

Children Looked After Strategy 2011-2014

VISION

**“Children in care deserve excellent parenting – nurturing supportive and ambitious care which provides stability, promotes resilience and respects their cultural heritage”
DCSF (2007 ‘Care Matters: A Time for Change’)**

Strategic Priorities

1. To reduce the number of looked after children and young people
2. To extend the range and type of placements
3. To provide safe, stable and secure placements for children and young people
4. To enable children and young people to make and sustain positive and supportive relationships
5. To ensure the children and young people are offered the best possible education and supported to reach their full potential
6. To promote the emotional health and well-being of children and young people
7. To help young people to be ready for adult life

Draft 9th December 2010

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Foreword

This Children Looked After Strategy aims to illustrate how Middlesbrough Council will exercise its responsibilities as corporate parents to its children and young people who are looked after and leaving care. It has been formulated around the standards set by the children of Middlesbrough, via The Pledge, which directly influences strategic priorities and operational work plans.

It recognises that, since the original document was produced in June 2008, there has been a significant increase in the number of children becoming looked after. For this reason, greater emphasis has been given to systems and structures that aim to prevent children becoming looked after. This will include a more robust and accessible 'front of house' service to provide early signposting and support to the town's families.

In the event that children do need to become looked after, Middlesbrough can respond using an improved commissioning process, which has increased the range of placements available, working regionally to ensure equitable costs and access to private sector providers.

As the Children's Pledge was developed, the children and young people told us that what they want most of all, is to be happy and to be loved. Whilst this could not be promised, the local authority has committed to creating an ethos wherein each child and young person looked after and leaving care will have all opportunities available to be healthy, happy and fulfilled. There is, therefore, great focus in Middlesbrough upon identifying excellent carers and on us together facilitating good education, health and attainments achieved by Looked After Children and those young people who are leaving care.

Improvements are necessary in the way we deliver support to children and young people to assist them in achieving good outcomes in each of the key areas outlined. Middlesbrough's performance against National Targets is used positively, to ensure that we are achieving this and, in so doing, the 'softer' targets set by the children.

This strategy identifies key priority areas and actions to improve outcomes for children. The strategic priorities that have been identified are ambitious and aspirational. We want to achieve the very best outcome for all of our children and young people and this strategy explains what we want to achieve and how we will ensure success.

Neil Pocklington
Deputy Director, Children, Families & Learning

The Pledge

“A promise you have to keep”

We promise that:

1. We will try very hard to make sure that you live with people who care about you and care for you.
2. We will help you to keep in touch with your family.
3. We will help you to make friends and build relationships.
4. We will believe in you and support you to do well in education, training and employment.
5. We will encourage you to think about your dreams and achieve your ambitions.
6. We will make sure there is a way to make things happen for you.
7. We will make sure you can talk to the adults who make decisions that affect you.
8. We will support you if you feel you are being treated unfairly.
9. We will support individuals and groups to deal with bullying, wherever it happens.
10. We will explain what words mean and things that you do not understand.
11. We will keep things confidential unless action is needed to keep people safe.

Local Context

The number of looked after children increased by 19% during 2009/10 compared with a 1% increase during 2008/09. Similarly, the number of children who were the subject of a child protection plan increased by 33% during 2009/10 and by 67% over the past 18 months. Research conducted by the ADCS reported high levels of growth in key social care indicators across the country, and discussions with other North Eastern authorities indicate similar pressures across the region.

Against this significant increase in caseloads, performance against 50% of the safeguarding indicators shows some improvement over the course of the year and only two indicators fall into the bottom quartile banding using the comparator data provided under Ofsted's 2008/09 annual assessment of children's services.

Structured performance management arrangements have been embedded to monitor performance against the key safeguarding process and outcome indicators on a quarterly basis and to identify and discuss key performance and process issues at a team level on a monthly basis. Team level monitoring includes case level reviews and discussions to identify and manage emerging issues.

An analysis of current and historic data clearly indicates:

- The number of looked after children is significantly higher than our statistical neighbours and has continued to rise.
- This increase is concentrated within East Middlesbrough (34.3%), with West and North Middlesbrough also showing a significant increase (27.8% and 27.3%).
- Some children become looked after without having any prior contact with social care services.
- Police Protection Powers (usage) appear to be volatile from year to year.
- An increase in the number of purchased foster placements.
- An increase in purchased residential care placements, including specialist provision for children with complex needs.
- This has resulted in an overall increase in pressure on the budgets for looked after children.
- There has been an increase in the number of adoptions but a low level of Special Guardianship and Residence Orders.
- Whilst the number of moves experienced by children and young people has decreased and we are performing well in relation to our statistical neighbours, there has been a decrease in the number of children and young people living in the same placement for two or more years.
- Educational outcomes for looked after children and young people are below the national average and that of statistical neighbours.
- Too many young people are being placed outside of council boundaries.

Children Looked After and Corporate Parenting

The government has challenged local authorities to care about and not just to care for its children and charged them with being 'Corporate Parents' which means that they have the same duties and responsibilities to all children looked after and care leavers as would any good parent.

Middlesbrough aims to give each of the children for whom it cares, excellent experiences and stable relationships throughout their childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Each child and young person should have a clear sense of their own identity, to feel nurtured and involved. Each child will know that their needs, as outlined in the pledge, are given the highest priority and that they are valued and cared for, both by those who look after them, and those who make key decisions at a political and operational level in Middlesbrough.

To fulfil this crucial task, Middlesbrough will;

- Ensure elected members understand their corporate parenting responsibilities and are supported to carry them out
- Ensure senior council officers provide child focused leadership and management of services for looked after children and those leaving care.
- Ensure that partner agencies are committed to improving outcomes for children looked after
- Ensure that the children in care council represents the views of looked after young people and to hold the Director and Lead member accountable for their individual experience of the care system.

The Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board is chaired by the Lead Member and attended by a range of elected Members and senior managers. The key responsibility of the committee is to ensure effective corporate responses to meeting the needs of children looked after and care leavers. This includes working in partnership with a wide range of agencies to ensure positive outcomes for children in care.

The role of the board is to be aware of the needs of children and young people and to challenge officers about the services provided to meet those needs, in the context of national and local performance indicators. Listening to the views and experiences of children and young people is a crucial element of this process and Members were directly involved in developing the Pledge. The Corporate Parenting Board will, therefore, drive forward the positive changes laid out in this strategy.

The Pledge

Middlesbrough's pledge was developed in partnership with 28 children and young people who met with elected members, the Director for Children, Families and Learning and various officers with responsibility for planning for children and care leavers.

All made some contribution, however, the final list of priorities and the wording of the Pledge is entirely the work of the children and young people. The Children in Care Council and the Corporate Parenting Board will consider how the Pledge is being embedded and will review what difference it has made to the lives of children and young people looked after and to care leavers. The action plan appended to this report identifies how the Pledge relates to the strategic priorities.

Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP)

This group has operational responsibility for corporate parenting, bringing together all agencies, which should influence the services delivered to children looked after and leaving care. Meeting every two months, the MALAP works on the development of collective responses to strategic objectives as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, individual organisational plans and this strategy.

Strategic Priorities

➤ To reduce the number of children and young people looked after

There are four key aspects to this priority: prevention, reunification, promoting contact with family and friends and robust review and performance monitoring in relation to care planning.

The restructuring of the Enquiry and Assessment Team (E&A) has impacted on services as the new team and revised processes have become established and impacted positively on the workload. Further staffing and structural changes are planned that will contribute to the department's capacity to prevent children and young people from becoming looked after.

A report produced by Sure Start Senior Managers on 24th November 2010 'Update on Parenting Services' indicates that investment in both targeted and universal approaches to parenting support would be prudent. The report refers to research findings within the recently published 'Grasping the Nettle' report, which recommends that priority should be given to funding parenting programmes, targeted family support and young people on the edge of care.

Middlesbrough has undertaken a regular exercise in matching the needs of and services delivered to children and their families. This has illustrated that there has been a remarkably similar pattern of demographic in respect of the children requiring care in terms of age and, likewise, in the duration of their placement. Whilst this information has been useful for the purpose of recruitment of foster carers and adopters in the past, latterly, the Council has struggled to place even those whose needs were previously easily met within its own provision.

The learning from this is that prevention and rehabilitation support must be strengthened and the option of family network care explored more robustly in the initial stages of intervention. To this end, the authority has reviewed its front of house response to create a timely and holistic support and signposting service to children and their families; appointed a dedicated worker to co-ordinate family group conferencing and commissioned a piece of research to explore the long term support needs of families who provide placements for family members, to inform how to create sustainability.

For those children on the edge of care i.e. subject to a child protection plan for twelve or more months and to second time plans, the newly configured 'Scrutiny Panel', comprised of three Safeguarding Service Managers, reviews each case. The aim of this is to ensure that plans are in place either to progress to care proceedings or to reduce specialist intervention with a view to families being supported at a community level.

For those who become looked after, the Scrutiny Panel and Permanence Process Meetings ensure that plans for permanence are timely and that sufficient

supports are provided to a family when there is a plan for reunification. Irrespective of the duration of a care placement, most children and young people tell us that they want to maintain a relationship with birth family members and Middlesbrough is committed to ensuring that contact is promoted.

It is often the case that young people wish to return to their family of origin as they mature, it is therefore crucial that those relationships are nurtured, as good parents nurture the relationships their children have with extended family members. As corporate parents, Middlesbrough strives to ensure that reunification is as comfortable and safe a process for its young people as possible.

Middlesbrough has always had a limited short break resource within its in house fostering scheme. The number of resources has increased in the last year. These resources can be used to prevent children becoming looked after on a long-term basis.

Families of children with a disability are receiving short break services either through traditional services or through new initiatives which have seen services respond to the needs of individual families. Currently short break services for these families are provided through:

- A range of activities, outings and events which either support the whole family, or involve the child in an activity away from the family home.
- The provision of Direct Payments or Individual Budgets so families can make their own arrangements
- Service provided in to families homes – including The South Tees Home Support Service (an in house service) the Wilf Ward Trust (a commissioned service) and service purchased through service level agreements from other providers.
- Residential services - including Gleneagles Resource Centre (an in-house service) and services purchased from other providers

Consultation with families demonstrates that children and their families often prefer to use less traditional means of providing short break services. The Aiming High initiative has allowed new ways of working to develop, and the challenge for the years ahead will be to continue to provide personalised services in a challenging economic climate.

Emergency placements, though necessary on occasion to safeguard children, can create great stresses for the child, their families and indeed care providers. It is also a well - researched fact that, unless work is undertaken proactively and intensively to return a child to the (safe) care of family members, reunification may not occur at all. Middlesbrough undertakes a rapid response to emergency placement in utilising FRT and key partners from within the 'Front of House' service to work closely with the family to rebuild relationships and support a rapid return home. The children looked after procedures are also being reviewed to reflect that the first review for a looked after child (at 28 days) should focus on a return home as the plan for permanence.

➤ **To extend the range and type of placements**

The 'Sufficiency Duty' is recent statutory guidance, which places a general duty on all local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children. This goes further than existing legislation (Children Act 1989) in requiring that local authorities act strategically to identify and address any gaps in provision and to meet needs through diversity of provision. Under this new duty, local authorities are required to;

- Actively manage their market
- Have access to limited surplus provision or planned standby accommodation
- Be able to demonstrate how, through working with their strategic partners, all that can be done, has been done, to secure sufficiency

The commissioning manager is currently working alongside the PCT to assist with the continuing care agenda and will be reviewing current residential care provision, specifically the partnership with 5 Rivers, to ensure that Middlesbrough can meet sufficiency as required. We are aware that in so doing, we are improving the means by which children can be offered quality care to meet the priorities and to achieve the desired outcomes outlined throughout this report. Middlesbrough has undertaken work at a regional level to secure a range of fostering resources but current demand for placements means that our bid to meet the sufficiency duty is a major challenge.

As at 31st March 2010 there were 31 children and young people placed in residential social care placements with a total cost to the authority of £3,615,221. Middlesbrough currently has a partnership with '5 Rivers' to provide eleven placements for young people aged between 9 and 17 years. The provision comprises of three homes, two with four beds and one with three. This partnership commenced in December 2001 and will be reviewed in 2011. The service costs (approximately) £1, 500,000.00 per annum or (approx) £2,500.00 per child per week.

Middlesbrough places the majority of its children looked after in foster care. On 31st March 2010 there were 107 children looked after, within in-house foster placements. There were a total of 80 carers approved by Middlesbrough at this time. Additional resources are being provided to support children and young people with complex needs to maintain placements with in-house carers.

At that point, 113 children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) at a total cost to the local authority of £3,515.440. This number has increased significantly in the last year, despite a recent improvement in the recruitment of in house carers. Middlesbrough's efforts to improve front end intervention should decrease dependence upon IFAs by reducing the need for children to become accommodated in the first instance.

In relation to Family Network Care, a key concern is the legal requirement for children and young people to 'become looked after' in order that families can receive long-term support as against family networks being empowered to support their children without a high level of intervention by Local Authority services. This issue is being explored at both a local, regional and national level with a view to agreeing a consistent approach to the provision of support to Family Network Carers.

➤ **To provide safe, stable and secure placements for children and young people**

Children and young people should be provided with the security of permanence, either through being returned to the care of their family, or via long term foster care, adoption or preparation for adulthood. All associated services are charged with fulfilling this tenet as, only through this, can a child grow to become happy, emotionally and physically healthy and successful.

Middlesbrough aims to secure a plan for permanence within four months of a child becoming looked after. A permanence process meeting maps out the tasks and timescales for ensuring that all objectives of the plan are met. These will include the family finding process, matching, introductions and agreement about life long support to the child and their family – new and of origin.

Middlesbrough has a Review and Development Unit whose Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) consider all plans for children looked after and placed for adoption, in their role as chair.

The regulations and statutory guidance for care planning, placements and reviews has been revised and the council's policy for IROs is being reviewed, accordingly. In effect, the IROs have extended responsibilities for monitoring the performance by the local authority in relation to a child's review and of their functions in relation to the child's case. The IRO will be required to provide effective independent oversight of the child's case and to ensure that the child's interests are protected throughout the care planning process. Middlesbrough has introduced a 'dispute and resolution' process to ensure that all challenges are translated into positive action on behalf of the child/children concerned.

Listening to the views of children and young people is essential to monitoring provision and ensuring the quality of placements. The role of the IRO is to ensure their views are heard and taken into account. The IRO is also responsible for chairing disruption meetings and for disseminating the learning from these for the benefit of the individual child and for all children for whom permanent placement is the plan.

➤ **To promote the emotional and physical health and well-being of children and young people and enable them to make and sustain positive and supportive relationships**

The child's Social Worker is responsible for creating and implementing a care plan for a child and does so in conjunction with the child, their parents/carers, health providers, education and any other person with significance to the child. The care plan will set out services to be provided, when and by whom, and will ensure the child has stability, strong attachments, good physical and emotional health and any facility to ensure that there are good outcomes for the individual. The social worker will also provide counselling and guidance to children and young people and will support ongoing contact with their family and friends, where appropriate.

The aim in Middlesbrough as identified through the latest government statutory guidance '*Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children*' (DoH, 2009) is 'to make sure that all looked after children and young people are physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, that they do not take illegal drugs and that they will enjoy healthy lifestyles'.

The Designated Nurse/Health Coordinator, who is based with the Leaving Care team provides health reassessments, health promotion and health input in a timely manner to children and young people. She will review this provision in line with the new statutory guidance.

In terms of specialist support, Middlesbrough works in partnership with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV). A specialist CAMHS Looked After Children Team provides the following services through a jointly agreed Referral Pathway Route -

- Systemic consultation and advice to field social workers and supervising placement social workers on young people's emotional, behavioural and psychological difficulties and how these can be managed and supported.
- Advice and attachment family work with foster carers of individual young people in Local Authority care on supporting them through identified problems.
- Direct therapeutic work with young people in a range of therapeutic and psychological therapies.
- Mental Health Assessments (including risk assessment) and management of psychiatric problems in young people in Local Authority care.
- Consultation and Training (where indicated) to staff groups and foster carers employed directly by Middlesbrough Local Authority in collaboration with service managers.
- Monthly meeting with all associated partner agencies invited (including education) pertaining to Looked After Children promoting collaborative information sharing and working practices.

Middlesbrough aims to reduce the number of children and young people looked after entering the criminal justice system by identifying and intervening early with those at risk. Restorative processes are used to divert young people from the criminal system, working across teams, as well as at a strategic and operational level. This includes the training of residential staff in restorative processes to ensure that potential criminal behaviours are identified and challenged and the representation of the Youth Offending Service in the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership.

The local authority also delivers interventions for young people involved with the criminal justice system through the Youth Offending Service. This includes the preparation of assessments and reports for Court and the supervision of young people subject to community and custodial sentences.

➤ **To ensure the children and young people are offered the best possible education and supported to reach their full potential**

In April 2010 Government published statutory guidance for local authorities 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children', in which the appointment of a Virtual School Head (VSH) is seen as being critical to the success of the Looked After Children attainment strategy.

The key areas of responsibility of the VSH for which s/he should be accountable are:

- To rigorously track and monitor the progress of looked after children
- To ensure that all looked after children access one-to-one tuition wherever appropriate
- To liaise with designated teachers to ensure that schools know which of the children on roll are looked after and that a robust and effective personal education plan (PEP) is in place

In Middlesbrough, the role of the virtual school head is integrated with that of the Looked After Children Education Service achieve a good balance between the strategic and operational aspects of education provision. The Virtual School is being developed to provide a clear and consistent focus on education and to support children and young people to overcome the barriers to achievement.

The Personal Education Plan will continue to provide a focus for identifying educational targets and ensuring that children and young people have access to a range of positive activities and personal development opportunities.

➤ **To help young people to be ready for adult life**

Middlesbrough's Leaving Care service aims to ensure that all young people who are and have been looked after by the local authority are prepared and ready to leave care. The Pathways team works with young people to complete thorough Needs Assessments and to support and develop robust Pathway plans. The

team has a forward thinking and positive outlook and are part of many initiatives to improve life chances and outcomes for care leavers.

The dedicated housing development worker ensures that Middlesbrough's care leavers receive priority status with local housing providers and that they have a range of suitable accommodation options to meet their needs. Pathways have also recruited, trained and currently support 11 supported lodgings providers who are able to provide up to 13 placements for young people who are not ready for full independence. We maintain strong links with partner agencies and are currently looking into developing further supported accommodation within the area.

Two Connexions workers, based within Pathways two days per week, focus on supporting the young people with education, employment and training. The Employability scheme is now being linked with the national Care 2 Work project led by NCAS (National Care Advisory Service) that will enable young people to increase their employability skills through taster days, work placements and apprenticeships with local, regional and national employers.

Pathways are also piloting the emotional health and wellbeing group, a project developed with our European partners to help and improve young people's self esteem and confidence that will ultimately enhance their employability and support their transition to adulthood. Along side this Pathways run a rolling accredited programme in Preparation for Independence.

Pathways provides a whole range of services to (UASC) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, undertaking age assessments and ensuring their needs are met through a package of care. As with all young people leaving care the service continues to actively support young people to lead positive lives as independent citizens.

The Strategic Action Plan for Children Looked After 2011-2014

- 1. To reduce the number of children and young people looked after**
- 2. To extend the range and type of placements**
- 3. To provide safe, stable and secure placements for children and young people**
- 4. To promote the emotional and physical health and well-being of children and young people and enable them to make and sustain positive and supportive relationships**
- 5. To ensure the children and young people are offered the best possible education and supported to reach their full potential**
- 6. To help young people to be ready for adult life**

1. To reduce the number of children and young people looked after

PLEDGE PROMISES 1, 2, 7, 10 & 11 – Cared About, Family Ties, Discussion, Explanation

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
1.1 Implement structural and staffing changes to support the reduction in numbers of children looked after.	Complete preventative strategy with the focus on preventing children from becoming looked after	Increased numbers of CAFs. Repeat referrals low. Reduction in number of children with protection plans.	C, F&L and partner agencies	Existing budgets	Front of House services to be implemented in January 2011
1.2 Increase the use of Family Group Conferences (FGCs)	Family Group Conference Co-ordinator appointed & developing robust processes	Increased number of conferences held. Fewer families requiring specialist intervention.	C, F&L and partner agencies	Existing budgets	Family Group Conferences are embedded in the practices of the Families First Team. FGCs offered to families receiving tier 3 services.
1.3 Family Resource Team (FRT) to ensure a specific focus on those children at greatest risk of becoming looked after	FRT re-modelled to provide intensive support to families	Children at greatest risk of becoming looked after remain with their family	C, F&L and partner agencies	Budget implications to be reviewed	To be monitored quarterly

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
1.4 Increase the number of children and young people who are worked with prior to becoming looked after	Refer to 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3	Refer to 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3	C ,F&L and partner agencies	Existing budgets	The front of House Service will address these issues once it is established.
1.5 Develop the use of outreach work to ensure support to children and young people as they return to live in the community using a range of resources and intensive support	Refer to 1.1, 1.2 & 1.4	Refer to 1.1, 1.2 & 1.4	C,F&L and Partner agencies	Existing budgets	
1.6 Ensure robust processes in place for considering the decision to look after a child	Monitor effectiveness of systems	Numbers of decisions to look after children	C, F& L and partner agencies	Review impact on budget	The Deputy Director chairs a weekly Service Provision meeting to consider every request for a child to become looked after and plans for children to be placed with family and friends.

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
1.7 Increase the number of children who are placed with family and friends	Refer to 1.2 and 1.	Increased numbers of children & young people placed with family and friends	C, F&L and partner agencies	Existing budgets	Family and Friends carers identified via the Family Group Conference process and Core Assessment
1.8 Increase knowledge of long-term support needs of families providing Family Network Care	Undertake research project	Research completed	C, F&L and partner agencies	Existing budgets	Findings available in December 2011
1.9 Increase the use of permanency orders in all appropriate cases	Provide staff and carer training	Increased the use of Adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders	C, F&L and partner agencies	Review budget implications	Special Guardianship being considered with individual carers and children, as appropriate

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
1.10 Thresholds are consistently applied across a range of agencies.	Provide briefings on thresholds to all agencies	Monitor referrals through to child protection plans and children looked after, including conversion levels	C, F&L and partner agencies MSCB	Existing budgets	Briefings in place by July 2011
1.11 Establish a protocol to ensure that the response to emergency admissions is consistent and measured in order to enable the necessary matching and finding of placements.	Protocol to be established through MSCB	Reduction in the use of Police Protection	MSCB	Existing budgets	Protocol to be developed by September 2011
1.12 Children and young people placed with parents cease to be looked after	Placements kept under review with particular reference to those placed for longer than 1 year	Reduced numbers of children and young people placed with parents under a Care Order for longer than 1 year	C, F&L	Existing budgets	Scrutiny Panel introduced April 2010, numbers reducing accordingly. Close to zero by 2012

2. To extend the range and type of placements

PLEDGE PROMISES – All – Cared About, Family Ties, Discussion, Explanation, Appropriate Support

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
2.1 Review provision in light of requirements under the Sufficiency Duty	Undertake needs analysis in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust	Gaps in provision identified Commissioning strategy developed Foster Carer recruitment increased Supported housing for care leavers increased	C, F&L	Existing budgets	Placements Officer appointed Commissioning Manager seconded to PCT until May 2012 Increase number of Supported Lodgings Providers to 12 by 2014 Increase number of LA carers to 100 by 2014
2.3 Residential provision commissioning arrangements reviewed	Review to be undertaken	Review completed	C, F&L and partner agencies	Existing budgets	Current contracts are under review and options such partnerships with other local authorities and in-house provision being considered.

3. To provide safe, stable and secure placements for children and young people

PLEDGE PROMISES – All – Cared About, Family Ties, Discussion, Explanation, Appropriate Support

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
3.1 Robust application of permanency planning process ensures there is no drift.	Monitor the use of all orders	Targets to be established	C, F&L	Review budgets as increase in orders takes place	Scrutiny Panel & permanence process meetings in place. Number of children and young people placed for adoption within 12months of decision increased to 100% by 2012
3.2 Financial support for special guardianship, residence orders and family network care clear and fair.	Develop Financial Support Policy	Policy in place	C, F&L	Consider budgetary implications	Complete by March 2011

4. To promote the emotional and physical health and well-being of children and young people and enable them to make and sustain positive and supportive relationships

PLEDGE PROMISES 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 and 11 – CARED ABOUT, RELATIONSHIPS

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescale
4.1 To make sure that all looked after children and young people are physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, that they will not take illegal drugs and that they will enjoy healthy lifestyles.	Implement new Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children (2009)	NI 50/58	CFLS/MRCCS Health	Existing resources	Strategy in place Review annually
	Implement the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE/SCIE) guidance on the health of looked after children	NI 50/58	CFLS/MRCCS Health	Existing resources	Strategy in place Review annually

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescale
4.2 To support looked after children's and young people leaving care positive mental health and to help identify difficulties early on.	Delivery of the strength and weakness questionnaire to be initiated by Social Workers	Middlesbrough Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008-11 / Stay Safe Indicator 1 Be Healthy Indicator 2	CFLS/CAMHS/ Education/MRC CS Health	Existing Resources	Increase number of SDQs completed on time to 100%
4.3 Provide dedicated CAMHS resources to work with the looked after children and carers	Monthly multi-agency meetings – CAMHS LAC, Education, Safeguarding	NI 50/58	CFLS/CAMHS/ Education/MRC CS Health	Funding increased for 2010/11	All children and young people who require specialist support receive it – monitor every 6 months
	Develop resilience workshops for children and young people	NI 50/58	MALAP	Existing Resources	Content to be developed by July 2011 First sessions to be delivered by Autumn 2011

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescale
<p>4.4 Looked After Children will receive good quality Sex and Relationship Education that includes knowledge and skills on: delaying early sex, developing trusting and consensual relationships, the effective use of contraception to prevent pregnancy and consistent use of condoms to prevent STIs</p>	<p>Ongoing implementation of Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and multiagency delivery of the Risk and Resilience Model/Social Norms to Looked After Children and Young People</p>	<p>Middlesbrough Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008-11 / Be Healthy Indicator 5&7</p>	<p>Middlesbrough Teenage Pregnancy/ Platform Strategy/CFLS/ Education/MRC CS Health</p>	<p>Existing Resources</p>	<p>Strategy in Place</p> <p>Monitor through Health Assessment processes</p> <p>Review annually</p>
	<p>Deliver the Chlamydia Screening/C card and offer Pregnancy testing in a non clinical environment</p>				
	<p>Delivery of SRE through the Health Assessment for Looked After Children and delivery of PSHE in Schools</p>				

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescale
<p>4.5 Children and young people looked after and care leavers are supported and enabled to avoid taking illegal drugs.</p>	<p>Identify clear referral pathways into PLATFORM</p>	<p>Middlesbrough Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008-11 / Positive Contribution Indicator 4</p>	<p>CFLS/PLATFORM/MRCCS Health</p>	<p>Existing Resources</p>	<p>All implemented Monitor through Health Assessment processes Review annually</p>
	<p>Delivery of Tier 2 intervention when identified need</p>				
	<p>Deliver substance Misuse Screening and Education to Looked After Children and Young People</p>				
<p>4.6 Children and young people in care are afforded the opportunity to form positive attachments to their carers and significant others</p>	<p>Promote contact with birth family and significant others.</p>	<p>NI 50 NI 58 NI 62 NI 63 NI 66 Children Act 1989</p>	<p>C, F & L & partner agencies</p>	<p>Existing Resources</p>	<p>Monitored via Review process</p>

<p>4.7 Reduce the number of children and young people looked after entering the criminal justice system</p>	<p>Intervene early to challenge offending behaviour</p> <p>Divert children and young people from the criminal justice system through the use of restorative processes</p> <p>Work in partnership to deliver interventions to those young people in the criminal justice system</p>	<p>No current NI</p>	<p>YOS , CF&L , partner agencies</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>	<p>Monitored via MALAP</p>
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5. To ensure the children and young people are offered the best possible education and supported to reach their full potential

PLEDGE PROMISES 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 – CARED ABOUT, RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION, AMBITION, DRIVE, DISCUSSION

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
5.1 Promoting a cultural shift in thinking and practices so that LAC pupils belonging to, and educated in Middlesbrough really do have equal opportunities for success in school.	Promote looked after children's progress at all levels of leadership.	NI 99 NI 100 NI 101 NI 148	Deputy Director Inclusion and Achievement	Within existing resources	September 2011
	Develop the Virtual School for Looked After Children.	NI 99 NI 100 NI 101 NI 148	Virtual School Head	Within existing resources	September 2011
	Develop an effective data tracking system.	NI 99 NI 100 NI 101 NI 148	Virtual School team and Designated Teachers	Existing resources	Two staff appointed Review progress in March 2011

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
5.2 To ensure young people are supported into further and higher education	Identify mechanisms to provide a robust support through transitions from Year 11 through to higher education.	NI 117	CFL	Existing budgets	Head Teacher of Virtual School to establish mechanisms & develop PEP by September 2011
	To develop post 16 PEP in partnership with young people.	NI 117	CFL	Existing Resources	
	To develop the designated tutor role within further education colleges.	NI 117	CFL & Colleges	Existing budgets	Designated Tutors in place in all Colleges by September 2011

6. To help young people to be ready for adult life.

PLEDGE PROMISES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 – CARED ABOUT, RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION, AMBITION, DRIVE, DISCUSSION

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
6.1 To improve access to good quality accommodation for young people leaving care.	Increase the range and quality of supported lodgings including those young people wishing to remain in their foster placements past 18 years.	NI 147 Care Matters	CFL Strategic Housing Adult Social Care	Existing budgets Care Matters Grant	Increase number of Supported Lodgings Providers to 12 by 2014
	Ensure local housing strategies address the needs of care leavers and that they have appropriate priority within the choice base lettings scheme.	NI 147 Housing Act	CFL Strategic housing	Existing budgets	Needs of care leavers specifically addressed in Housing strategies & reviewed annually

Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescales
6.2 Young people achieve economic wellbeing.	Provide financial support to enable young people to access higher education.	Leaving Care Act 2000	CFL	Existing budgets	Budget to be reviewed by March 2011
	Work with Benefits Agency to ensure young people have appropriate information about financial support available to them.	Leaving Care Act 2000	CFL	Existing budgets	Regular contact to be established by July 2011
	Increase placements available via the employability scheme.	NI 117	CFL & employers/ organisations	Existing budgets	Number of employers involved in the scheme Number of young people supported
6.3 Ensure that Children And Young People Have A Successful Transition To Adulthood	Deliver training for foster carers & other care providers in relation to transition to adulthood.	Children Leaving Care Act 2000 Care Matters	CFL	Existing budgets	Training to be delivered by September 2011

In addition to the above strategic priorities, the following actions are required in relation to Corporate Parenting.

PLEDGE PROMISES 6, 7 and 10– AMBITIONS, INFLUENCE, DISCUSSION, DECISIONS					
Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescale
Children looked after and care leavers know what services and facilities they can expect from the local authority.	Continue to embed the pledge and to monitor its impact	Pledge reflected in every child's care plan NI 66	Chief Executive, Lead Member, Corporate Parenting Board Senior Managers and partner agencies	Existing Budgets and Care Matters Grant	Review the Pledge annually
Children looked after and care leavers are aware of opportunities for involvement	Implement and develop the Children in Care Council	Children looked after influence the key decisions made about them	As above	Key council officers	Children in Care Council to be in place by September 2010
	Circulate the minutes of the council meetings to all children looked after and care leavers	Children and young people aware of issues discussed NI66	As above		Formal meetings to be in place by March 2011
Services reflect the views of children & young people	Children in Care council meet with Corporate Parenting Board on a regular basis	Number of meetings held	As above	Corporate Parenting Board and partners	Regular meetings to be in place by September 2011

PLEDGE PROMISES 5, 6, 7 and 10– AMBITIONS, INFLUENCE, DISCUSSION, DECISIONS					
Key Service Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Lead Agency & Partners	Resources	Milestones/ Timescale
Children looked after and care leavers are involved in service planning processes.	Review service plans to monitor inclusion of involvement of children and young people in their work.	Service plans include evidence of how views have impacted upon service delivery.	C, F & L & partner agencies	Existing systems & personnel	Annual audit of all key planning documents
Strategic plans across the Council identify the support given to meeting the needs of children looked after and care leavers	Monitor and review strategic plans across the Council	All plans and strategies clearly identify how services benefit children looked after and care leavers	Middlesbrough Corporate Parenting Board, Partner agencies Partnership Middlesbrough Council, MALAP	Existing systems & personnel	Children and young people's plan – reviewed 3 yearly CLA Strategy annually
The Corporate Parenting Board receives regular reports on strategic plans as they relate to children looked after and care leavers.	Relevant elements of strategic plans to be submitted to Corporate Parenting Board	Reports submitted to Corporate Parenting Board at least annually.	Middlesbrough Partner agencies ,Partnership, via MALAP, Council	Existing systems & personnel	In keeping with CPB business meeting schedules