



**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**  
**4<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

**‘GETTING INVOLVED’ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S  
INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY**

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**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To seek Members’ approval for ‘Getting Involved’ the children and young people’s involvement strategy (Appendix 1) which sets out the ways in which children and young people who are ‘in need’ or ‘looked after’ by Middlesbrough Council can be involved in decision-making processes.

**BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

2. The Children Act 1989 requires that  
“Before making any decision with respect to a child whom they are looking after, or proposing to look after, a local authority shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain the wishes and feelings of -  
(a) the child;”
3. The national objectives for children’s services reflect this requirement and under Objective 8 local authorities are expected:  
“To actively involve users and carers in planning services and in tailoring individual packages of care; and to ensure effective mechanisms are in place to handle complaints.”
4. These requirements are based on the core principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which require governments to listen to children and to protect and promote their rights. They also reflect the approach set out in Every Child Matters: Next Steps (2004) which puts children’s views and wishes at the forefront of decision-making processes.

5. The 'Getting Involved' strategy is based on legal requirements, national objectives, current good practice and national, regional and local research into the views of children and young people. Young people in foster care and care leavers from Middlesbrough contributed to the development of this strategy.

## **GETTING INVOLVED**

6. The Getting Involved strategy sets out the ways in which children and young people can be involved in key decision-making processes. This includes decisions about:
  - their own lives
  - planning services and making them better
  - policies

The strategy also provides information on expectations, the law, access to records, advocacy, and the comments, compliments and complaints process.

7. For ease of reading, the strategy is available in leaflet form. Some examples of the leaflets are attached (Appendix 2)

## **OPTION APPRAISAL**

8. N/A

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

9. There are no immediate financial or legal implications in this report. There are no specific ward implications as this strategy covers the whole of Middlesbrough.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

10. That the 'Getting Involved' Children and Young People's Involvement Strategy be approved.

## **REASON**

11. The recommendation is supported by the following reason:

The local authority is under a duty to seek the views and wishes of children and young people when making decisions that affect their lives. The strategy is intended to clarify how this might be achieved.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:  
Corporate Parenting Policy & Strategy May 2001

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# Getting Involved

Children and Young People's Involvement Strategy

**Middlesbrough Social Services**

**October 2004**



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# 1. Introduction

This strategy sets out what Middlesbrough Social Services will do to involve the children and young people who use its services.

It says what kind of things young people can get involved with and what young people can expect from Social Services.

The aim is to help young people to get involved in all aspects of decision-making, including:

- Decisions about their own life
- Decisions about planning services and making services better
- Decisions about policies

The strategy is linked to "Putting Users and Carers at the Heart of Social Services - User and Carer Involvement Policy and Strategy".

If you want any information about getting involved, please contact:

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## 2. The Aims of the Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to make sure that:

- Children and young people are respected.
- Children and young people are able to have their say.
- Children and young people are given the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to say what they think.
- Children and young people are listened to.
- Children and young people are involved in making decisions about their own lives.
- Children and young people influence the services they use.
- Children and young people have someone to speak on their behalf (an advocate) if they need one.
- Children and young people are helped to join in with their local communities and to know their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

This strategy is based on the principle that:

**Children and young people have views and have a right to be heard.**

### 3. Decisions about your life

The main way that young people are involved in decisions about their lives is through.....

#### **Assessment, Care Planning and Review**

The aim is to make sure that you get involved as much, or as little, as you want to be in the decisions that are made about your life.

##### ➤ **Assessment**

When you and your family first need help and support from Social Services, someone will talk to you and your family to see what sort of help you need. This means that a social worker, and sometimes other people who know you, will make an **assessment** of your needs.

The assessment covers every part of your life:

Health	Education	Feelings and Actions	Relationships
How you see yourself		Where you live	

This assessment helps us to decide what support you and your family need, and what help we can give you. If things change, another assessment might be done.

You have the right to say what you want to happen and how you feel about things.

Your wishes and feelings should be taken into account when decisions are made about your life.

If you want help to have your say, you can ask for someone called an **advocate**. An advocate is someone who:

- does not work for Social Services
- can help you to have your say
- can speak on your behalf (if you want them to)
- can help you to sort things out

**Your wishes and feelings should be written down separately from the views of anyone else in your family.**

The information that is written down about you should be checked with you to make sure it is right.

**You have the right to see what is written down about you. You can not see what is written about other people - even other people in your family - unless they agree.**

The law says that if you are unhappy about anything that Social Services does, or does not do, you have the right to make a complaint. The 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints' procedure is there to give you a chance to tell us what you think about what we do.

The Social Services Complaints Officer is not involved with day to day services. She can help you to decide what to do.

### ➤ **Care Planning**

When an assessment has been done, a care plan is made. This is a plan that says what will be done to help you.

The care plan may include 'actions' for you to do, actions for your family to do and actions for your Social Worker or other people from Social Services to do. There may also be actions for your teachers, your doctor or other people (such as a school nurse or a health visitor) to do.



The plan will say when the actions should be done by. It will also say how often your social worker will visit you. A key date is when the plan will be looked at again (reviewed). The longest any plan should last is 12 months. If the aims of the plan have not been achieved by then, a new plan will be made.

**You will be asked to sign the plan to say you agree with it. If you don't agree, this will also be written down on the plan.**

**You have the right to have a copy of any plans that are made about your life.**

### ➤ **Reviews**

Your care plan must be reviewed regularly to make sure you are still getting the help you need. Your social worker will review your plan every three months with their Team Manager.

Your social worker will check with you and your family to see how things are going and how you are feeling. Any changes to your care plan must be discussed with you and your family. You should be asked to sign any new plan that is made and you should be given a copy.

### **If you are looked after by Social Services .....**

Your assessment may find that, for some reason, your own family cannot look after you. In that case, you might need to be 'looked after' by Social Services for a time. How long this will be depends on your own situation.

### ➤ **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

Very soon after you become looked after, your social worker will help you to do your PEP. This is a chance for you to say what you think about your school/education and what you like to do in your spare time. The aim is to help to keep your education on track.

➤ **Health Plan**

You will also have a health assessment. This gives you a chance to have your health checked by a doctor. The aim is to help you to stay healthy. It is a chance to talk about anything that may be worrying you. The doctor will work with you to write a health plan about any health problems you might have. The doctor will give you a copy to keep.

➤ **'Looked after' Reviews**

If, as part of your care plan, you are looked after by Social Services, then different rules apply to reviews. When you first become looked after, your plan is reviewed after one month, four months and ten months. After that, as long as you are looked after by Social Services your plan is reviewed every six months.

Any key decisions about your care while you are looked after should always be confirmed at a review meeting. So if things change, you might have reviews more often,

When your care plan is reviewed, the key people involved in the plan have a meeting to see if anything needs to be changed.

**You have the right to attend your own 'looked after' review meetings.**

Your social worker should visit you before your review is due to happen. This is to give you a chance to talk about how you feel and to think about what you want to say. You will be given a 'consultation form' so that you can write down what you want to say. You will also be asked who you would like to attend your review.

**Your social worker will discuss with you:**

**How you feel about things**

**What you want to say at your review meeting**

**Who you would like to be there**

**Whether you want to use an advocate**

If you want help to have your say, you can ask for an advocate. Your social worker can arrange this for you or you can contact the advocacy service directly - see contact list.

A Reviewing Officer organises your review meeting with you and your social worker. The Reviewing Officer must make sure that your wishes and feelings are known and taken into account in your review. They must also make sure that you know what happened at the review meeting and understand what will happen next.

This is a time for you to tell us your views and ideas. It is a time for you to have a say in the plans being made with you and for you. This helps us to look after you as best we can. It helps us when we think about your future.

**You have the right to have information about the decisions made in review meetings.**

Your Social Worker and the Reviewing Officer must make sure that you know what to do if you are unhappy about anything and want to make a complaint.

**You have the right to complain about anything that Social Services does..... or does not do.**

### ➤ **Leaving Care**

You are classed as a 'Care Leaver' if you have been looked after by Social Services for more than three months between the ages of 14 and 16 and you are still looked after on your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. This means that you can get help from the Leaving Care Service.

The Leaving Care Service uses the same basic approach of 'assessment, care planning and review'. Your Personal Adviser will work with you to do an assessment of your changing needs as you become an adult. This will be done within three months (either side) of your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The document used is called 'Platform'. It includes some activities to help you to say what you think your needs are.

**You have the right to be fully involved in deciding what you need.**

**You are expected to take some responsibility for deciding what you need.**

Within three months of starting work on Platform, a 'Pathway Plan' will be written. This plan sets out what you want to do and what help you might need. Rollercoaster (the Pathway Plan) also includes information about other people who might be able to provide help and support.

**You have the right to be fully involved in deciding what is in your Pathway Plan.**

**You are expected to take some responsibility for deciding what is in your Pathway Plan.**

Your Pathway Plan will be reviewed every six months. When you stop being looked after by Social Services, you will be offered an 'exit' review.

If part of your Pathway Plan is to go to college or university, you will receive support up to a maximum age of 24.

## 4. Decisions about planning services and making them better

The main way that all young people can be involved in decisions about planning services and making services better is by.....

- **telling us what sorts of services they need**
- **saying what's good, what's not so good and what's missing**
- **helping us to make sure our information makes sense**
- **helping us to choose new staff**

The aim is to make sure that we've got the right kind of services, in the right place, at the right time and provided by the right people.

### ➤ **Telling us what sorts of services you need**

We ask what you think as part of the assessment process. There is a short questionnaire for you to fill in. We ask you again when your care plan is reviewed.

The more you get involved in your assessment, care planning and review process, the more we know about what services **should** be like. This helps us to plan for the future.

We might also ask you to get involved in special meetings to talk about how we organise our services. That might be a special 'one-off' meeting or a series of meetings to look in more detail at how we do things.

**Every time you get involved it helps us to make the right decisions when we plan for the future.**

### ➤ **Saying what's good, what's not so good and what's missing**

If you have been doing a piece of work with one of our staff, you might be asked to fill in an evaluation form. It's a chance for you to say what you think about that piece of work. This helps us to get things right.

Sometimes we send out questionnaires to ask young people what they think about certain issues. For instance, we have asked young people what they thought about sharing information.

If you are not happy with the things we do, then you can make a complaint. Complaints are another way that we can find out what you think and what we might be doing wrong. The same system can be used to tell us what we are doing right. We use the information we collect to help us plan to do things better.

➤ **Helping us to make sure our information makes sense**

Whenever we need to produce some information for young people, we ask young people what they think about it. For instance, young people helped us to make sure that the leaflet about assessments made sense to them. They also helped with this strategy.

Sometimes groups of young people get involved in projects to help us to design the documents we use. This happened with the information leaflets and evaluation forms used by the Family Resource Team. Children and young people that we look after helped us to design documents such as the Personal Education Plan, Platform One (Leaving Care Assessment) and Rollercoaster (Leaving Care Pathway Plan).

➤ **Helping us to choose new staff**

We believe that involving young people in staff interviews helps us to get the right kind of people to do the job. Young people have helped us to recruit social workers, care staff and sessional staff. This is done in different ways.

Sometimes we arrange an informal meeting between the adults being interviewed (candidates) and young people who use the service. Their views of the candidates are taken into account by the managers doing the interviews.

Sometimes young people set some of the questions that the candidates are asked.

Sometimes young people sit on an interview panel with the managers doing the interviews and ask their own questions.

Young people who get involved with choosing new staff are given training and support to help them to do it properly.

### **Other opportunities for children and young people we look after**

For children and young people that we look after, there are some extra ways that they can get involved in what we do.....

- **Helping us to train staff, foster carers and volunteers**
- **Joining a consultation group**
- **Being a Young Adviser**

#### ➤ **Helping us to train staff, foster carers and volunteers**

Some young people get involved in training staff, foster carers and volunteers. For instance, young people have been involved in a preparation course for people who want to be foster carers.

There is also a course called 'Total Respect' that is all about involving young people in decision-making. Young trainers (people we used to look after) deliver this course.

Young people who get involved in training staff, foster carers and volunteers are given the training and support they need.

#### ➤ **Joining a consultation group**

Some children and young people we look after meet regularly to discuss what we do and how we do it. These groups have really helped us to make services better for everyone we look after.

For instance, the Overnight Stays policy was changed because young people asked for it to be made easier for them to stay with their friends. The Children's Guides to Fostering and Adoption Services were both written with their help.

➤ **Being a Young Adviser**

Young people involved with the Leaving Care Service can become Young Advisers. They work with the Youth Development Worker to help other young people to get involved in things and to make the service better. For instance, Young Advisers have organised consultation events for other young people.

The Young Advisers are employed by Social Services as sessional staff. They are given training and support to help them to do their job.



## **5. Decisions about policies**

The main way that young people are involved in decisions about policies is by .....

### **Talking to the Mayor and local Councillors**

The aim is to make sure that the people who make the 'big decisions' about what the Council does know what young people think.

In Middlesbrough Council, policies are decided by the elected Mayor, elected Councillors and, sometimes, by very senior managers. These policies say what the staff who work for the council should do.

#### **What is an elected Mayor or Councillor?**

The Mayor and local Councillors are elected by people over the age of 18, who live in Middlesbrough. The Mayor represents the whole town. Councillors represent their Ward - the area they are elected by. They also represent the town as a whole.

The Mayor and the Councillors make all the 'big decisions' about what happens in Middlesbrough. They decide which services to spend money on and how much to spend.

Once you are 18, you can vote. You can vote for the Mayor and the Councillors that you think will do the best for your area and your town. When you are 21, you can also stand for election and become a Councillor yourself.

#### **Youth Parliament**

Meanwhile, Middlesbrough has a Youth Parliament that is open to young people aged over 11. This gives you a chance to get involved in representing other young people. You can also talk to the Mayor and Councillors about the things that affect all young people in the town.

## **Middlesbrough Council is a 'Corporate Parent'**

Middlesbrough Council has special responsibilities for children who are unable to live with their own families - children who are 'looked after' by the Council.

When the Council looks after a child or young person, it shares the duties of the child's parent. Because many different people carry out the work of the Council, this is known as 'Corporate Parenting'.

## **The Corporate Parenting Board**

To help them to be **good** corporate parents, the Council set up the Corporate Parenting Board. This is made up of nine elected Councillors, a foster carer, someone from the Health Service and someone from the National Youth Advocacy Service. There are also spaces for up to six young people to be involved.

If you are looked after by Middlesbrough Council, the easiest way for you to have your say about policies is to talk to the members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

You can do this by:

- Asking a member of staff to put forward your views and ideas to the Board.
- Asking to talk to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board.
- Asking to present your views and ideas to the whole Board.
- Becoming one of the six young people's representatives on the Board.

The Board meets at least six times a year after school.

## 6. What we expect of each other

An essential part of getting involved is knowing what the 'ground rules' are. This includes knowing what you can expect of us and what we expect of you.

### **What you can expect from Social Services Staff**

All Social Services staff are expected to:

- Treat children, young people and their families with respect.
- Listen to, and respect, the views of children and young people.
- Help children and young people to give their views and get involved in decision-making.

Social Workers are expected to:

- Make sure that the wishes and feelings of children and young people are taken into account in assessment, care planning and review processes.
- Write down the views of children and young people separately in all relevant documents - e.g. assessments and care plans.
- Tell children and young people what is written down about them.
- Ask children and young people to sign their current care plan.
- Give children and young people a copy of their current care plan.
- Visit children and young people as often as it says in their care plan.
- Visit children and young people before their review is due, to find out how they feel about things.
- Tell children and young people about the comments, compliments and complaints procedure.
- Make sure children and young people have an advocate if they want one.

For children and young people who are looked after.....

As well as the above, Social Workers/Personal Advisers should:

- Visit children and young people who have just become looked after once a week for the first four weeks.
- Visit children and young people who have been placed, in an emergency, with relatives once a week for up to six weeks.
- Visit children and young people who have a series of regular short-term placements within the first 7 days the first time they are placed. If the placements continue, visit at least once every 6 months.
- Visit children and young people at least once a month until they stop being looked after.
- Make some visits when everyone in the household is there.
- Check that the child or young person's bedroom is ok.
- Make sure that children and young people have a chance to talk to them away from anyone else - in private and in confidence.
- Record visits to children and young people on their file.
- Ask children and young people what they want to say at their review.
- Ask children and young people who they would like to attend their review.
- Ask children and young people whether they would like an advocate.
- Regularly remind children and young people about the comments, compliments and complaints procedure.

Reviewing Officers should:

- Make sure that children and young people's views are known and taken into account in their review.
- Make sure that children and young people know what happened in their review.
- Make sure that children and young people know about the comments, compliments and complaints procedure.
- Make sure that children and young people know how to get in touch with an advocate if they want one.

- Make sure that children and young people have an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP).

### **What we expect of you**

Children and young people are expected to:

Treat other children, young people and adults with respect.

Listen to, and respect, the views of other people.

Take some responsibility for making sure their views are known.

## 7. What the Law says

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is an international law passed by the United Nations in 1989. It came into force in the United Kingdom in 1991. It sets out the basic rights of children and young people all over the world.

**Article 12** of the UNCRC says:

Children have a right to express their views on anything that affects them and for those views to be listened to.

**Article 13** of the UNCRC says:

Children have a right to information.

The **Children Act 1989** is the law that says how Social Services should help children and young people. It says:

Social Services should find out the wishes and feelings of children and young people. Those wishes and feelings should be taken into account when decisions are made about their lives.

The **Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000** is the law that says what Social Services should do to help care leavers.

The **Carers and Children with Disabilities Act 2000** is the law that says what Social Services should do to help children with disabilities and young carers.

## 8. Looking at your files and records

By law, Social Services has to keep information about each person we work with. Some of this information is kept in a paper file and some is kept in a computer record.

We need the information to make sure that you get the help you need. It is also there to help us remember things that have happened.

All the information we keep is covered by the Data Protection Act, which means we must keep it private and confidential.

### **Your records contain:**

- Your name and address
- Important details about you and your family
- Who is helping you
- Any problems you might have
- Anything you have asked about
- Notes made each time you are in touch with Social Services

This reminds us what we have talked about and what we have agreed to do.

### **Who can look at your records?**

Your records are seen and used **only** by people who are helping you.

Other people can look at your file only with your permission - that includes your family. If you are under 18, a parent or guardian can ask to see your file. They have to say why they want to see it. They need your permission unless for some reason, such as your age, you would not be able to understand. They can see your file only if it is in your best interests for them to see it.

## **You have the right to see your personal records.**

To see your records, you need to fill in an 'Access to Personal Information Request Form'. If you are under 18, you have to get an adult - a parent, guardian or social worker - to sign to say that you understand what you are doing. The request form asks for information that helps us to find all your records.

## **What happens**

Once we have got your form, we arrange for you to see a member of Social Services staff - usually a social worker. They bring your records for you to see. They will explain what things mean and answer your questions. You can say if you think anything is wrong or might be a mistake. You cannot take the records away but you can ask for a copy of things that you might want to keep.

You probably already know most of what is in your records. You will have been given copies of some of it. You can bring someone with you - a relative, friend or another person - to the meeting.

## **Will you see everything in your records?**

You might not be able to see everything in your records. Some information comes from other people, such as doctors, who have to give their permission for you to see what they have said. Some information is about other people, such as members of your family, who have to agree that you can see what is said about them. There may also be some information that we are not allowed to show you.

## **How long will it take?**

We need time to make sure your records are in order. We may also have to ask other people for permission to show you some things. We aim to arrange for you to see your records **within 40 working days** of getting your request form.



**What if we say 'no'?**

If Social Services decide not to show you any personal information, you can ask for that decision to be looked at again. You need to contact the Director of Social Services and ask for a review of the decision.

## 9. Advocacy, Comments, Compliments and Complaints

### Advocacy

We want to know what you think but some people don't find it easy to speak out for themselves. To help you to have your say there is an organisation called the **National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)**.

NYAS is an independent organisation which means that it is nothing to do with anybody else who might be involved with you. That includes Social Services, your Carers, your Parents, your School or your Doctor.

NYAS is confidential which means that nothing you tell them will be repeated without your permission, unless your or someone else is in danger or is being seriously hurt. If they have to tell someone else, they will always tell you first.

So, if you:

- Need advice or information
- Are worried or unhappy
- Feel that nobody is listening to you
- Want to get something stopped, started or changed

NYAS can help by providing advocates who can help you to get problems sorted out. An advocate will help you by:

- Talking things over with you
- Helping you to sort out things by yourself
- Coming with you to meetings and/or writing letters for you
- Telling you about different ways of dealing with your problems and what might happen next.

When you contact an advocate, you are the one 'in charge'. This means that the advocate does what you ask him or her to do. Also, if you decide half way through that you don't want to go on with sorting the problems out or if things change, that's OK.

All NYAS advocates have a lot to do with children and young people and they know about the difficulties and worries that young people have. They all have proper qualifications and their work is supervised.

The advocates will try and sort things out as quickly and as calmly as possible. They will help by discussing things over the phone or by sending an advocate out to see you, if that is what you want.

Contact NYAS on the Freephone: 0800 616160  
Or at the office: 0151 649 8700

### **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

If you have got something say about any of our services, we promise to listen. You might want to:

- thank someone for their help
- tell us how to make things better
- tell us that you are unhappy about how we do things

We are happy if you think we have done a good job. We are interested in your ideas about how to make things better. We care if you are unhappy about something we do - or don't do.

We believe that many problems can be sorted out quite easily if you tell someone about them. Talking to someone can help to stop a problem becoming bigger.

If you need help with a problem, you could talk to:

- your social worker
- your teacher
- any member of staff
- someone in your family
- your foster carer
- someone else that you trust

If you are unhappy about the way your problem is dealt with by Social Services, you can make a complaint by talking to any member of staff. You can also telephone, write to or visit the:

Social Services Complaints Officer  
PO Box 234  
Civic Centre  
Middlesbrough  
TS1 2XH

Telephone: 01642 729245  
Fax: 01642 729985  
Minicom: 01642 726980  
(use announcer)

The law sets out a system for dealing with complaints that Social Services has to follow. Sometimes they change the way things must be done. If this happens, we will tell you about the changes.

## **This is what happens when you make a complaint.....**

You will get a letter saying who will look into your complaint. You should get this letter within 3 working days of us hearing from you.

### **Stage 1 - Problem-solving**

A manager who is responsible for the service will talk to you about your complaint. They will try to sort it out as quickly as possible. We will try to complete this stage in 14 working days if we can. If you are not happy with how your complaint has been dealt with, you can move to.....

### **Stage 2 - Formal Complaint**

A different manager will look into what has happened. An Independent Person - someone who does not work for Social Services - will be involved too. They will make sure your complaint is dealt with fairly. We will try to complete this stage in 28 working days. If you are not happy with how your complaint has been dealt with, you can move to.....

### **Stage 3 - Review Panel**

Your complaint will be looked at by a 'Review Panel'. The panel is chaired by a different independent person. You will be asked if you would like to go and talk to the panel. This panel will decide if your complaint has been dealt with properly and fairly. The panel will tell Social Services what they think should happen. Social Services will tell you what they are going to do.

If you are still not happy, you can talk to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is based at Beverley House, 175 Skipton Road, York YO30 5FZ. Tel: 01904 663200

**If you need help with making a complaint, you have the right to have an independent advocate.**

## 10. Useful Contacts

### **Social Services**

Sandringham House  
(for most social workers)  
170a Overdale Road  
Park End  
Middlesbrough  
Tel: 01642 300870

### Civic Centre

(for the Executive Director of Social Services, Head of Children and Families Services, Complaints Officer)  
P.O. Box 234  
Civic Centre  
Middlesbrough  
TS1 2XH  
Tel: 01642 726004  
Minicom: 01642 726980 (please use announcer)

### Family Resource Team

(for family support workers)  
6-14 Viewley Centre  
Hemlington  
Middlesbrough  
Tel: 01642 575012

### Children with Disabilities Team

(for social workers, occupational therapists, transitions and home support)  
10-12 Farndale Road  
Middlesbrough  
TS4 2PL  
Tel: 01642 855150

Leaving Care Service  
(for personal advisers)  
3 Park Road North  
Middlesbrough  
TS1 3LS  
Tel: 01642 354100

Review & Development Unit  
(for reviewing officers)  
18 Farndale Road  
Middlesbrough  
TS4 2PL  
Tel: 01642 818094

## Helplines

**NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)** to help you to have your say.  
Telephone: 0800 616101  
Web Site: [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)  
e-mail: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

**Child Line** for someone to talk to over the phone and in confidence.  
Telephone: 0800 1111 open 24hours a day or Minicom: 0800 400222 -  
open 2p.m. - 9p.m.  
Web Site: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)**  
Telephone: 0808 800 5000 or Textphone: 0800 056 0566  
Web Site: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Young Minds** for young people with mental health problems.  
Telephone: 0800 0182 138  
Web Site: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

## **Organisations of, and for, children and young people in care**

**The Who Cares? Trust** - works to improve the care of children and young people in care or leaving care. Telephone: 020 7251 3117

Web Site: [www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

E-mail: [mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

**A National Voice** - an organisation run by and for young people in care.

Telephone: 0161 853 4011

Web Site: [anationalvoice.org](http://anationalvoice.org)

E-mail: [office@anv.u-net.com](mailto:office@anv.u-net.com)



## Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Policy

### Corporate Parenting Policy

Middlesbrough Council has extra responsibilities for the children and young people it looks after. It has a special policy that says:

#### Middlesbrough Council aims:

- to be a good parent to the children that it looks after
- to make sure those children have the best life possible
- to make sure that everyone works together to make this happen
- to help children become healthy and independent adults

#### How the policy works

- The Corporate Parenting Board takes special responsibility for children the Council looks after.
- Every part of the Council has to say how it can help children who are looked after.
- Councillors visit residential children's homes to make sure they are safe and well cared for.
- The Corporate Parenting Strategy is used to say what should be happening and to check progress.

#### What is included?

##### Rights & Participation

The Council will:

- Protect and promote children's rights.
- Tell children and young people what is happening to them.
- Help them to have their say when decisions are being made about their lives.

##### Assessment, Care Planning & Reviews

The Council will:

- Listen to children and young people.
- Give them a copy of any plans that are made.
- Help them to take part in meetings.

## **Placement & Accommodation**

The Council will:

- Try to keep children with their own family if possible.
- Try not to move children around too much.
- Try to keep children as safe as possible.

## **Education & Personal Development**

The Council will:

- Help children to do as well as they can at school.
- Give children the chance to try different activities.
- Help young people to move on to training and employment.

## **Health**

The Council will:

- Make sure children get the health checks they need.
- Help children to look after their own health.
- Try to make sure the right services are there when needed.

## **Care Leavers**

The Council will:

- Help young people to learn to look after themselves before they leave care.
- Work out a 'Pathway Plan' with young people that covers education, training, careers and housing.
- Keep in touch with young people wherever they live.

## **The Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Board is there to look at what the Council does for the young people that it looks after. Their aim is to make sure that the Council provides the kind of services that young people need. They will work with other organisations such as the Health Service and voluntary organisations to do this.

The Board meets once every six weeks after school. Any young person that is looked after by Social Services is welcome to attend.

## United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child

This convention became international law in 1990 and was ratified by the UK in 1991. It provides an internationally agreed framework of minimum standards necessary for the well-being of the child, to which every child is entitled. The following is a summary version of the articles of the convention.

Article 1 The convention covers anyone under the age of 18.

Article 2 All children have the rights listed here.

Article 3 All actions taken should be in the best interests of the child.

Article 4 The Government must uphold children's rights.

Article 5 The rights of parents/carers and family must be respected.

Article 6 Children have a right to live.

Article 7 Children have a right to a name and nationality.

Article 8 Children have a right to have their identity protected.

Article 9 Children have a right to be with their parents if this is best for them.

Article 10 Children have a right to leave a country to be with their parents/carers.

Article 11 Children have a right to protection from kidnap.

Article 12 Children have a right to express their views on anything that affects them, and for those views to be listened to.

Article 13 Children have a right to information.

Article 14 Children have a right to choose their own religion.

Article 15 Children have a right to choose their own friends.

Article 16 Children have a right to privacy.

Article 17 Children have a right to information through newspapers, TV, etc.

Article 18 Both parents have a responsibility for their children.

Article 19 Children should be protected from abuse and neglect.

Article 20 Children have a right to be cared for if their family is unable to do so.

Article 21 Children have a right to be adopted if this is in their best interest.

Article 22 Children's rights to protection and care should be upheld if they have to leave their own country.

Article 23 Disabled children have a right to care, education and training.

Article 24 Children have a right to medical treatment if they are ill.

Article 25 If children live in care, this needs to be the most appropriate for them.

Article 26 Children have a right to Social Security.

Article 27 Children have a right to a decent standard of living.

Article 28 Children have a right to education.

Article 29 The education children receive should help them to develop.

Article 30 Children have a right to practice their own religion, language and culture.

Article 31 Children have a right to leisure, play and participation.

Article 32 Children have a right not to have to work until they are legally old enough.

Article 33 Children have a right to be protected from all forms of drugs.

Article 34 Children have a right to be protected from all forms of  
35,36,37 exploitation and cruelty.

Article 38 Children have a right to be protected from having to fight  
39 in wars; and a right to care if they are injured in a war.

Article 40 Children have a right to defend themselves legally and to receive help if they need it.

Article 41 Any other rights children have in law also apply.

From "Children as Partners in Planning" (Save the Children Fund 2000)