

## YOU MATTER TO US - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

<b>Date:</b> Thursday 22nd January, 2026
<b>Time:</b> 5.00 pm
<b>Venue:</b> Mandela Room, Town Hall

### AGENDA

1. Welcome and Fire Evacuation Procedure

In the event the fire alarm sounds attendees will be advised to evacuate the building via the nearest fire exit and assemble at the Bottle of Notes opposite MIMA.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest.

4. Minutes - You Matter to Us - Corporate Parenting Board - 16 October 2025 3 - 8

5. Cared For and Care Experienced Engagement July - December 2025 9 - 18

6. Developing our Forward Plan via a Thematic Approach

The Corporate Director of Children's Services will deliver a presentation at the meeting.

7. Any other urgent items which, in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered

Charlotte Benjamin  
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall  
Middlesbrough  
Wednesday 14 January 2026

## MEMBERSHIP

Councillors L Henman (Chair), Z Uddin (Vice-Chair), E Clynych, D Jackson, D McCabe, J McTigue, M Nugent and S Platt

### **Assistance in accessing information**

**Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Tabitha Frankland, 01642 726241, [tabitha\\_frankland@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:tabitha_frankland@middlesbrough.gov.uk)**

## YOU MATTER TO US - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

A meeting of the You Matter to Us - Corporate Parenting Board was held on Thursday 16 October 2025.

**PRESENT:** Councillors L Henman (Chair), E Clynych, D Jackson, J McTigue, S Platt and Z Uddin (Vice-Chair)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** S Calvert (Volunteer Voice/Change Ambassador)

**OFFICERS:** D Alaszewski, T Dunn, G Nicholson, G Peacock, S Disbury, E Scollay, C McGarry, S Lightwing, T Frankland, A Bates and T Jelfs

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors P Storey & L Young

### 24/1 WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Building Evacuation Procedure.

### 24/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

### 24/3 MINUTES - YOU MATTER TO US - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - 13 MARCH 2025

The minutes of the You Matter to Us – Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 13 March 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### 24/4 MINUTES - YOU MATTER TO US - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - 3 APRIL 2025

The minutes of the You Matter to Us – Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 3 April 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### 24/5 MINUTES - YOU MATTER TO US - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - 10 JULY 2025

The minutes of the You Matter to Us – Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 10 July 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### 24/6 CARED FOR AND CARE EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT APRIL-JUNE 2025

Members were provided with a Care For and Care Experience Engagement update and a report was presented to cover activity from April-June 2025 and beyond due to the last meeting being deferred. Members were advised that a new care experienced adult had been recruited as a Volunteer Voice/Change Ambassador (previously known as a Care Ambassador) and was present at the Board meeting today.

The Chair thanked the new Volunteer Voice for his time at the meeting and for supporting the engagement activities and wider engagement work.

Further details were included in the report and the following matters were discussed during the meeting:

- An informal engagement event had been held on 25<sup>th</sup> September for Corporate Parents with cared for and older care experienced young people/adults to discuss their direct input into plans and development of services for them.
- The Voice and Change Ambassadors were working with the Pathways team to support eight care experienced adults to create a music video and start a choir.
- There had been a football event held for cared for and care experienced young people/adults at MFC Herlingshaw Centre in July.
- A Halloween event had been scheduled to take place at My Place on 29<sup>th</sup> October

and Members were welcome to join.

- The We Matter Christmas party was scheduled to take place on 10<sup>th</sup> December at Teesside University Student Union where there would be games and activities.
- November was National Care Leavers/Experienced Month and a schedule of events/activities throughout the month would be circulated. On 27<sup>th</sup> November another informal engagement activity was planned for Corporate Parents to attend to discuss 'Safe and Stable Homes' and 'Opportunities to Succeed' with cared for and care experienced young people.

**AGREED** that the information provided was received and noted.

24/8

## **YOU MATTER TO US - PERFORMANCE**

The Director of Children's Care presented the latest You Matter to Us Performance Data. The information provided had been compiled using the Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) based on Ofsted's inspecting local authority services for children (ILACS) Annex A dataset (2020)/inspection report. The following areas were highlighted:

- The number of children in care had remained similar over the past few years.
- There had been 120 CLA starters in the last six months.
- There had been an increase in adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders being granted.
- The rate of CLA per 10,000 children was becoming in line with statistical neighbours.
- 90% of current open CLA who had been looked after for at least 12 months had an up to date health assessment and 82% for dental checks. It was noted that this had got better but still needed improvement.
- 12% of all CLA had a missing incident.
- 83% of care leavers aged 17-18 were in touch with the LA and 94% for 19-21 year olds.

The Chief Executive noted that the largest 'reason episode of care ceased' shown in the data was 'any other reason' and asked for clarification on what this could cover.

The Director of Children's Services advised that this could be separated further at the next meeting.

**AGREED** that:

- The information provided was received and noted.
- More detail be provided around the 'any other reason' field within the 'Reason episode ceased' ChAT data. If 'aged out' of care, this to be specified.

24/8

## **CHILDREN IN CARE UPDATE**

The Head of Corporate Parenting and Fostering delivered an update on Children in Care to the Board. At the time of the report, there were 498 children who were cared for, 322 had plans of permanence and were supported by the Children Looked After Teams. 15 had plans of permanence and were supported by social workers in the Children with Disability Service. The remaining children and young people were subject to permanence planning within the Safeguarding and Care Planning Service and Assessment Service. Of those subject to permanence planning a majority were subject to legal processes in order to determine plans of permanence. Middlesbrough had 2 children who were in our care who were currently subject to Deprivation of Liberty Orders under the jurisdiction of the Court of Protection, within Safeguarding and Care Planning.

For children in care who were no longer in the education system, working or being trained for work, a personal advisor would work in conjunction with the Social Worker and had a responsibility to care leavers after their care order had ceased. They supported their young people to develop life skills for independent living and access key agencies who could assist them. The key services used were as follows; the NEET Clinic, the Work Readiness Team, and the Middlesbrough Employability Hub drop in which took place twice a week. It was also raised that incidents of young people presenting as homeless on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday had increased so advice around housing and how to contact social housing providers as well as managing budgets was an important aspect of the personal advisors' work.

A Member queried how many personal advisers were currently in post and it was confirmed that there were 15.

The Early Help team provided support to young people around education, employment and training, which was available up to 21 years. Discussions had been held with the service to seek to extend this to 25 years in line with the extended duties. The service was seen to have a positive impact for young people, and it was hoped that with the expansion of this work, this would extend to all young people who were cared for and care experienced. There had been feedback that care experienced children were accessing better opportunities and achieving more due to the work of the Early Help team.

The funding by the DfE around reunification ended in March 2025. However, this work continued within the teams as part of the Council's role and responsibility, this was monitored through Permanency Monitoring Group (PMG). Although a change in working practices and culture was needed, across a number of services, this had been a positive intervention with either changed orders or care orders discharged in some cases and provided clarity on the need for long term foster care for some children and young people. Courts and DfE had been positive about this work and had provided compliments around this. Feedback from families who had been through the reunification process had also been received and they reported very positive experiences working with children's care.

The Fostering Service had also been developed alongside the reunification work and a Kinship Team had been introduced, via the Modernising Fostering Transformation work. This team would provide support to SGO and CAO carers post order, when the children were no longer open to Children Services. This team would provide reviews of support plans, access to training and support groups for kinship carers. Managers and legal colleagues had met with the senior Judge to advise of the work in this area, which was received very positively, with the senior Judge agreeing to notify all Judges within the Court of the work by Middlesbrough.

Marketing campaigns had also been run across the North East to encourage local foster carers and had received good engagement. The shortage of foster carers was due to a variety of reasons including the high level of responsibility, in-depth assessments and training, the requirement to have a spare bedroom and an aging population where biological children were living at home for longer. There was an increasing rate of children having to be placed outside their home authority due to availability and keeping local links was key to a child's progression.

The Volunteer Voice and Change Ambassador suggested the creation of videos featuring children in care as part of a marketing campaign to show their stories, highlight the voices of care experienced children and encourage fostering in the town.

**AGREED that:**

1. Officers would look into the creation of videos featuring children in care as part of a marketing campaign to show their stories, highlight the voices of care experienced children and encourage fostering in the town.
2. That the information provided was received and noted.

24/9

**CARE LEAVERS OFFER**

The Head of Corporate Parenting and Fostering provided an update on the Care Leavers Offer and advised that Middlesbrough's hub had been developed with the collaboration of young people in the Borough and was located in the Live Well Centre. The hub was aimed at young people aged 16 to 25 who were due to leave or had left care and provided a base for support with facilities such as a gym and living area. The Live Well Centre was a Council-ran building and a permanent venue.

Members queried the funding timescale for the hub and it was confirmed that it would likely become part and parcel of the financial strategy moving forward.

A Member also queried how young people were made aware of the hub and any activities that took place. It was confirmed that the Personal Advisors would keep young people up to date with scheduled activities in addition to social media and word of mouth. Constant engagement also took place with young people to ensure the hub and its provision was aligned with their needs. This was echoed by the Voice and Change Ambassador. Members requested that

information/activities regarding the Care Leavers Hub be circulated to Councillors and that Officers suggested ways that Members could support during 'National Care Leavers/Experienced Month' to raise awareness/celebrate successes.

**AGREED that:**

1. Information/activities regarding the Care Leavers Hub to be circulated to Councillors.
2. Officers to put forward ways that Members could support during 'National Care Leavers/Experienced Month' and this to be circulated to Councillors.
3. That the information provided was received and noted.

24/10

**PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Children's Care provided an update on Private Fostering. Private fostering was an arrangement for a child under 16 to be cared for by an adult not related to them, for more than 28 days. For example, by a family friend in their home. There were National Minimum Standards in place that applied to all local authorities. These standards were grouped under a series of key topics:

- Statement on private fostering
- Notification
- Safeguarding and promote welfare
- Advice and support
- Monitoring compliance

It was advised that this type of arrangement was not particularly common in Middlesbrough but that in this situation, the Council was reliant on someone with parental responsibility and the private foster carer notifying the Council of the arrangement. It was a legal duty to inform the local authority and this was advertised in settings such as schools, GP surgeries and A&E to increase awareness.

A Member queried whether private or mainstream fostering had an impact on an individual's social housing banding. It was confirmed that this would be taken away as an action and confirmed outside of the meeting.

It was also raised that more awareness of private fostering regulations and the duty to report was needed for housing officers.

The action plan going forward focused on the following areas:

- Ensure that there was targeted awareness raising and training in private fostering and that this was regularly re-communicated to the workforce and the community. This was an action carried forward by agreement at STSCP. A joint campaign will take place between Middlesbrough and R&CBC.
- Hold the annual review of private fostering arrangements.
- Align Private Fostering Offer into overall Kinship Care service, to allow more tailored support for carers.

**AGREED that:**

1. Information to be confirmed with the Board around social housing banding for foster carers/private foster carers and what (if any) impact this has on priority.
2. That the information provided was received and noted.

24/11

**VIRTUAL SCHOOL - ANNUAL REPORTS 2022/2023 AND 2023/2024**

With the approval of the Chair, this report was **DEFERRED** to the next meeting.

24/12

**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)**

With the approval of the Chair, this report was **DEFERRED** to the next meeting.

24/13

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

The Chair advised that discussions were ongoing as to ways in which the You Matter to Us –

Corporate Parenting Board could be enhanced and invited suggestions from the Board.

Members agreed that a more thematic approach would be useful and would provide opportunity for a more thorough understanding of specific topics meaning that the meetings could be used to drive change where needed. Themes suggested included education, housing and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). It was also raised that the themes and agendas of the meetings should be influenced by our care experienced young people and that the Board alternate meetings, with one focused on data and the next on lived experience.

The timing of the meeting was also discussed and it was agreed that some thought should be given to scheduling the meeting for earlier in the week and at an earlier timeslot, although it was raised that our care experienced young people and some Members could have work/education commitments during the working day.

**AGREED** that:

1. The discussion was noted.
2. Officers and the Chair would review the suggestions from Members on how to enhance future meetings and determine how to implement them in future.

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
------------------------------	--

<b>Report of:</b>	Annabel Bates, Corporate Director of Children's Services
<b>Date:</b>	22 January 2026
<b>Title:</b>	Cared For and Care Experience Engagement July – December 2025
<b>Report for:</b>	Information
<b>Status:</b>	Public
<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	Safe and resilient communities
<b>Key decision:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Why:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Subject to call in?</b>	No
<b>Why:</b>	N/A
<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>	
N/A	

<b>Executive summary</b>
<p>This report provides an update to the Corporate Parenting Board regarding recent activities with some of our cared for and care experienced young adults. The information shared in this report will be factored into review of our participation services and our broader strategic planning in the coming months. An update on priorities will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board in upcoming meetings.</p> <p>The report is for information only.</p>

## 1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The report details activities undertaken with cared for and care experienced young adults. We evidence the outcomes and impacts of these activities, demonstrating that the work we do enables our young people to be engaged and make a difference to them as individuals and wider.

1.2

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
<b>A healthy Place</b>	<i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities</i></li> <li>- <i>promote inclusivity for all</i></li> <li>- <i>reduce poverty</i></li> </ul>
<b>Safe and resilient communities</b>	<i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>support adults to be independent for longer</i></li> </ul>

## 2. Recommendations

That the Board:

- Notes the engagement work that has been undertaken.

**Contact:** Annabel Bates, Corporate Director, Children's Services  
**Email:** Annabel\_Bates@middlesbrough.gov.uk

## **Cared For and Care Experience Engagement July - December 2025**

**Middlesbrough Children's Services fosters open, safe, and inclusive environments that provide opportunities for individuals to gather and engage. We empower them to communicate their priorities to key decision makers and to collaborate in enhancing the support they and their peers receive.**

### **Volunteer Voice and Change Ambassadors**

- One care experienced young adult is co opted onto the 'You Matter to Us' Corporate Parenting Board - Sean Calvert. We have another young adult who has applied and should be joining us shortly.
- In addition to this position, they have opportunities to volunteer during our engagement events with cared for and care experienced young people and if they wish support the wider engagement work - working with students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and Parent/Carer engagement as part of the Family Hubs.
- Caitlin O'Connor is also back volunteering with us.
- We continue to advertise volunteering positions and hope to have several more in 2026.
- We will be working with these volunteers and other older care experienced young adults to regularly come together to plan lots of wonderful activities in 2026

### **'We Matter' (Middlesbrough's Children in Care Council)**

- Cared for and care experienced young people aged secondary school age and above are invited to come together to have fun and be engaged

# Engagement Activities

EVENT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
<p><b>1st July</b> - Two of our care experienced adults were invited to attend Teesside University - 'Raising Aspirations for Young People in Care' conference. They were also asked to be part of a Q&amp;A session at the end of the event.</p>	<p>They enjoyed listening to the key note speakers and attending a workshop. They enjoyed being part of the Q&amp;A session and delegates said they thought their answers were thought provoking.</p>	<p>We worked with the university to offer a session during care experienced month to show our young people what the university could offer them. They will work with the university in 2026 to develop their next conference. We got in touch with one of the workshop providers 'Blue Cabin' who ran a session with the 'We Matter group. We are exploring possible areas of work they can undertake with our young people and their families.</p>
<p><b>2nd July</b> - Our two Voice and Change Ambassadors worked with residential managers to develop the Children's Homes Awards and choose the winners.</p>	<p>The event was a huge success with all homes represented. 20 of their young people came along. Several young people gave out the awards along with the Ambassadors.</p>	<p>Residential services thought the event was a great way to celebrate their staff and involving their young people. They plan to hold the event every year.</p>
<p><b>3rd July</b> - Following on from a survey with older care experienced young people where many said they wanted to be involved with music. Pathways invited their young adults to meet to discuss forming a music group.</p>	<p>Six care experience adults talked about what they wanted and sessions ran every week until the end of October 2025. They did their own version of 'Dreams' song by the Cranberries. They filmed making the song and told us what their dreams are.</p>	<p>The film was shown at the beginning of Care Experienced month in November at Roxy Movies. 35 people came to watch the film including some of the young adults involved, their families, friends, support workers. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive, Lead member Luke Henman, the Children's Director and many other managers and colleagues enjoyed the showing.</p>
<p><b>10th July</b> - Two care experienced adults and a member of the Youth council wrote questions and interviewed candidates for the Executive Director of Children's Services position</p>	<p>One member of the young person's panel was invited to sit with the professional panel to give their feedback. Annabel Bates was appointed and is really keen to develop our cared for and care experienced engagement.</p>	<p>The young adults enjoyed being in the position of interviewing the candidates and believed their feedback was heard and taken into account. We have a interview procedure in place, meaning young people should always be involved in recruitment processes.</p>

# Engagement Activities

EVENT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
25th July - Cared for and care experienced young people were invited to the Annual Football event supported by Middlesbrough Football Foundation.	20 young people had a great time doing art activities and playing football games. Two Pathways Personal Advisors supported the event.	Our cared for and care experienced young people know that this event happens every year and look forward to being part if it. The volunteer Voice and Change Ambassador asked Pathways to create a football activity for their young adults. This started in October and will run monthly for 6 months.
5th August - Annual Picnic.	Six carers and eight cared for young people came along. Everyone enjoyed spending time together, having fun and food.	Our cared for and care experienced young people know that this event happens every year and look forward to being part if it.
8th August - Pathways invited their young adults for a free trip to Flamingo land.	Six older care experienced young adults joined three Personal Advisors and an Assistant Manager, The young adults said they enjoyed spending time together and having fun with staff.	We will work with our young adults early 2026 for them to look at what fun activities they would like to have fun and come together.
13th August - Pathways invited their young adults for a trip to Redcar Beach.	Five care experienced young adults (one came with her daughter), two Personal Advisors and the Voice and Influence Manager all met to have lunch and spend time together in the sun having lunch and ice creams.	Pathways young people told us they wanted to do activities like this. We listened and they had a great time.
28th August - The Fostering service invited all carers to enjoy free entry to Light Water Valley. The event was supported by two fostering staff, the Voice and Influence Manager.	29 young people came with 14 adults (either foster families or connected carers). Feedback from a couple of carers ....	These events offer carers an opportunity to come together, to be supportive of one another and for young people to mix with other children in similar care arrangements.

Just a quick message to let you know that the kids had a brilliant day yesterday. Thank you so much for organising it, much appreciated

Today was great thanks Kathy! Kloe, her friend Lila and I had such a good time. The weather was predominantly kind, queues were minimal and the families in our group all seemed lovely. We had a great day and thank you for organising a great day out.

# Engagement Activities

EVENT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
<b>25th September</b> - You Matter to Us - Corporate Parents met with their cared for and care experienced young people/adults.	10 cared for and care experienced young adults joined 12 Corporate Parents (including one foster carer) to work together to plan for Care Experienced month - November 2026. They worked in groups to work on particular boards. All their ideas were captured and a plan of activities created.	Our cared for and care experienced young people were actively engaged, listened to and they helped design a plan for activities.
<b>13th October</b> - A weekly art group started, led by Andy Boddy (Personal Advisor), supported by Hannah Patterson (Personal Advisor), Karen Turner (Assistant Manager) and Kathy Peacock (Voice and Influence Manager).	In total seven care experienced young people enjoyed being involved in the project.  They were supported to display their art work at Middlesbrough Central library.	15 adults popped in to look at their work - including several members of the public. They all congratulated the young adults on their work. Deputy Mayor - Phillipa Storey suggested their art work could be displayed at the town hall along the carriageway. This will be explored early 2026.
<b>28th October</b> - Pathways invited their young adults for to enjoy free access to Scream Factory.	14 young adults were supported by four Pathways staff to have a fantastic spooky time.	Young adults asked after their trip to Scream Factory in 2024 to go again. They were listened to and Pathways supported more to come to the event.
<b>29th October</b> - An invite was sent out to all our foster families and connected families to enjoy the free Annual Halloween Party.	45 Cared for, care experienced young people and those living with connected carers came with their carers to enjoy spooky games, music, activities and food.	This is an annual event and many of the same foster families and connected carers come each year.

# Engagement Activities

EVENT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
Care Experienced Month - 5th November - Roxy Movies	See information given in the 3rd July	See information given in the 3rd July
Care Experienced Month 7th November - Councillor Luke Henman arranged for some of our care experienced young adults to meet the MP Andy McDonald. They were joined by Luke and the Mayor Chris Cooke.	Four care experienced young adults had an opportunity to hear their priorities and to ask them some questions.	The meeting proved to be a positive experience for everyone. MP Andy McDonald said he would help them arrange a trip to the Houses of Parliament in 2026.
Care Experienced Month 10th November - Geoff Field - Director of Environment and Community Services, invited cared for and care experienced young people to hear about what his service does and the opportunities available to them.	Five young adults took up the opportunity.  They listened to Geoff, had a tour around Cargo Fleet lane and chatted to people in the various teams.	One young adult applied for one of the refuge collector posts and successfully got the job. A proposal on how to get more care experienced young people to work in Geoff's service area will be presented to DMT in 2026.
Care Experienced Month 11th November - Free access to experience Level X for free.	Nine cared for and care experienced young adults all enjoyed free access to Bowling, Go Carts and Mini Golf. They had lots of free goes on the game machines with two of the cared for young people winning soft toys.	We all had a great time and they enjoyed going on as many things as they could. The Future For Families staff and young people loved the chance to be there and meet other young people.
Care Experienced Month 18th November - the police ran a drop in session for our cared for and care experienced young people/adults at the live well centre.	Four young adults came to hear what the Police do and asked them some questions.	We will be working with the Police to create more opportunities for our cared for and care experienced young people to be involved in 2026.
Care Experienced Month 19th November - The Police invited Professionals to have a tour around their young person's custody suite.	13 people attended including four Councillors.	They fed back that they found the tour very interesting and understood what support we give to our young people. We are working with the Police to create more opportunities for young people and Professionals.



# Engagement Activities

EVENT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
<p><b>Care Experienced Month</b> <b>21st November</b> - Our Volunteer Ambassador, Sean delivered a talk to police trainee new recruits.</p>	<p>Sean talked about his experiences with the Police both positive and negative. He then answered their questions.</p>	<p>Sean although nervous, stood in front of the new recruits and senior members of the Police to tell them his story. He was very articulate and answered all their questions. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the feedback from the recruits was very complimentary.</p>
<p><b>Care Experienced Month</b> <b>20th November</b> - Pathways held a Mindfulness and wellbeing day. Free food, hair cuts/styling, Tai Chi, Indian Head massage. Vitamin stall - giving matcha, cacao hot chocolate, chai seeds (helps with ADHD).</p>	<p>12 care experienced young adults popped into the event. We had some of the Looked after nurses ask them some questions about a website they are developing.</p>	<p>Most took advantage of having their hair styled and enjoyed the food and other free items. Several helped the looked after nurses develop the website, with one young adult offering to work with them further. Everyone said how much they liked the event.</p>
<p><b>Care Experienced Month</b> <b>26th November</b> - Members of the music project were invited to show their film to Councillors before the Full Council meeting. We then all joined the meeting and Sean our volunteer Ambassador asked a question which was answered by the Mayor.</p>	<p>Five members of the project joined all the Councillors to watch their film. Afterwards all the Councillors took part in holding up cards saying they are 'Proud to be a Corporate Parents' The Mayor answered Sean's question '<i>How can you all as Corporate Parents increase your understanding of Middlesbrough cared for and care experienced young people?</i>'</p>	<p>The Councillors fed back that they thought the film was really good and enjoyed watching it. They all took part in holding up the card and photographs were taken for the Communications team to write a piece on being a Corporate Parent. The Mayor said he will work with care experienced young people to develop the work they do.</p>
<p><b>Care Experienced Month</b> <b>27th November</b> - Free 'Celebration' Party for older care experienced young people.</p>	<p>30 young adults enjoyed the Western themed party. They had a go on the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bucking Bronco</li><li>• Captured memories at the photobooth</li><li>• Line danced</li><li>• Did karaoke</li><li>• Had western styled food</li><li>• And got a certificate telling them how Awesome they are!!</li></ul>	<p>This event was asked for by our older care experienced young people as they wanted their own party.</p>



# Engagement Activities

EVENT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
<b>We Matter - 10th December</b> - Annual Christmas party. This year it was held at Teesside University Student Union	85 young people and 25 carers came to the free event. Social workers, support staff and Independent reviewing officers engaged with the young people.	The annual Christmas party is well known by Middlesbrough carers and they look forward to attending the event. They fed back that they enjoyed the new carnival activities and liked seeing social workers/Independent Reviewing officers and other staff there.
<b>Care Experienced Month - Art Exhibition</b> - was due to be held during November but was rescheduled to 16th December	Five members of the Art group showed their art work at the Middlesbrough Library. They chatted to a Councillor, the Deputy Mayor, Children's services staff and members of the public about their work.	The care experienced artists reported they really enjoyed doing their art work and felt privileged to be able to show their work and hear all the positives they received.

## Other amazing opportunities created for our young people

- 'We Matter' went out for a Christmas meal
- We took Caitlin out for tea to thank her for all her hard work
- The Pathways football group got free tickets to see a Middlesbrough football match
- Pathways holds weekly drop in sessions at the Live well centre
- Weekly 'Walk and Talk' with Pathways

## Overall impact

We are thrilled to share that we had 345 attendances across all our activities and events! This includes some of our young friends who came back to join us again.

We have made sure that the voices of cared for and care experienced young people are heard and valued by giving them meaningful chances to engage, celebrate, and make decisions. Through our annual events, creative projects, and the celebration of care experience month in November, we created new opportunities, thanks to partnerships in particular with the Police, Health, Teesside University, Fostering, Pathways, and Residential services. Young people have actively helped shape the services, recruitment processes, and activities they care about. These initiatives have built confidence, connection, and aspirations - leading to wonderful outcomes like employment opportunities, exciting new activity programs, and fresh collaborations for future events. Our work has also strengthened relationships between carers, professionals, and young people, nurturing a culture of listening and inclusion that will carry on into 2026 and beyond.

This page is intentionally left blank