covers the main aspects of living independently and focused on the following areas,

- What are your choices? ( rights, entitlements and housing options)
- Life - what is all about? (isolation, social relationships, being a good neighbour and citizen)
- Staying Well ( health and wellbeing)
- All things Money ( managing money, paying bills and budgeting)
- Let's Cook
- Can you do it (basic DIY skills and what do in an emergency)

We have also developed a rolling programme which we will be delivered in group sessions either face to face and/or virtually. This can also be undertaken individually. The will be led and delivered by our Personal Advisors and Housing Support Workers in conjunction with colleagues from Health, DWP and Housing etc.

We aim to focus on building resilience and good support networks and awareness of how to manage living alone, reducing isolation and resolving problems. There will also be a focus on accommodation options, understanding the tenancy, being a good neighbour, paying bills etc.

Young people will be able to develop a portfolio of achievement which evidences their progress and support them in their future Housing applications

The programme will be held at the TLC Hub but can be delivered virtually for those young people who live out of borough or are unable to attend in person.

Our programme commences on 3rd March 2022, we will measure the impact by asking our young people to complete an evaluation after each session.

We will further consult with our Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum to involve their contribution ensure that the programme is tailored and can be adapted as required. We will continue to reflect on our learning and evaluate the impact.

**2.9 Action: We need to review the support and interventions provided to our care experienced young parents. The feedback from young people and our findings has prompted the need for a focused audit in respect of our care experienced young parents and parents to be.**

Update: This Audit was completed in March 2021 and identified improvements in our assessments, supervision and support for young care experienced parents. The recommendations of the Audit were presented to the Directorate's Performance Board in April 2021 and these have now been implemented.

One of the key recommendations was to strengthen support and in conjunction with the Daisy Team a bespoke offer has been developed which can be tailored to the needs of the individual young people.

**2.10 Action: We will jointly develop the information about the range of housing options in an easily accessible format and will be set out in our Local Offer.**

**Update:** We have jointly developed information about the range of Housing options and we are working with colleagues to ensure that these are reflected on our website. A key part of this work is the development of the website so that children in care and care leavers can access key information easily.

We have sought feedback from young people on how best to information is set out and there is ongoing consultation on the look and feel of the information shared with young people.

A separate report on the progress of this work is being considered by the Board.

**2.11 Action: Joint workshops with colleagues from housing will be held to educate our social workers and foster carers about the range of housing options available.**

**Update:** Joint workshops were held between Children's and Housing staff following the Audit in February and March 2021. There has also been ongoing joint work to progress the actions below.

We now have regular networking meetings across both services and use these sessions to share good practice, where we have worked well together as well as to reflect when we could have worked better. As new staff have joined these network meetings have helped to induct staff and build relationships.

**2.12 Actions:**

**Housing and Welfare Services to work with Children's Services to consider how a single pathway for care leavers can be developed in Walsall.**

**To jointly review and simplify the nomination and referral documentation for care leavers, ensuring that the language used is more reflective of the needs of care leavers, including how the Duty to Refer operates in Walsall when a care leaver is threatened with homelessness.**

**Review and streamline the processes in the WHG Young Person's Scheme to ensure that young people are not disadvantaged**

**Update:**

The above three actions are inter-linked and co-dependent.

Since February 2021 operational managers from the Transition and Leaving Care Team, Money, Home Job and WHG as well as our commissioners have worked closely together to review the processes and forms needed to progress a referral and /or an application for housing. Alongside this we have reviewed our transition arrangements between social workers and personal advisors. This now ensures that where appropriate housing colleagues are involved in the care planning meetings earlier.

As part of this work we have simplified and streamlined forms which have been agreed with our housing providers. We now have one form which is completed at the point of referred, the information is shared appropriately and there is no duplication. In addition we have reviewed the Triage documentation pack and this is now more reflective of the needs of care leavers, and though this remains lengthy to meet statutory requirements there is a greater understanding of what information is legally required by all agencies, why this is needed and that it is secured in a timely way.

We have developed a flow chart to help staff understand the pathway and their responsibilities. The process is reviewed at Housing Pathway Panel Meetings in respect of individual young people and where there are any issues or barriers these are addressed and resolved.

We have further clarified the Duty to Refer mechanism with all staff and the importance of triggering this with our Housing colleagues if someone is threatened with

homelessness. However the usage of this mechanism is limited as both teams work well together seeking to resolve the issues.

The Housing Pathway Panel provides a forum to identify any young people at risk of homelessness which ensures that wherever possible we are developing contingency plans for young people living in Walsall. The Duty to Refer mechanism is more likely to be used when young people live outside of Walsall.

This has culminated in a single pathway and all young people are now supported by the Young Person's Team who receive referrals directly from Personal Advisors/ Social workers; the young person themselves or via the Housing Pathway Panel. This includes young people leaving Custody

This piece of work has been time consuming but very positive and we have been able to measure the positive impact of the changes and strengthening of the relationships across the services.

- 2.14 **Action: Care Leavers Leaving Custody – Jointly review and revise how Money Home Job, Children's Service, National Probation Service and the Youth Offending Services work together to support the release of young people from custody ensuring that there is appropriate pre-release planning in place. This will include the need to ensure accommodation needs are identified early, and actions taken to ensure care leavers do not leave custody without an accommodation plan in place.**

**Update:**

We have reviewed the processes for care leavers leaving custody and as a result of this our pathway is that we work with the Young Person's Team who are able to pull on any resources from the wider service if this is required. Our Rough Sleepers worker are also involved in the pre-release support and planning for young people leaving custody.

The Young Person's Team have a good understanding of the needs of care leavers. Managers and Personal Advisors take an active lead in ensuring that the Offender Management Unit in prisons and probation officers are agreed well in advance to ensure there is an accommodation plan in place prior to release. Personal Advisors will ensure that planning meetings involving Housing, Offender Manager and Probation to ensure that accommodation and support plans are in place to reduce the risk of reoffending behaviour.

The Housing Pathway Panel will consider those leaving custody to monitor pre-release planning and support.

Although, there is good joint work to identify suitable accommodation prior to release from custody, for some young people there can be challenges in securing appropriate accommodation as their risks cannot be managed safely. This can result in some young people being accommodated out of the Walsall area.



2.15 **Action: Review the access to Children’s Services records to ensure that this is proportionate and further information is requested on the basis of an agreed protocol**

**Update:** This has been reviewed by the Group Manager and on balance there was agreement that the access was proportionate.

2.16 **Action: Revised Joint Housing and Children’s Services Housing Protocol**

**Update:** There has been a delay in revising the joint protocol due to capacity issues. There has been considerable work has been undertaken to address the processes, roles and responsibilities based on the best practice guidance produced in 2020 by the Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST) within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and with the Department for Education (DfE), to support the development of joint protocols. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers-good-practice-advice>.

**The draft protocol is in progress and will be completed by end of February 2022 for wider consultation, including advisers from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.**

## Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme 2021/22

	<i>Report to AD</i>	<i>18<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>20<sup>th</sup> August</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> November</i>	<i>27<sup>th</sup> December</i>	<i>7<sup>th</sup> February</i>	<i>21<sup>st</sup> March</i>
	<i>Report to Democratic Services</i>	<i>22<sup>nd</sup> June</i>	<i>25<sup>th</sup> August</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> Nov</i>	<i>31<sup>st</sup> Dec</i>	<i>10<sup>th</sup> Feb</i>	<i>24<sup>th</sup> March</i>
	<i>DMT for noting</i>	<i>24<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>26<sup>th</sup> August</i>	<i>11<sup>th</sup> November</i>	<i>13<sup>th</sup> January</i>	<i>10<sup>th</sup> February</i>	<i>24<sup>th</sup> March</i>
<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Board date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> July</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Feb</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> April</b>
<b>David Hughes</b>	<b>Young People Engagement</b>						
<b>Elise Hopkins Helena Kucharczyk</b>	<b>Development of website and app</b>						
<b>Alison Jones</b>	<b>Health Passports</b>						
<b>Jivan Sembi</b>	<b>Local Offer</b>						
<b>Jivan Sembi and Elise</b>	<b>Housing Report</b>						
<b>Mark Tobin Adoption @Heart</b>	<b>Annual Adoption Report</b>						
<b>Mark Burrows</b>	<b>Fostering Annual report</b>						
<b>Helena Kucharczyk.</b>	<b>Performance Monitoring</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>		<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	
<b>Lorraine Thompson</b>	<b>NEET</b>						
<b>Alison Jones</b>	<b>CAMHS and emotional wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers</b>						
<b>Lorraine Thompson –</b>	<b>Assurance report – virtual school</b>	<b>Information.</b>					

## Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme 2021/22

<b><i>not required to attend.</i></b>							
<b>Alison Jones</b>	<b>Assurance report –CCG</b>						
<b>Jivan Sembi</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Strategy</b>				<b>Action plan</b>		
<b>Debbie Sylvester with CGL</b>	<b>Independent Visiting Service Annual Report</b>						
<b>Jivan Sembi</b>	<b>Increasing Employability for Care Experienced Young People</b>						Apprenticeship update Helena Baxter
<b>Nikki Gough/Chair</b>	<b>CPB Annual Report.</b>						