

# Care Matters: Time for Change

**A home with someone who cares**

  
Middlesbrough  
moving forward

# What good corporate parents want for their children

**“We want all children in care to have kind, understanding and committed carers – whether foster carers or residential staff - and we want to encourage that element of ‘stickability’ which research has shown to be key to the successful continuation of relationships .”**

Care Matters: Time for Change  
(Department for Education and Skills, 2007)

# Key Proposals

Ensuring a strong focus on **stability**

Improving foster carer **support and training**

Improving **commissioning** of placements

Enforcing national **minimum standards** for care providers

Piloting **social pedagogy** in residential care

Ensuring that children in **long-term health or education placements** get the best possible support

Improving practice in responding to **children who go missing** from care

Ensuring a **better placement experience** for children and making regulations to achieve this

# Stability

**Successive movements of placement/school lead to:**

**A sense of rejection**

**Loss of confidence**

**Loss of capacity to trust**

**Stability & continuity in care help to redress discontinuity and loss prior to coming into care**

# Stability

## **BAAF training materials:**

- **audit performance**
- **support improved stability**
- **baseline of current practice**

**Middlesbrough's performance - 'good'**

# Options for Permanence

- **Return home**
- **Live with family or friends**
- **Special Guardianship**
- **Long-term foster care**
- **Residential care**
- **Adoption**

# Foster Carers

**“Foster parents deserve a special mention because, with generosity of spirit, they open their homes to look after a child hitherto unknown to them and they provide this care 24 hours a day.”**

Lord Herbert Laming

Care Matters: Placements Working Group  
(DfES, 2007)

# Attachment

## Dimensions of parenting to help children become more confident and competent

Being available

Responding sensitively

Co-operative caring

Accepting the child

Family membership

Helping children to trust

Helping children to manage feelings

Helping children to feel effective

Building self esteem

Helping children to belong

Attachment Handbook for Foster Care and Adoption  
Schofield and Beek, 2006



# Supporting Foster Carers

“Carer stress, and the need to respond to difficult behaviour, account for a high proportion of placement breakdowns and instability for children.”

Care Matters: Time for Change  
(DfES, 2007)

# Supporting Foster Carers

- **CWDC – Foster Care Training, Support & Development Standards**
- **National Minimum Standards revised & linked**
- **Ofsted inspections – quality framework for assessments**
- **Rollout ‘Fostering Changes’ programme of skills-based training on positive parenting techniques**

# Supporting Foster Carers

- **Pilot weekly foster carer meetings and weekly 'parent report' to anticipate & prevent disruption**
- **Pilot Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care**
- **Foster Carer Payments – published policy & payments structure**

## One young person's view (nationally)

**“I think a foster carer’s personality is what makes a good foster carer, I am interested only in their kindness, understanding and commitment to me.”**

Care Matters: Time for Change  
(DfES, 2007)

# Improving residential care

## Social Pedagogy

A system of theory, training and practice to support the overall development of the child.

Practical engagement with children and young people using skills in art, music, outdoor activities etc.

## Pilot to evaluate effectiveness

**Ofsted power to issue notice of failure & action needed + power to restrict admissions**

# Commissioning

- **Statutory duty to secure a sufficient and diverse provision of quality placements in the local authority area**
- **Pilot Regional Commissioning Units**
- **CWDC – Occupational Standards for Commissioners**
- **Standardised national contracts**
- **Guidance on managing the market**
- **Improve placement choice**

# Out of Area Placements

## Children and young people

- feel isolated
- are vulnerable to poorer outcomes
- have difficulty in accessing services such as education and CAMHS
- may not be visited regularly
- may be threatened with a move even when settled

# Out of Area Placements

## Strengthen the statutory framework

- may not place out of area unless clearly in the child's best interests
- senior management scrutiny of decisions to place out of area
- clarify responsibilities of placing and host authority
- may not bring home unless clearly in the child's best interests



# Out of Area Placements

## Disabled children in long-term residential placements in health or educational settings

- Clarify notification procedures
- Requirement on placing authority to visit regularly and re-assess needs
- Issue guidance on the role and purpose of the visit
- Will have 'looked after' status in majority of cases

# Missing from Placement

**Statutory guidance issued 2002**

**Integrated Children's System contingency arrangements**

**National Minimum Standards & Ofsted inspections**

**Strengthen guidance on risk assessments and independent de-briefing for young people**

# A Better Placement Experience

In addition to all of the above,

- **Strengthen regulations in relation to social worker visits**
- **Ensure contact outside of regular visits**
- **Requirement to visit 'accommodated' young people if taken into custody**

# Care Matters - Time for Change

“Children in care should be *cared about*, not just cared for.”

DfES 2007

  
Middlesbrough  
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# Children and Young Person's Bill

## Changes to all key children's legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

# Children and Young Person's Bill

**Changes mostly as above**

**New Statutory Guidance to be issued by  
2009**