

Middlesbrough MALAP / CPB
(Multi Agency Looked After Children Partnership / Corporate Parenting Board)
Terms of Reference

Strategic Context

The Local Authority (Council) has a strategic responsibility for Looked After Children (LAC) as documented in legislation and national and local guidance. The Children Act 1989 places a duty on Health, Housing, Education and Social Care as a minimum, to work together to improve outcomes for Looked After Children. This was strengthened by the Children Act 2004, which places a statutory duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

Corporate Parenting is the term used to refer to the collective responsibility of the Council to provide the best possible care and protection for children who are looked after. The Council as a whole is the corporate parent and Councillors have a key role to play in ensuring that children are well looked after and that they achieve their full potential.

Building on the good partnership arrangements that are in place in Middlesbrough, a Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) will be formed, bringing together the Local Authority responsibility and that of other agencies represented by the involvement of key people, including Elected Members, to ensure the needs of these children and young people are met. This provides a common understanding of each agency's responsibility, as referenced in their organisation's strategic plans, culminating in better outcomes for children and young people who are looked after.

1. Aim

To take a Multi-Agency approach to challenging outcomes, improving systems and promoting the needs and interests of Looked after Children and Young People in Middlesbrough, who are a priority group in the Middlesbrough Children's Trust Board Children and Young People's Plan.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 Identifying opportunities for collaboration and partnership.
- 2.2 Seeking to improve outcomes through sharing good practice and experience.
- 2.3 Further development of a coherent approach to issues relating to looked after children, young people and care leavers.
- 2.4 Work to improve and co-ordinate commissioning across all of the services for Looked After Children & Young People.

- 2.5 Making recommendations to the Director of Children, Families & Learning, Middlesbrough Children and Young People's Trust and relevant Partnership Boards as appropriate.
- 2.6 Pro-actively celebrating success and achievement of LAC.
- 2.7 Forging productive links with other local, regional and national groups with a focus on looked after children.
- 2.8 To ensure that all elected Members are enabled to fulfil their corporate parenting role & responsibilities.
- 2.9 Ensure actions, targets, outcomes and reporting arrangements reflect the strategic structure of the Children & Young People's Plan, the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the MALAP Work Plan.

3 Governance

3.1 Meetings

Middlesbrough Council will arrange secretariat facilities for MALAP / Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) meetings. Formal meetings will be arranged bi monthly, on a day to be agreed. Special meetings may be convened to discuss urgent business.

Minutes

Minutes from all MALAP / CPB meetings will be circulated within 7 working days of the previous meeting.

Agenda Items

Routine agenda items should be sent to the appointed MALAP /CPB Administrator at least 10 working days prior to the next meeting. Any emergency items should be notified to the Administrator 24 hours in advance of the next meeting, if at all possible.

Agenda Papers

Agenda papers will be sent out 7 working days in advance of the next meeting.

Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair will be the Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning, advised by the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning, due to their statutory responsibility for LAC. The Vice Chair will be elected by the group and revisited annually. The Chair and Vice Chair will preferably be from different areas of the Council.

Decision Making and Conflict Resolution

MALAP / CPB has no delegated or decision making powers but can make recommendations to improve the outcomes for LAC on an individual agency basis or to the Children's Trust on a consensus basis, with the Chair having a casting vote. The partnership will determine the most appropriate method to do this.

Where a conflict may arise or where a consensus decision cannot be reached, the Chair will endeavour to reach an acceptable solution with the aggrieved party. Where this cannot be achieved, s/he will refer the matter to the Children's Trust or Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning, depending upon the issue.

3.2 Membership

To ensure the services for and voice and rights of Looked After Children, young people and care leavers are taken into consideration, representation will come as a minimum from:

CAMHS / Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Trust

Police

Primary Care Trust

Middlesbrough Council

- Elected Members (Corporate Parents including Lead Member)
- Harm Reduction Team
- Integrated Youth Support Service
- Chair of Children & Young People's Trust Board
- Leisure Services
- Youth Offending Service
- Safeguarding Services
- Regeneration
- Virtual School

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All members will have an agreed Deputy. Agency members will be of sufficient seniority to have the authority to commit resources and speak on behalf of their agency.

Links with:

- Middlesbrough Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Children in Care Council
- Performance Management
- Virtual School

In addition, the MALAP / CPB is supported by an advisor with specialist responsibility for looked after children (Service Manager, Specialist Services).

It is expected that representatives:

- Are active participants of the MALAP /CPB and attend meetings.
- Attendance will be monitored by the Chair and followed up appropriately.
- Have sufficient authority to represent their area and be able to agree actions on its behalf.
- Assist with the collection of data, monitoring, reviewing and communication of developments whilst working towards improving the effectiveness of service provision for Looked After Children

The MALAP / CPB Chair can authorise:

- Appropriate substitution if a member cannot attend a meeting.
- Introduction of co-opted members to provide another perspective on issues to be discussed at a meeting. They will not, however, be eligible to vote at meetings.

3.3 Finance, Risk Management and Conduct of Members

Middlesbrough Council as the lead partner with statutory responsibility for LAC will ensure any costs relating to hosting meetings are met.

Each partner agency will make their own arrangements for meeting costs associated with their responsibility for LAC, as governed by their agency's procurement, standing orders, safe recruitment and any other linked procedures.

Each partner agency will ensure they have suitable arrangements in place to fulfil their risk management, insurance, anti fraud and corruption and professional indemnity responsibility for work undertaken in relation to LAC.

A standing item on the MALAP / CPB agenda will relate to Declaration of Interest. This will cover pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

In addition, each member will follow their agency's or professional body's own code of conduct in relation to the receipt of gifts and hospitality, and the safety and security of information, personal or otherwise. Should any members have any concerns that they cannot address within their own agency, advice and guidance can be sought from the Middlesbrough Partnership Administrator.

4. Children and Young Peoples Voice

The MALAP / CPB actively seeks Children and Young People's participation and involvement. MALAP / CPB meetings and minutes are shared with Children and Young People, who in turn have the opportunity to input to the agenda. The MALAP / CPB support a positive relationship with the Children in Care Council. The work plan will positively reflect this.

5. Reporting and Inspection Arrangements

It is the intention to report to the Middlesbrough Children & Young People's Trust Board and Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board in accordance

with their reporting cycle and to the Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning and other Partnership Boards as appropriate. Independent inspection will be undertaken in accordance with Ofsted inspection processes for Safeguarding and Looked After Children.

6. Performance Management

The CYPP (Children & Young People's Plan) is the key strategic driver for securing improved outcomes for all children and young people, including those who are looked after. Through its annual work programme and review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Partnership will monitor the performance of services in working together to improve outcomes for looked after children, in line with the priorities, actions and success criteria set out in the CYPP. The group will report to the Children's Trust Board on all significant aspects of performance in delivering these outcomes, with particular regard to relevant measures in the Local Area Agreement and the National Indicator Set, and taking account of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment arrangements for external inspection and assessment of local area services.

7. Review of Terms of Reference

These terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis (May/June).

Included as part of the Annual Review will be an assessment for the continued need for the partnership. Should circumstances identify and warrant an exit strategy, the Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning and Children's Trust will be notified and one will be developed.