



Somerset
Council

Somerset Corporate Parenting Board

Annual Report

2022-23



1. Summary

- 1.1** The Somerset Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) meets quarterly to take reports from its four sub-groups on progress to improving the lives of children and young people in care. It is also responsible for making sure that the aims of the Somerset's Corporate Parenting Strategy are met.
- 1.2** In 2022-2023 children looked after, care leavers, their carers and the services that support them in Somerset have faced challenges around making ends meet during a cost-of-living crisis; keeping healthy; engaging with their education and navigating structural changes in their communities.
- 1.3** Staff in Children's Social Care and its partners have operated in a changing climate of local government and local health reorganisation and a change of political administration while at the same time having undergone a month-long OFSTED inspection, a Peer Challenge with Gloucestershire and national and local safeguarding reviews. All this at a time when children coming into local authority care were presenting with more complex needs.
- 1.4** The CPB has strived for assurance that our young people's experiences and needs have been understood and met during this transformational period. We also want to ensure those needs shape our local conversation and actions about how we ensure that the changes in Somerset enable more opportunities for our young people and the people who care for them, to thrive and become confident young adults with good prospects and stable lives.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1**
 - That Council recommends a continued focus on corporate parenting responsibility as our new structures and arrangements are established, especially around housing, education, apprenticeships and social value in our procurement systems.
 - That Council supports and promotes a whole council approach to create practical and specific offers to Care Leavers through our Local Offer and the Care Leaver Covenant
 - That Council extends its thanks to the Somerset Care Council's young people for all the hard work that they undertake.
 - That council extends its thanks to the retiring Independent Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, Jill Johnson for her commitment and tenacity during her tenure from 2016- 2022

3. Background

3.1 The role of the Somerset Corporate Parenting Board is to ensure that Somerset Council, fulfils its duties towards children looked after (CLA); corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies, including the NHS and Police. The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 2025 and Terms of Reference (TOR), including membership of the Corporate Parenting Board, clearly define roles and responsibilities.

3.2 The Corporate Parenting Board has met quarterly throughout the year, receiving regular updates from officers, partners and the Somerset In Care Council (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC) who are a representative group of young people looked after or leaving care and are supported by a Participation Worker (see **Appendix B** for their report). The voice of the child is a key aspect of the Strategy, and the Board has continued to engage with young people, both through their representation on the Board, and through SiCC and SLCC which is well established and has an effective and regular link with the Board.

The Council's corporate parenting arrangements were reviewed following May 2022 Local Elections to ensure Somerset continues to provide a robust Corporate Parenting approach.

Full council in June 2022 approved the new elected members, and the updated annual action plan, and the arrangements set out in the corporate parenting strategy. Currently, ten elected members are committed to the Board.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 2025 sets out how Somerset intends to fulfil its responsibilities against the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting in a way that puts children and young people at the centre of improvements in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our services. It forms the framework in which Somerset staff, elected members and relevant partners will work.

3.3 Promotion of the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting:

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out Seven Principles (identified in section one of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people as follows:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.

5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

These principles form the structure of our actions and guide the decisions and challenges we make as a board.

3.3 The focus of the Corporate Parenting Board is on the delivery of five priorities covering placement sufficiency and stability, education, health, voice of the child and leaving care through well-established sub-groups with good cross agency working, led by a senior officer, and supported by a councillor from the Board.

Additionally, the key areas of foster carer development and achieving permanence are led by the council's fostering and adoption services. Action owners on the groups take responsibility for issues to deliver solutions within deadlines.

The outcomes of this work are reported quarterly through the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) performance reporting arrangements, against four improvement programmes. Reports are complemented by detailed data and performance measures provided to the Board to support them in their role in leading and challenging service delivery.

3.4 This report provides an update of the function and impact of the Board over the past 12 months.



4. 2022 – 2023 Achievements

4.1 Achievements 2022 - 2023 (see Appendix A): this information evaluates the progress against the annual priorities set for 2022/23

4.2 The Board has continued to meet virtually via Teams at a time when members of the Care Councils can join the meeting after school or college.

Attendance has been strong, and use of technology has been embedded.

4.3 The chair of the Corporate Parenting Board is a member of the Partnership Business Group of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. The group reports to and aligns to the Safeguarding priorities and those of the Children & Young People's Plan 2022 – 2024.

4.4 The chair especially wishes to highlight the many positive outcomes from the work of the Board and sub-groups especially:

- That the work of the Corporate Parenting Board was recognised in the OFSTED Inspection where the inspection outcome led to Somerset's Children's Social Care (CSC) service being recognised as Good
- The health adoption process has been strengthened with additional staff.
- An additional paediatrician recruited to support Initial Health Assessment and other Children Looked After (CLA) work.
- Children's participation in their CLA reviews rose from 91% to 96%
- The strategic partnership for ten new Children's Homes in Somerset – called Homes & Horizons- has progressed well and young people have been actively involved in the development of the project.
- The project won the category of Partnership Working at the prestigious MJ (Municipal Journal) Awards and the Somerset team attended the ceremony in London.
- Route One provided a designated advocate linked to each of the newly opened children's homes.
- 92% of children aged 4+years+ had advocacy support at their Child Protection Conference (CPC)
- Children invited to attend a CPC are now able to watch an animation co-produced with SiCC and SLCC, that helps them to understand the process.
- SiCC and SLCC took part in a CSC peer review with Gloucestershire on CLA and Safeguarding in Schools by hosting an online debate with young people from Gloucestershire.
- SiCC and SLCC have developed a Creatives group for young people to have a voice about their lived experiences through poetry, writing and music.

- 105 of the 110 newly elected councillors have undertaken Corporate Parenting training.
- Children at risk of exploitation are now supported via a Child in Need (CiN) meeting where advocacy support has increased.
- The Virtual School has refreshed its offer following the Inclusion redesign and formed a new Governance Board
- All Personal Education Plans (PEPS) are quality assured, and RAG rated and the majority have found to be green (good).
- Childrens Commissioning and SiCC and SLCC have collaborated on the tender to re-commission the 16+ Accommodation Service
- An additional Quality Assurance assistant in the Children's Commissioning has ensured that commissioned placements (homes) are of the highest possible quality.
- Films for UnAccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arriving into Somerset are being developed in three languages in collaboration with children and young people, the Leaving Care Team and the Engagement & Participation team.
- Somerset's Leaving Care service were runners-up at the National Benchmarking Awards for the Personal Advisor team.
- A greater percentage (7%) of young people are continuing onto Higher Education – from 4.9% in 21/22 to 11.9% in 22/23.

For current data, please see **Appendix B**



5. Areas for development

5.1 Areas for Development (see **Appendix A**) – this information sets out the development areas for 2023-24.

6. Appendices

- **Page 8: Appendix A** – Corporate Parenting Board Achievements and Areas for Development 2021 – 2022
- **Page 19: Appendix B** – Current data
- **Page 23: Appendix C** – SiCC and SLCC Annual Report 2021 - 2022
- **Page 27: Appendix D** – Corporate Parenting Board Strategy 2022 - 2025
- **Page 45: Appendix E** – Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference 2022 – 2023
- **Page 50: Glossary of Terms**
- **Link to Somerset’s Local Offer for Care Leavers**



Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Board Achievements and Areas for Development 2022 - 2023

SEVEN PRINCIPLES	1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2022-23</p>	<p>The summer of 2022 saw significantly increased numbers of children becoming looked after, work continued to refine the assessment pathway and drive-up assessment standards.</p> <p>Additional Initial Health Assessment (IHA) clinics were commissioned to help manage the backlog of IHAs that built up over the summer and an additional Paediatrician recruited with capacity in their job plan to provide IHAs and other Children Looked After (CLA) and adoption work.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Sub Group sought additional assurance that the specific emotional and mental health needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are considered in the current CYP MH Transformation Plan. Councillor Tessa Munt wrote to the Chair of the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board to ensure our children and young people’s needs are a significant part of this improvement agenda. Work commenced with system partners to ensure the best use of the remaining CLA and Care Leavers mental health transformation assessment.</p> <p>Dental performance of children looked after having an up-to-date dental assessment throughout the majority of 2022 was low, however began to improve at the beginning of 2023. There is a significant shortage of NHS dentists in Somerset. The ICB have had several meetings with NHS England Southwest Specialist Commissioners to help manage the risk.</p> <p>Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and chair of the Learning and Improvement subgroup of the Safeguarding Children’s Partnership will now attend the Health and Wellbeing Subgroup. Learning from Safeguarding reviews featuring CLA will remain a standing agenda item going forward.</p> <p>In January 2023 the system approved the formal business case to secure the temporary additional adoption roles. The Health Adoption team will now consist of 20 Programmed Activities of Agency Medical Advisor time, 30 hours of Specialist Nurse, 22.5 hours of Adoption Nurse, 22.5 hours of WREN Team Midwife time, 37.5 hours of senior administrator time and 22.5 hours of administrator time. The permanent provision of these posts will ensure the continuation of the excellent service which is now in place for children with a care plan for adoption.</p> <p>Work is underway to update the Medical Advisor Job Description to ensure it reflects the wider roles now being carried out by the Medical Advisors in line with the Adoption Statutory Guidance.</p>

**AREAS FOR
DEVELOPMENT
2023 - 24**

In 2023 an IHA deep dive will review the actions taken by both Health and Somerset Council to facilitate the Initial Health Assessments of those children and young people who became looked after in March 2023 with the aim of addressing the notification, consent, booking and attendance issues that continue to account for most delayed assessments. The Initial Health Assessment template which has been updated by the Named and Designated professionals needs to be finalised to ensure that paediatricians have access to the most relevant information about the child prior to an IHA taking place.

In 2023 as part of the Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Transformation Plan, work will be undertaken to develop a successor to the Big Tent. The Designated Nurse will be meeting with commissioners to ensure the needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are understood and reflected in service provisions.

A thematic workshop with an emotional and mental health focus, for the councillors of the Corporate Parenting Board is planned for 2023-2024.

In 2023 a dental deep dive will be undertaken to better understand the reasons children do not have an up-to-date dental assessment. NHS England SW will also be developing an updated flowchart and referral form for children who have dental pain but do not have an NHS dentist. From April 2023 commissioning of Dental Services in Somerset will transfer to Somerset ICB from NHS England.

Continue to support medical and nursing elements of the IHA pathway and dental assessment recovery to again achieve 90% targets.

Monitoring the impact of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on Health services. Somerset has seen a significant rise in the number of Somerset UASC. The Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children IHA pathway is to be finalised.

Ensure that the emotional and mental health needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are recognised, prioritised and addressed.

RESPONSIBILITY

Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group



SEVEN PRINCIPLES

2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2022-23

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service completed 1,375 children looked after reviews in the 12 months from 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The IRO Service now take an approach to children's reviews whereby the child (dependent on age) decides on how they would like their review to be held- in person, held virtually or held in two parts. This approach is enabling children to have an increased view on how they would like meetings about them to be held. This approach also supports increased participation from children in their reviews and decisions that affect them.

In 2022/2023, we have seen children's participation within CLA reviews increase from 91% to 95.7%. The IRO Service and Route1 Service work closely together to ensure that children are aware of their rights to advocacy and for an Independent Visitor. It is a strength that more children are either actively participating in their reviews by attending, speaking to an advocate beforehand or meeting with their IRO separately to ensure that their views can be captured.

Route One now delivering introductions to Mind of My Own and to monitor statements of concern although the impact of this has not been seen by increased usage of Mind of my own. Numbers of usage for Mind of my Own remain low despite an increased drive on Mind of My Own.

Route 1 continues to meet with all children over the age of 8 who have become looked after to explain their rights to them about advocacy, Independent Visitor, SiCC, SLCC and Mind of My Own. Mind of My Own training is available for all staff via the Learning Centre.

Route 1 is linked in with the new Homes & Horizons children's homes, with each children's home having a designated advocate when they open. 5 advocates have now been allocated to 5 of the homes.

The number of eligible children (aged 4 and over where parental consent is given) who have had an advocate for their Child Protection Conference (CPC) in 2022/2023 is 91.8%. This demonstrates an outstanding effort across the service to ensure that children's voices are amplified and tells us that advocacy is firmly embedded in our practice.

In 2021/22 the figures for children and young people having advocacy for Core Group Meetings or Child in Need meetings was 55. With the continued drive from the Chairs Service, this figure has increased in 2022/23 to 78. This increase tells us that the voice of the child continues to be a priority across the service.

Numbers of volunteer advocates continues to grow.

Somerset In Care (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care (SLCC) Councils attended YMCA Frome to run an activity and promote the work they do. We aim to use this model more in 22/23 with other providers around the county.

SiCC and SLCC attended the Children Looked After (CLA) & Leaving Care staff away day at Dillington and ran an activity for social worker staff to promote the group to professionals.

As well as the usual work within Childrens Social Care (CSC) CLA & LC services, SiCC and SLCC have also worked with Quality Assurance teams, Fostering, Family Intervention Service (FIS), NHS and commissioning with positive results from young people being involved.

SiCC and SLCC were also involved with a peer review with young people from Gloucestershire Council exploring three themes.

SiCC and SLCC were mentioned positively within the Ofsted report.

The development of the SiCC and SLCC Creatives gives young people the opportunity to have a voice in a different way from the core group meeting, virtual meeting and service/policy development.

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
2023 - 24**

Increase usage by children of Mind of My Own app to share their wishes and feelings - Mind of My Own usage remains poor. The contract is up for renewal and a decision regarding whether Somerset continue to commission Mind of My Own will need to be made by the Corporate Parent Board in November 2023.

Develop a better understanding about whether CLA and Care Leavers know how to make a Comment, Complaint or Compliment about services they received - examine the % of children's complaints resolved satisfactorily and the number of hits on young people's page on SC customer experience page.

SiCC and SLCC aim in to attend CSC events such as the Getting To Know You days to run activities and proactively increase membership.

The SiCC and SLCC website was updated by young people and Paul Mitchell from the Engagement & Participation team. The young people stripped away pages that they felt no longer should be there and included new pages such as the Creatives (which displays young people's art, poetry, writing and music)

RESPONSIBILITY

Voice of the Child Sub-Group



<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people.</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2022-23</p>	<p>After May 22 local elections new councillors were invited to a 2-hour CP training session run over 2 sessions; thereafter, any unable to attend this access the TLC learning- 105 of the 110 councillors have now undertaken the training.</p> <p>The Pledge was approved by the Board and publish in its 2022 - 2025 Strategy.</p> <p>The Child Protection Conference (CPC) animation for children and young people is now live and in use. This has supported children to understand how they can be part of their CPC and how they can have their views heard.</p> <p>Some of our children who are suffering or at risk of harm via exploitation are supported via Child in Need (CiN) meetings. Advocacy data for Core Group Meetings and CIN meeting has increased. Children are invited to attend their CP conferences or provide their views via an advocate in over 97% of cases.</p> <p>SiCC and SLCC organised and ran the Annual Achievement Awards to celebrate the achievements of CLA and care leavers. Ofsted inspectors attended and gave positive praise.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2023 - 24</p>	<p>The CPB training film on The Learning Centre (TLC) will need to be remade to reflect changes to local structures and the CPB refocus following Local Government Reorganisation</p> <p>A Risk Outside the Home process is commencing. A Lead Chair has been identified and has been fundamental in the developing of the Risk Outside the Home Pathway. These meetings are about the child and children being exploited are supported to have their view heard and if their views are conducive with their safety, acted upon.</p> <p>More partnership work with The UnStoppables who represent children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and whose focus is particularly concerned around meeting their health needs, getting a good education and transitioning into adulthood.</p> <p>Further develop advocacy offer in Somerset to vulnerable young people.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<p>Voice of the Child Sub-Group</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board – Partnership Team</p>

<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>4. To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2022-23</p>	<p>Homes & Horizons is an ongoing piece of work to implement 10 new children's homes in Somerset. SiCC and SLCC visited the new homes to help with colour themes, supporting the resident engagement days, visited the furniture manufacturer in Oxford to give views and helped name the homes. SiCC and SLCC have also supported a short film for the Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards.</p> <p>Somerset won the category of Partnership Working for the prestigious MJ Awards for the Homes & Horizons strategic partnership on Childrens Homes. Team members including a young person from SiCC and SLCC collected their award at a ceremony in London in June.</p> <p>SiCC and SLCC were involved with several areas of the P2i recommissioning which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a question for the formal process of the recommissioning • Discussing with commissioning what the minimum standards a young person should expect when in P2i accommodation. • Redefining the term crash pad • Helping create the life skills checklist for P2i. • YP involved with new vision statement.
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2023 - 24</p>	<p>Young people will be involved with scoring the question that they devised for the P2i recommissioning - this will make up 7% of the final score.</p> <p>Creating a Young Persons Quality Checker team.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Board – Partnership Team</p> <p>Voice of the Child Sub-Group</p>



**SEVEN
PRINCIPLES**

5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people.

**ACHIEVEMENTS
2022-23**

Following the Inclusion redesign in 2023 the Virtual School consulted with its partners in order to provide an effective service within the new structure.

CAPITA is now used extensively to record activities and has refocused in the light of the Inclusion restructure and division of the Virtual School and the Learning Support team.

The Virtual School has now formed its new Governance Board and this aspect of management continues to develop and embed.

Overall there has been little change in numbers of fixed term exclusions; however, the Virtual School have been able to engage with schools more helpfully in conversations around exclusion.

All Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are now quality assured and RAG rated – there are currently very few red RAG rated PEPs and the majority are rated green.

The Virtual School ensures that all CLA are placed in an appropriate education setting and there are now fewer CLA without a school placement; however, when a child has to move home, this often impacts on the stability of their education setting.

In order to increase educational attainment of CLA the Virtual School has raised awareness of the particular needs to CLA with schools to ensure young people can make good progress. Specifically, awareness of the impact of trauma has been delivered to a cohort of schools.

There has been an increase in PEP meetings for post 16 CLA and the Virtual School is working closely with Somerset Works to support young people who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).

Education Roadshows for CSC were well attended and wide range of teams engaged. Education continues to be high profile for social workers.

**AREAS FOR
DEVELOPMENT
2023 - 24**

The Virtual School will review and develop its offer as it embeds within the new Inclusion model; the Inclusion Approach will form the basis of its ongoing offer.

Following the introduction of the Inclusion Advice Line as part of the service offer, the Virtual School will review how this aligns with CAPITA records to ensure accuracy.

Continued development of the Governance Board.

Data around numbers of Fixed Term exclusions for academic year 22/23 is expected in September 2023 and will continue to be a key priority area.

The analysis of academic year 22/23 will give data on PEPs in September 20-23 with a focus on the quality of SMART target setting.

Review the enhanced offer of extracurricular activities – this action was impacted by the Inclusion redesign and will be a focus for 23/24.

The development of Homes & Horizons therapeutic education offer supports the priority to have all CLA in an appropriate education setting and this will be a continued focus.

**AREAS FOR
DEVELOPMENT
2023 - 24**

The newly formed Area Inclusion Partnerships will support the focus on all CLA being in an appropriate educational setting.

Working with Bath University to explore issues around early school leaving for our CLA and care leavers to remain in education, training or employment.

A new approach regarding CLA post 16 is being developed with Somerset Works.

Developing a suite of short development material for social workers called Take Five to enable them to challenge and encourage schools more effectively.

Attendance, achievements and attainment will continue to be the key priorities for the Virtual School.

RESPONSIBILITY

Education Sub-Group - Virtual School



<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>6. For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2022-23</p>	<p>Children’s Commissioning have recruited an additional Quality Assurance (QA) Assistant to work under the QA Officer to ensure that commissioned placements are of the highest quality. Links have been strengthened with our Peninsula colleagues (Devon, Plymouth and Torbay) to share intelligence around quality assurance. Joint visits have also taken place with our colleagues in health where there have been concerns around the issue of medication.</p> <p>Young people have been involved in the scoring of the tender for the re-commissioned 16+ Service. They came up with their own question around the support young people will receive within the first 7 days of them moving into their new home. This equates to 7% of overall tender score.</p> <p>Young people were involved with reviewing the Coming Into Care document and creating a short animation to replace the outdated document.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2023 - 24</p>	<p>The Board will refocus its governance, membership and strategy based on the opportunities arising from Local Government reorganisation.</p> <p>Develop a draft of the new Corporate Parenting Board strategy 2025 – 2028, using the new structures and opportunities emerging from unitary.</p> <p>The Board will develop oversight of the council’s decision to view Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic.</p> <p>Children’s Commissioning to introduce a new role around ‘Young Inspectors’ to support quality assurance visits and ensure young people are fully represented.</p> <p>Hold a thematic workshop on Children Going Missing to inform and assure the CPB of the process.</p> <p>Implement and mobilise the new 16+ Accommodation service.</p> <p>Write a robust 5-year Sufficiency Strategy to improve sufficiency of homes for children in care and care leavers.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Board – Partnership Team</p> <p>Sufficiency Statement</p> <p>Fostering and Adoption</p>

**SEVEN
PRINCIPLES**

7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

**ACHIEVEMENTS
2022-23**

A film for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) arriving in Somerset is being developed, involving children who have already arrived and settled in Somerset. The film will help children and young people to know what to expect from us, how we plan their support and what service we deliver.

This year SICC and SLCC attended the Getting To Know You days across the county and will be attending again in 2024 - it is hoped that this will help encourage more young people to engage with SICC and SLCC.

Somerset came runners up at the National Benchmarking Awards for Personal Advisor Team of the Year, which we are very proud of.

The Leaving Care service have met with Superdrug and SUEZ (refuge collection company) to support our young people into employment with them.

Somerset has joined the South West Regional Offer for Care Leavers, it is hoped that this will form a stronger network of opportunities for our young people related to employment, training and housing options.

Senior Leaving Care workers assist with promoting the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

There is close working between the CLA and Leaving Care service with SICC and SLCC with bespoke actions taking place seeking feedback from young people to inform our service delivery.

Health summaries are now sent to care leavers when they turn 18 years of age.

When required private dental treatment is funded for care leavers.

Young Somerset offer counselling to care leavers without charge.

50% of sports centres within Somerset offer free access to their venues. Freedom Leisure and Everyone Active are free.

We have a higher percentage of young people continuing to higher education that the previous year - in 2021/2022 4.9% of 18- 21 years olds were in higher education and this has risen in 2022/2023 to 11.9% 18-21 years old in higher education.

Joint training takes place between Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) and the Leaving Care Service for young people.

Somerset have been part of the National Redevelopment of ASDAN. We continue to promote the use of ASDAN for the Preparation for Adult Living Award and we are seeing ASDAN being used with more young people - our current figure is 56 young people signed up to ASDAN.

Leaving Care Workers are being involved sooner with CLA and being introduced to young people when they are 17 years old and this allows Pathway Plans to be co-written between the CLA and LCs.

In recent months transitions to Adult Social Care has improved and will be a continued focus on 2023/2024

**AREAS FOR
DEVELOPMENT
2023 - 24**

SiCC and SLCC are supporting the development of 3 short animations for UASCs arriving in Somerset. 22/23 saw UASC young people engaged for their views and quotes.

The launch of the first UASC film is planned for the UASC Conference in Autumn 2023 and the production of the second UASC film is planned for 2024.

The Leaving Care Covenant and the role of corporate parents will be widely promoted.

Work is underway regarding the cost of living and impact on young people within the Leaving Care Service. This joined up approach between SiCC and SLCC and the CLA and LC service will continue in the coming year.

A target for the coming 12 months is focusing on the remaining 50% of sports centres that do not offer free access to their leisure centres.

Every 17-year-old will have a named Adult Social Care (ASC) transition worker if they require ongoing support from Adult Social Care.

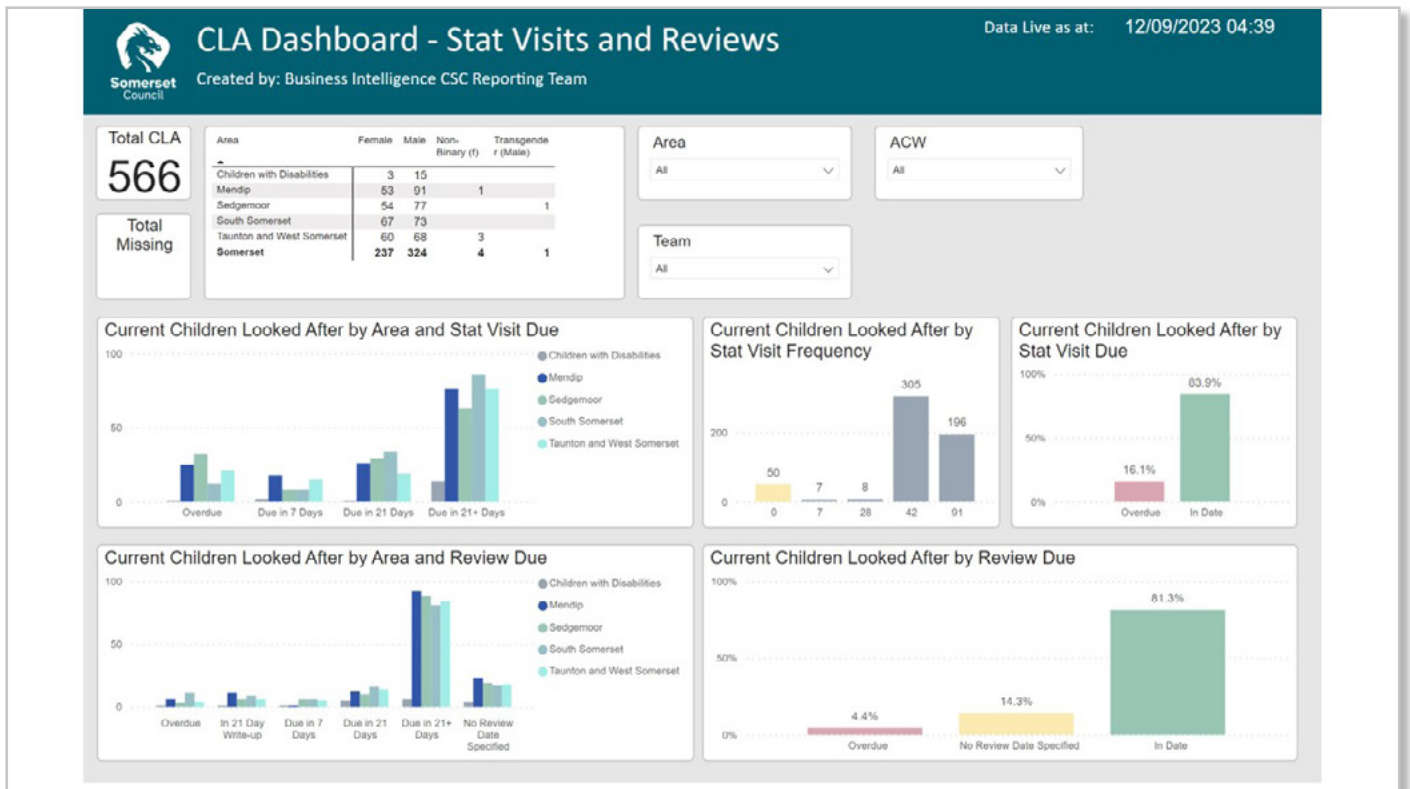
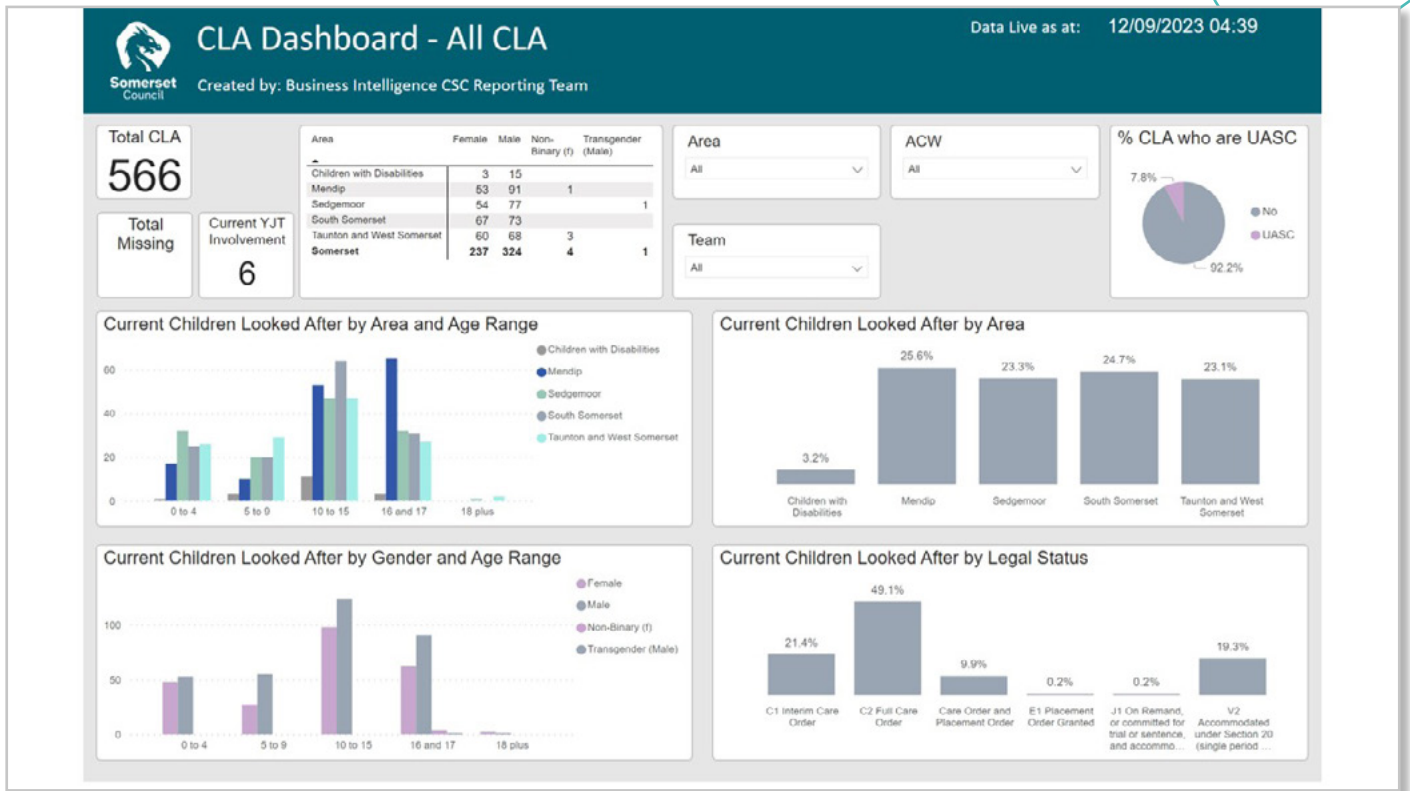
Further role out of ASDAN and other training schemes to support independent living.

RESPONSIBILITY

Care Leavers Sub-Group



Appendix B – Current Data





CLA Dashboard - Placements

Data Live as at: 12/09/2023 04:39

Created by: Business Intelligence CSC Reporting Team

Total CLA
566
Total Missing

Area	Female	Male	Non-Binary (f)	Transgender (Male)
Children with Disabilities	3	15		
Mendip	53	91	1	
Sedgemoor	54	77		1
South Somerset	67	73		
Taunton and West Somerset	60	68	3	
Somerset	237	324	4	1

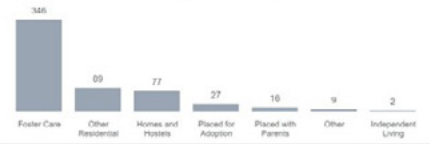
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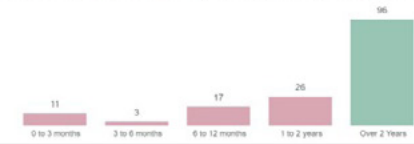


Current Number of Under 16's in Unregulated Provision
7

Current Children Looked After by Placement Type



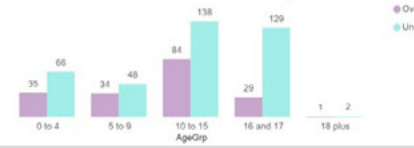
Children Looked After for more than 2.5 years by Placement Duration



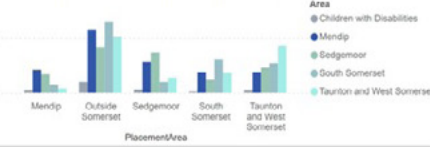
Current Children Looked After by No Placements in the last 12 Months



Current CLA Placed over 20 Miles From Home (and not in Somerset)



Current CLA by CSC Area and Placement Area



Current CLA Placed inside or Outside LA



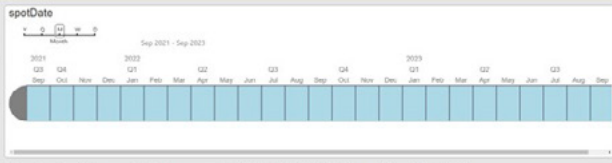
CLA Dashboard - Starting & Ceasing

Data Live as at: 12/09/2023 04:39

Created by: Business Intelligence CSC Reporting Team

Total Starting
496
Total Ceasing
465

Team: All
Age Range: All
Immigration Status: All
Area: All
Placement Description: All



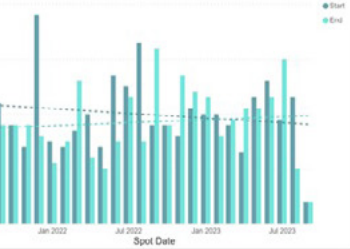
Periods of Care Starting by Age and Gender



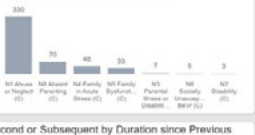
Periods of Care Ceasing by Age and Gender



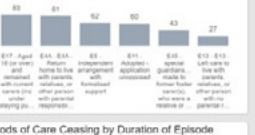
Periods of Care Starting and Ceasing by Month



Periods of Care Starting by Need Category



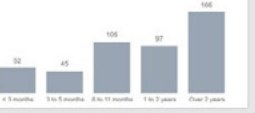
Periods of Care Ceasing by End Reason (Top 6)



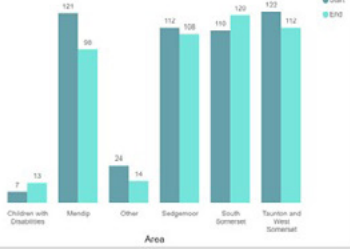
Second or Subsequent by Duration since Previous Period of Care



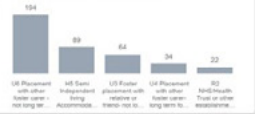
Periods of Care Ceasing by Duration of Episode



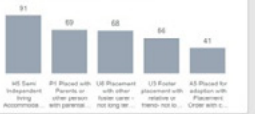
Periods of Care Starting and Ceasing by Area



Placement Description at Care Start



Placement Description at Care End





CLA Dashboard - Placements Map

Data Live as at: 12/09/2023 04:39

Created by: Business Intelligence CSC Reporting Team

Total CLA
566

Total Missing

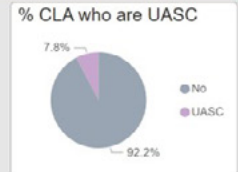
Area	Female	Male	Non-Binary (f)	Transgender (Male)
Children with Disabilities	3	15		
Mendip	53	91	1	
Sedgemoor	54	77		1
South Somerset	67	73		
Taunton and West Somerset	60	68	3	
Somerset	237	324	4	1

- AgeGrp
- 0 to 4
 - 5 to 9
 - 10 to 15
 - 16 and 17
 - 18 plus

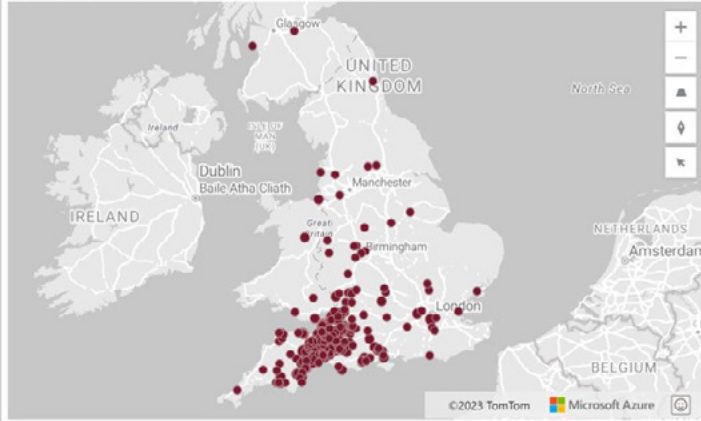
Area:

ACW:

Team:



Count of CaseNumber by PlacementPostcode



PlacementPostcode	PlacementArea	Total CLA
B23 7LR	Outside Somerset	1
B66 4NT	Outside Somerset	1
BA11 1GN	Mendip	1
BA11 1QD	Mendip	1
BA11 2XG	Mendip	2
BA11 4EQ	Mendip	2
BA11 5EU	Mendip	2
BA12 7OZ	Outside Somerset	1
BA13 4DX	Outside Somerset	1
BA13 4LF	Outside Somerset	1
BA13 4PX	Outside Somerset	1
BA14 0AQ	Outside Somerset	1
BA14 7FU	Outside Somerset	1
BA16 0EF	Mendip	1
BA16 0FN	Mendip	1
BA16 0PN	Mendip	1
BA16 9PS	Mendip	1
BA16 9RS	Mendip	1
BA2 8HW	Outside Somerset	3
BA2 8JL	Outside Somerset	1
BA20 2AP	South Somerset	1
Total	South Somerset	566



CLA Dashboard - CLA Over Time

Data Live as at: 12/09/2023 04:39

Created by: Business Intelligence CSC Reporting Team

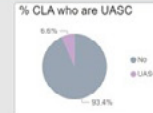
Financial year: 2018-2019 2019-2020 2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023 2023-2024

AgeGrp: 0 to 4 5 to 9 10 to 15 16 and 17 18 plus

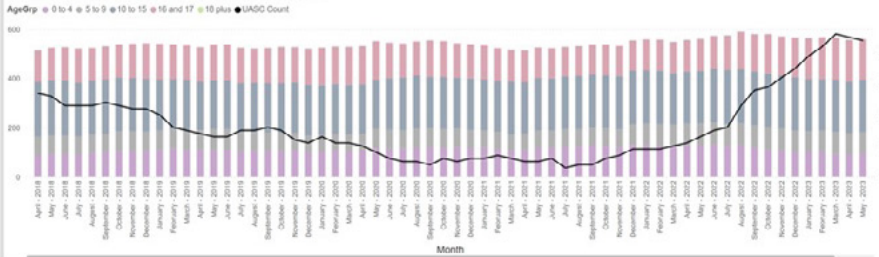
Area:

Team:

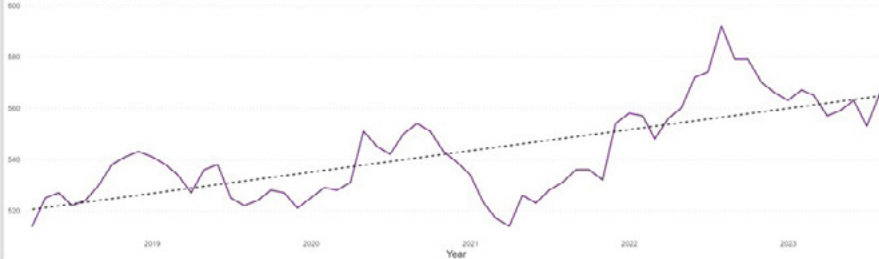
placementdescription:



Count of CaseNumber and UASC Count by Month and AgeGrp



Count of CaseNumber by Year and Month





CLA Dashboard - CLA OLA

Data Live as at: 12/09/2023 04:39

Created by: Business Intelligence CSC Reporting Team

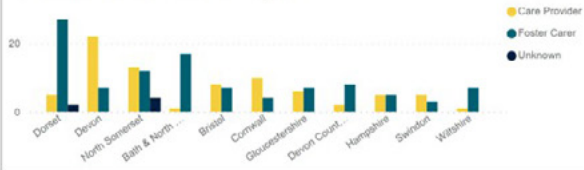
Total CLA
260

Authority	Female	Indeterminate	Male	Non-Binary (f)	Unknown
Bath & North East Somerset	1		9		
Birmingham	9				
Bournemouth	1				
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	2		1		
Bracknell Forest	1		2		
Bristol	8		5		2
Buckinghamshire	1				
Cardiff	1		1		
Somerset	128	1	127	1	3

Authority: All
Worker: All
CarerType: All
Carer: All

This data is reliant on OLA's reporting to us correctly so will not always be 100% accurate

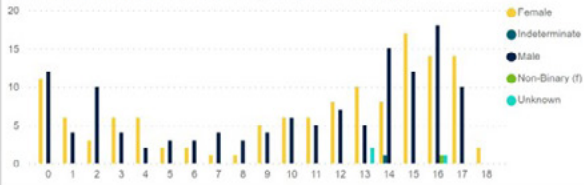
Current Children Looked After by LA



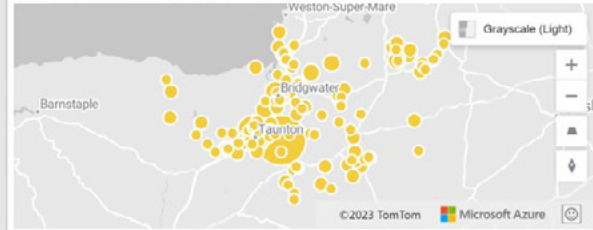
Current Children Looked After by Carer Type



Current Children Looked After by Gender and Age



Count of CaseNumber by Postcode



Care Leavers at a Glance Dashboard

12/09/2023 03:13:57
Date Last Refreshed

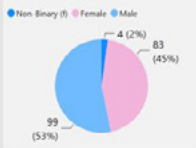
Care Leavers in School Year 12 and Onwards

Cohort Size	Number of Young Persons not in ETE	Not in ETE %	Care Leavers not in ETE and are UASC
569	186	32.9%	8

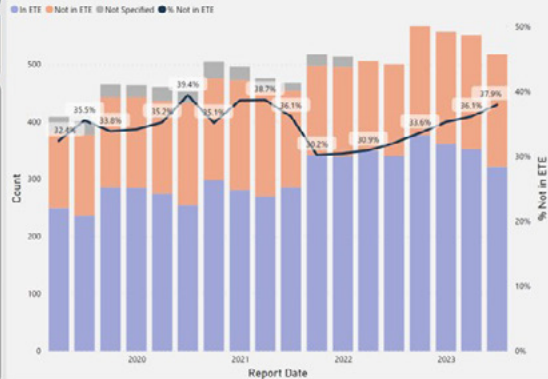
Area	Total
Mendip	34
Other	1
Sedgemoor	58
South Somerset	40
Taunton and West	54

Allocated Team	Total
Assessment Team Yeovil 2	1
CLA Team Bridgwater 1	2
CLA Team Bridgwater 2	6
CLA Team Mendip 1	3
CLA Team Mendip 2	7
CLA Team Taunton 1	5
CLA Team Taunton 2	1
CLA Team Yeovil 1	3
CLA Team Yeovil 2	2
Family Safeguarding Team 1 Yeovil	1
Leaving Care Accommodation Team	1
Leaving Care Mendip	24

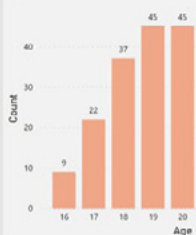
Gender Breakdown



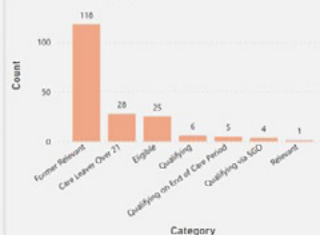
Care Leavers Not in ETE Over Time



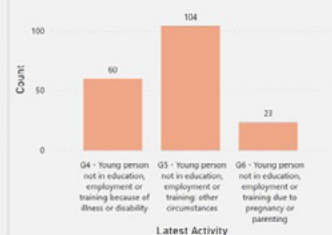
Age Breakdown



Care Leaver Category Breakdown



Latest Activity



Appendix C – SiCC & SLCC Annual Report 2022 - 2023



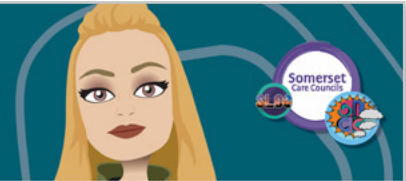
Introduction

SiCC and SLCC (the Somerset In Care Council & the Somerset Leaving Care Council) is a mechanism for young people in care and care leavers to participate within shaping services within Somerset.

This can be through service & policy change; consultation, interviewing staff and also by the use of creative arts.

We believe it important for our voices to be heard to help shape the best services for young people in Somerset.

Creators not just Clients young people as partners



Working with CSC services & partners

Children Looked After & Leaving Care

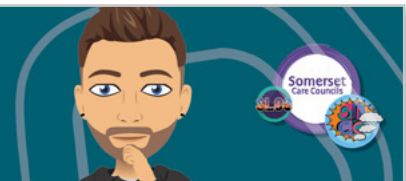
- Annual Achievement Awards
- Independence skills proposal for the Leaving Care Service
- Gloucestershire County Council Peer Review

Family Intervention Service

- Redefining Missing Episodes



Creators not just Clients young people as partners



Commissioning

- P2i recommissioning
- What Makes Your Home Happy survey

Homes and Horizons

- Visit to the furniture manufacturer in Oxford
- Involved with the naming and branding of the new service
- Naming of new homes
- Supporting resident engagement days
- Supporting the application for the MJ awards
- Informing the training for foster carers



Creators not just Clients young people as partners

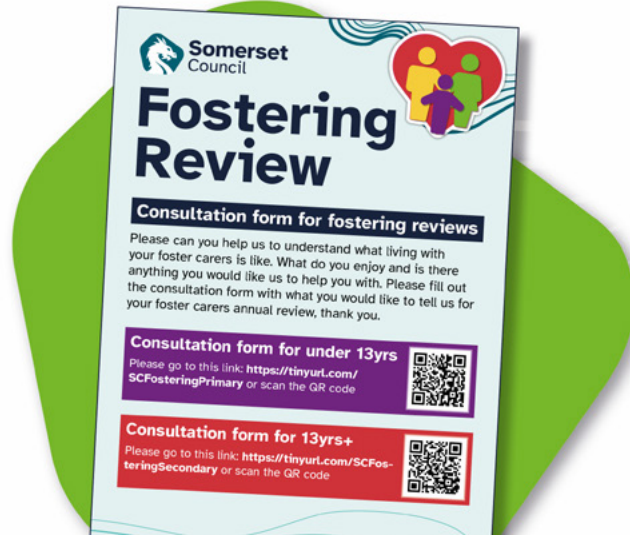


Fostering

- Skills to Foster days
- Fostering review

NHS

- Interviews such as CLA
Band 6 nurse



SiCC and SLCC Film Crew



- Coming into Care film
- Child protection
Conference animation
- Vaping film
- UASC films



SiCC and SLCC The Creatives



- The SiCC and SLCC Creatives
- Dillington event
- YMCA Frome
- Updating the newsletter & Website



Aims for next year



- Young People's Quality Checker team training
- Supporting the Getting To Know You Days
- UASC films
- SiCC and SLCC Creatives countywide roadshow
- Refresh the Corporate Parent Board pledge
- Collaborate on the 16+ accomodation tender



Appendix D – Corporate Parenting Board Strategy 2022 - 2025



Contents

- 3 Foreword**
- 4 Introduction**
- 6 Principle 1** - To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people
- 7 Principle 2** - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people
- 8 Principle 3** - For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- 9 Principle 4** - To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- 10 Principle 5** - To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living
- 11 Principle 6** - To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- 12 Principle 7** - To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- 13 Measures of success, monitoring and evaluation**



Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to have been asked to write the foreword to our new Corporate Parenting Strategy. This strategy takes account of what our children looked after, and our care leavers have been telling us about their experiences of being in our care, as well as linking with the key priorities of the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2022 - 2025 and our Sufficiency Statement.

The strategy sets out how Somerset intends to fulfil its responsibilities against the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting in a way that puts children and young people at the centre of improvements in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our services. It forms the framework in which Somerset staff, elected members and relevant partners will work. It is our children and young people's Pledge Tree - their Tree of Life giving them stability, strength, support and shelter as they grow up and take their place in society.

I look forward to supporting the independent chair of our Corporate Parenting Board in leading member support to the delivery of this strategy.

Frances Nicholson

Frances Nicholson
Lead Member for Children's Services



Cllr Frances Nicholson
Cabinet member, Children
and Families



Julian Wooster
Director of Children's
Services

Dear Somerset Corporate Parents

We are children and young people who happen to be in care – please don't judge us or make assumptions or think that we need special treatment – we just want to be treated like any other young person.

SiCC and SLCC (Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils) have a trusting relationship with all of our agencies to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard by the Corporate Parenting Board - through a range of resources that we produce; such as films, policies and procedures and events. We put the 'core' into Corporate Parenting!

We expect you, as our corporate parents, to ensure our priorities are upheld in a strategic plan that makes a difference and improves the quality of our lives. That's why we have helped the Board to refresh their Pledge to all children looked after and care leavers in Somerset – we hope you enjoy reading the pledges throughout this strategy.

We want you to recognise the significance of your responsibilities to help us to become confident young adults with good prospects and stable lives.

You can help us to thrive.

Best wishes

The members of SiCC and SLCC



Jill Johnson OBE
Chair of the Somerset
Corporate Parenting Board



Introduction

When a child comes into care, they become “looked after” and Somerset County Council (SCC) becomes their Corporate Parent. This means that everyone who works for SCC, in any capacity, its elected members and its partners have a special and important responsibility in fulfilling the corporate parent role, underpinned by *The Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting*.

Somerset County Council is committed to being an effective and trustworthy corporate parent for any child or young person who is in our care, irrespective of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, faith or ability.

Every good parent knows that children require a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow and thrive. Parents protect and support their children in coping with the dangers and risks of everyday life. Parents are ambitious for their children and strive to support them to reach their potential. Parents celebrate and share in their children’s achievements, however large or small. A child who is cared for by the Council has the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that they would expect from a good parent in the community.

Services that support children looked after are corporate parents, and we are all accountable to the children and young people who are looked after in Somerset. We must all strive for children in our care to succeed in the same way that any parent would strive for their own children. This can mean providing advice and guidance to a young person who is starting to live independently, supporting carers, ensuring that children’s mental health is safeguarded, helping a young person find a job, or listening to their hopes and dreams, problems and insecurities.

There is a wide range of people and organisations who need to work together, including:

- *The Somerset Corporate Parenting Board*
- Elected members
- All Council services
- Children’s services
- The Virtual School
- Schools, Colleges and other education providers
- Health service providers
- Housing providers
- Community organisations



Number of CLA*
in Somerset

48.9

per 10,000 children

Number of
CLA* in England

65.4

per 10,000 children



Aims and Objectives

The Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting form the aims and objectives of this strategy:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people



Care leavers in
touch (all ages)

98.3%

* Children Looked After (CLA)

Principle 1

To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Support you to have your physical, emotional and mental well being needs met

The Health and Wellbeing sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Designated Nurse - Children Looked After and Care Leavers, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Ensure that all Children Looked After have robust statutory health assessments which are completed in a timely way by the right Health professional, are included in the child's care plan and are considered at each CLA*** Review meeting
- Ensure that the emotional and mental health needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are recognised, prioritised and addressed
- Ensure that the Health elements of the adoption pathway remain compliant with statutory responsibilities and are adequately resourced to provide sufficient Adoption Medical Advisor, nursing and administrative capacity
- Monitor the ongoing recovery of health services to CLA and Care Leavers which have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the longer term physical and emotional impact on CLA and CL
- Look at the learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and other reviews and ensuring all actions are taken and embedded.

SLCC worked with CLA commissioners, to look at options for how they receive their health information when they leave care.

CLA more than 28 days with IHA
90.3%

Percentage of children of four or more years looked after with more than 1 year SDQ**

83%

Percentage of CLA after more than 1 year with a dental check

55.2%

* Initial Health Assessment (IHA), **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Principle 2

To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Push you to be the best you can be
- To understand your goals and help you to achieve them
- Help you to believe in yourself
- Have high aspirations for you and support you in education, training and employment

The education sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Virtual School, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Embedding and monitoring the use and impact of the ePEP** including progress data
- Improve the quality of PEPs* so that an increased % of PEPs* are found to be 'good' or better according to our QA process
- Deliver a system for monitoring attendance of Children Looked After which works for our schools and settings, while also providing the virtual school with the live data needed to act promptly where there are attendance concerns
- Ensure we are listening to our young people and their carers, and learning from their views and feedback
- Develop and clarify our Post-16 offer, following the appointment of a Lead Advisory Teacher to oversee and champion this work
- Continue to strengthen our partnership working, with SEND***, CSC† and YOS††, to ensure holistic support to young people with multiple vulnerabilities
- Continue to see a positive impact on our Key Performance Indicators, to include improved attainment, reduced exclusions, fewer children missing education, improved attendance and engagement
- Broaden the offer of the virtual school to support partners in promoting the education of children with social workers (Extension of Duties)

Percentage of education settings using ePEP**

100%

Percentage of PEPs* completed

94.2%

Percentage of CLA in full time education

93%

Number of initial PEPs* scheduled on time

100%
since October 2021

* Personal Education Plan (PEP).

**Electronic Personal Education Plan.

†Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), †Children's Social Care (CSC).

††Youth Offending Service (YOS)

Principle 3

For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Respect you and treat you as an individual
- Work hard to give you a choice of the best and safest places for you to live.
- Make sure that if you have to move it is a planned transition wherever possible
- Celebrate your birthday and other successes and achievements, including your school prom and with family if you choose to, and its safe to do so.
- Support you to see the people who are important to you, if it is safe to do so and support you to make new friends
- Be available when you need us, or someone else we know if not
- Help you to be safe and reduce the possibility of being bullied
- Try to keep the same social worker for you where possible

The lead officers are the Strategic Commissioner, Children's Commissioning and the Strategic Operations Manager, Fostering in Somerset

The priority focus for this group is

- Develop the strategic partnership to deliver homes for children and young people, aligned high needs fostering and therapeutic education in Somerset
- Strengthen and develop relationships with all providers who care and support our children and young people
- Create and embed 16+ standards
- Re-design prevention and supported accommodation for young people aged between 16-25 at risk of homelessness
- Share and implement the learning from the fostering feasibility study to increase stability of children and young people living in foster homes
- Continue with the 'step-forward' programme for children and young people moving from residential homes to be with foster families

CLA placed more than 20 miles from home
31.2%

RHI within 72 hours
62%

"Just being in the WhatsApp group, I think, has had a positive impact on the mental health of carers, for sure to have that support. To know that they can throw those ideas out and have that support as well, which is quite nice"

Carer taking part in Fostering Feasibility study 2021

Children looked after at least two and half years staying in the same home for two or more years
67%

Carers taking part in the Fostering Feasibility study valued the directory that gave them access to over 360 local organisations and has led to young people engaging in a new activity

* Return Home Interview (RHI)

Principle 4

To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Make sure you are made aware of the same opportunities as other young people of your age
- Support you in the same way as if you were our own child.

The Voice of the Child sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service – Quality Assurance, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Celebrate young people's successes through the Annual Achievements Awards
- Promote and raise awareness of the Corporate Parenting Board through our training offer



Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 9

Principle 5

To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Teach you independent living skills and provide practical support if you need it
- Provide adult in your lives who inspire you
- Support you when you live independently and keep in touch regularly
- Help to get the most suitable accommodation for you

The Leaving Care sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service, Children's Social Care, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Develop the participation of care leavers (CLs), and inclusion of the voice of children looked after (CLA) and CLs in service delivery and developments, aligning the work of SiCC & SLCC with Leaving Care Apprentices
- Making full use of the Leaving Care Covenant within the Corporate Parenting community
- Continue to improve and publicise the Local Offer for CLs, ensuring that the voice of CLA and CLs is central to service delivery of SCC and partners
- Ensure that the health and well-being needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are met, particularly during periods of transition
- Improve outcomes for children who are looked after CLA and care leavers CLs in respect of Education, Training and Employment
- Ensure that the range of accommodation available is safe and meets the needs of all CLA and CLs

"It is very useful to be involved as it could be used as evidence for my college course as the learning from this experience was towards my qualification in customer service."

Member of SiCC and SLCC 2021

Care Leavers who are NEET (all ages)
36.4% (21)
vs 41.7% in 2020

Care leavers who are suitably accommodated
96.3%

Leaving Care Local Offer: Information and advice for Somerset's Care Leavers aged 16 to 25. [Click here](#) for more information.

About the Care Leaver Covenant: The Care Leaver Covenant is a national inclusion programme that supports care leavers aged 16-25 to live independently. [Click here](#) for more information.

* Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 10

Principle 6

To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Listen to your views
- Make sure you know who your worker is
- Make it easy to contact your worker and where to get their contact details
- Make sure you understand your rights and how you can make a complaint and get support from Route 1 Advocacy.
- Make sure you know how to get involved with the Care Councils
- Help you to communicate with us in the best way for you (i.e. social media, Mind of My Own etc)

The Voice of the Child sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service – Quality Assurance, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Improve the way we hear the voice of the child and young person
- Refresh and promote the Pledge
- Supporting young people to be a part of our recruitment processes



Volunteer Advocates & Independent Visitors ensure that young people's voices are heard. [Click here](#) for more information.

"It feels important to be able to make a difference for others and be part of something that will support and help young people"
Member of SICC and SLCC 2021.

'Making a complaint against Children's Social Care' film

Making a complaint about Children Social Care



'Mind of My Own' film

* Child Protection (CP)

Principle 7

To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people

Our pledge to you

We will:

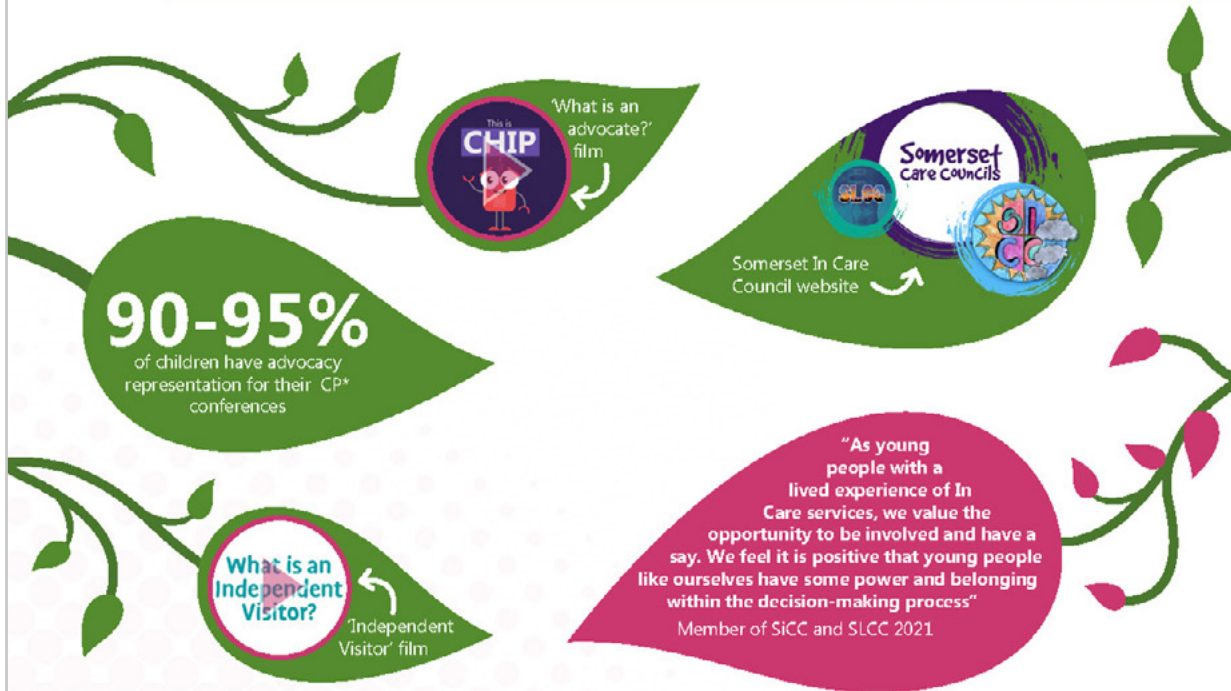
- Involve you in the decisions that affect you and aim to respect your wishes
- Tell you in good time about any proposed changes being made to your care plan – even in an emergency.

The Voice of the Child sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service – Quality Assurance, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Promote advocacy to our children and young people throughout their journey
- Support the functions of the Somerset In Care Council and Leaving Care Councils (SiCC and SLCC)





Measures of Success: Would This Be Good Enough for My Child?

The Corporate Parenting Board monitors the services that Somerset County Council (SCC) and our partners deliver to our children looked after and care leavers, with the aim of continually improving outcomes. The Board is made up of elected members, Council officers and our partners. It holds the responsibility for producing a three-year strategy that reflects the needs of our looked after children and care leavers and our statutory obligations to them.

The Corporate Parenting Board Strategy is underpinned by a robust three-year plan to achieve its strategic goals. The plan is flexible to recognise the changing needs of children looked after and care leavers and social care legislation.

The progress of plan is reported to the Board quarterly with supporting data from the SCC Business Intelligence Team and our partner agencies.

On reading the quarterly reports, the first question the Board must answer is, "Would this be good enough for my child"? Elected members are ultimately accountable for the quality of the service, so is the data telling them what they need to know?

The Board publishes an Annual Report for approval by the full County Council meeting. The Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils (SiCC and SLCC) annually evaluate improvement through their 'We Said, You Did' report which forms part of the Annual Report.

The Board is an associate function of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership which receives quarterly reports for assurance on the safeguarding of our children looked after and care leavers.

Monitoring and evaluation

This strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the successful delivery of the Corporate Parenting three year plan through:

- Listening to children and young people who are looked after
- The effective use of local data to identify areas for improvement and the extent to which national and local indicators around children looked after are being met
- Receiving reports from across service areas and from partners as required
- Peer review and challenge
- Feedback from partners, agencies, parents, carers and children and young people about services
- Continued revision of actions in the plan in the light of monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.



The Pledge Tree

The children and young people of SiCC and SLCC (Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils) decided that the Pledge should reflect the qualities of a tree - the roots give stability, the trunk gives strength, the branches give support and the leaves give shelter.



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County Council

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Children in Care in Somerset Pledge

The pledge is the promise that we make to you - we commit to keeping you safe, happy and healthy, and to help you reach your full potential.

Our pledge is to let you know what we should be doing for you, and for you to know what your rights are.



Priority 1

To promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people



The Pledge

Support you to have your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing needs met.





Priority 2
To encourage children and young people to express their views and wishes and feelings

The Pledge

- Make sure you know how to get involved with the Care Council
- Make sure you know who your worker is
- Make it easy to contact them and where to get their contact numbers.
- Help you to communicate with us in the best way for you (i.e. social media, Mind of My Own etc.)
- Listen to your views
- Make sure you understand your rights and how you can make a complaint and get support from Route 1 Advocacy

Priority 3
To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people

The Pledge

- Tell you in good time about any proposed changes being made to our care plan - even in an emergency
- Involve you in the decisions that affect you and aim to respect your wishes



Priority 4
To help children and young people gain access to all services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

The Pledge

- Make sure you are made aware of the same opportunities as other young people your age
- Aim to support you in the same way as if you were our own child

Priority 5
To understand your goals and help you to achieve them

The Pledge

- Push you to be the best you can be
- Have high aspirations for you and support you in education, training and employment
- Help you to believe in yourself

Priority 6

For children and young people to be safe and stable in their home lives, relationships and education or work

The Pledge

Support you to see the people who are important to you, if it is safe to do so and support you to make new friends

Celebrate your birthday with family if you choose to and other successes and achievements; including your school prom

Make sure that if you have to move it is a planned transition wherever possible

Work hard to give you a choice of the best and safest places for you to live

Help you to be safe and reduce the possibility of being bullied

Respect you and treat you as an individual

Be available when you need us, or someone else you know if not

To keep the same social worker where possible



Priority 7

To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

The Pledge

Teach you independent living skills and provide practical support if you need it

Provide adults in your lives who inspire you



Support you when you live independently and keep in touch regularly

Help to get the most suitable accommodation for you




Appendix E – Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference 2022 – 2023

Overall aim

To improve the life chances of Somerset's children and young people in our care-and those leaving care- through a joint approach to the delivery of services. Somerset Council (SC) and its partner agencies together aim to continuously improve the outcomes of the children and young people we care for to bring them in line with their peers.

Objectives

1. To listen to the voices of children and young people in our care, and those leaving care, either directly from them as individuals or through the Care Councils - Somerset in Care Councils (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC), or indirectly (through national/local inspection and surveys, parents/carers, independent reviewing officers, advocates and others) and to use what we learn to improve services and outcomes
2. To take the lead for the children and young people in our care and leaving care, raising awareness and priorities across all agencies, making sure all agencies' responsibilities toward children looked after are being met
3. To promote the role of all elected members as “corporate parents” and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place by SC to enable all members to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in this area
4. To review the Corporate Parenting Strategy annually to ensure that it is current and effective and to recommend any changes to the SC Executive for decision and to Full Council to be endorsed
5. The Corporate Parenting Board members will offer leadership and, via its work plan for children looked after and care leavers will keep the focus on strategic priorities that include:
 - a. Health care needs, including physical and emotional health and wellbeing
 - b. Safeguarding, including placement stability, quality of care placements and appropriate supported accommodation
 - c. Educational attendance, attainment, and aspirations
 - d. Positive activities, including leisure, volunteering, sporting and social activities, and prevention of offending
 - e. Employment and training (including work experience and employment opportunities provided through SC and partner agencies and contractors), housing and support
 - f. Successful transitions to adult life

- 
7. To ensure that SC and its partners support SiCC and SLCC and deliver against the commitments made in the Pledge to children looked after and the Charter for care leavers
 8. To ensure progress is regularly and actively monitored and reviewed.

How will these objectives be delivered?

The Board will work to an agreed plan, which will be based on the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting to be delivered, as set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025 and aligned to the Children and Young People's Plan 2022-2024, the Sufficiency Statement (refreshed annually), the Corporate Parenting Pledge and the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

Board members will also regularly meet and hear from children looked after and care leavers, including those in foster care, residential care and independent accommodation by attending celebratory events for the achievements of children looked after and other events organised by the Engagement & Participation team and other services. Individual members will feed back on opportunities they have identified for support for employment, apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience.

The Board will:

- Receive regular reports from relevant Officers to provide an insight into life for children looked after in Somerset
- Consider regular reports that set out performance against key agreed outcome indicators to monitor progress over time, and compare Somerset's performance with top quartile authorities and recommend actions for improvement
- Regularly monitor and receive reports in respect of SC and partners' progress against external regulator recommendations
- Establish links with other key groups responsible for representing children looked after (e.g., Foster Carers Consultative Group).

Status

The Board is a leadership and advisory body with no formal decision-making powers but will seek to influence decision makers to drive improvement across the Council and its partners. Consequently, it will make recommendations where necessary to SC Executive to impact and influence SC decisions and policies.

Formal Board meetings will not be open to the public or press because of the sensitive nature of the business and will not be subject to the Access to Information Rules set out in the Council's constitution. When reporting to the Full Council, Executive or elsewhere the expectation is that those reports will be public unless there are good reasons to recommend the exclusion of the public and press to consider confidential information.

All members of the Board shall respect and maintain the confidentiality of the Board's business.

The Corporate Parenting Board will maintain a close working relationship with the Council's Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee to ensure they do not duplicate each other's work.

Accountability

The Board will be accountable to **Full Council**, via an annual report, in recognition of Council's budget setting responsibilities, the role of all elected members as corporate parents, and to enable Council to maintain an overview of the Strategy and the delivery of the Board's Annual Plan.

Reporting

The Board will report on its activities to:

- **Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)**, which brings together all the relevant agencies to agree how to identify and meet the needs of children and young people in Somerset. The SSCP is responsible for coordinating agencies so that together they fulfill their statutory duties relating to safeguarding and targeted and universal services to effectively meet the needs of children, against the priorities of the Children & Young People's Plan 2022- 2024.
- **Somerset in Care Council** via the Voice of the Child Officer who is a full Board member
- **Somerset Leaving Care Council** via the Voice of the Child Officer who is a full Board member
- **Executive**, reporting as and when necessary, as the key decision-making body for Council services including endorsement of the Strategy every 3 years.
- **Scrutiny** Committees, as and when requested, in relation to reviewing the effectiveness of the Board and the Strategies the Board is responsible for.

Voting Arrangements

Formal meetings of the Board will operate by consensus of those present rather than through any formal voting mechanism in recognition of the wide membership and the roles of the Board to advise and challenge.

Membership

The emphasis for Board members is leadership, and so the Board's core appointed elected membership will include any member who, as one way of exercising their role as corporate parent, has the passion and commitment to volunteer as a core Board member. Members will be nominated by their political group leader and notified to the Executive Director Children's Social Care as the Lead Officer. There will be no limit on numbers of Members although the Chair's discretion will ensure the Board operates effectively.

Newly elected members will undertake mandatory corporate parenting training and will also be offered any ad-hoc relevant training and development i.e., Local Government Association training for Corporate Parents.

Core Board Members

- Council Elected Members
- "Voice of the Child" Officer
- Lead Member for Children & Families

- Executive/Director of Children’s Services
- Foster Carer Association
- NHS Somerset ICB executive member
- Representation from Somerset in Care Council (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC)
- Independent Lay person

Co-opted Members

TBC.

Lead Contributors

- Virtual School Head
- Strategic Manager, CSC Quality & Assurance
- Strategic Manager, Children looked After and Leaving Care
- Designated Nurse Children Looked After and Care Leavers
- Strategic Commissioner, Children’s Commissioning
- Senior Business Intelligence Analyst, Performance Planning and Business Intelligence
- Police/One team representatives
- All other Councillors
- Providers of Council or NHS commissioned services.

Co-opted Members

Co-opted members to be invited as and when the agenda requires i.e., housing, specific voluntary groups etc.

Chairing Arrangements

The Chair and Vice Chair will be members on the Board with the Chair appointed by the Leader of the Council when a new council is convened and the vice chair appointed at the first formal meeting of the Board following the Full Council meeting post local government election.

Officer Led

Executive/ Director Children and Families, SC

Frequency of meetings

The Board meets quarterly with subgroup meetings held as required to fulfil the Board’s quarterly reporting and annual plan. Subgroups will report formally to the Board every quarter. Representatives from the Care Councils will attend regularly and a standing agenda space will be held for the voice of the child. The Board and its subgroup meetings may take a range of different formats, including visits to different locations and informal meetings with children and young people, and those who support them, when possible.

Two thematic meetings will be called annually in between quarterly Board business to look at areas of interest or concern in more detail.

Meetings will be held either virtually via Teams or face to face in County Hall or suitable alternative venues.

Corporate Parenting Board Action Log

Will be reviewed at every Board meeting, for updates and progress on the subgroups.

Preparation for the Board

Chair and vice chair to meet with the Lead Officer a minimum of two weeks before each formal meeting to agree the agenda and papers.

Agendas and papers for formal Board meetings will be sent to the members of the Board at least five working days prior to the meeting.

Support to formal meetings of the Board

This will be provided by the Partnership Business Manager – Children’s Quality Assurance, Safeguarding & Care team and Corporate & Children’s Management Support Team.



Glossary of terms

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service	CAMHS is the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. These are local, specialist mental health support teams run by the NHS throughout the UK. These services are free and help young people under 18 who have emotional, behavioural or mental health problems.
	Care Leaver	<p>The leaving care age in England is 18 years old, however some young people do leave care aged 16 or 17. There are different categories of care leavers depending on age, when the care leaver was in care and for how long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible child is a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after • Relevant child is a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained • Former relevant child is a young person over 18 who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'. Councils support this group until aged 21, or longer if they are in education or training • Qualifying child is any young person under 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who stops being looked after or accommodated in a variety of other settings, or being privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes young people who are under a special guardianship order • Former relevant child pursuing education is any former relevant child whose case was closed, for any reason. If they're planning to continue education or training they can ask the council for support. If eligible, any help would last until their 25th birthday • Extension to 25 years old - If you are under 25 year old and previously open to the leaving care team, under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 you are entitled to return for support.
	Care Plan	<p>Every child and young person who is looked after will have a Care Plan. The provision of services and other help for them and their family will be set out in the plan. The Care Plan will say what the council and other agencies will do to meet the child's needs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health • education • identity • family relationships • hobbies <p>and sets out the plan for the child's future. It will describe the child's contact arrangements with family and friends. Where appropriate, it will include how parents or guardians will help to look after them.</p>

CP or CPC	Child Protection or Child Protection Conference	A Child Protection Conference is a meeting, which is arranged by Social Services because there are serious concerns about the care or protection of a child(ren). The Conference shares information about the child(ren) and discusses the concerns with the family and other professionals to see if any action is required to make ensure the child(ren) is safe and well cared for in the future.
CICC	Children in Care Council	The children in care council (CICC) is a way that children and young people in care can share their experiences of the care system, to help their 'corporate parents' get things right and look after them properly. In Somerset they are called SiCC & SLCC.
CLA	Children Looked After	In England and Wales the term 'looked after children' is defined in law under the Children Act 1989. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. Looked after children fall into four main groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are accommodated under voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20); • Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38); • Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (section 44 and 46); • Children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).
CME	Child Missing Education	Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at a school (for example, at home or in alternative provision).
CSC	Children's Social Care	By law, Children's Social Care has to give priority of service to children with specific categories of need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those at risk of serious harm and who may need a protection plan • Those who are, or may need to be, looked after by Children's Social Care and are unable to remain living at home (birth to 18 years including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people) • Private Fostering – such arrangements have to be notified to the local authority (Children's Social Care) • Those aged 16 or over who are leaving the care of Children's Social Care or have previously left care and are eligible for Leaving Care services • Where Children's Social Care involvement is required by the courts In Somerset we also provide a number of specialist services, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recruitment, assessment and supervision of foster carers • Placing and supporting children with foster carers • The recruitment, assessment and support of people who want to adopt • Matching and placing children with adopters • The provision of residential care for children who are no longer able to live at home and where that is the appropriate option • Supervising children who are privately fostered • Young carers
CYPP	Children & Young People's Plan	The children and young people plan (CYPP) explains how services will work together to support and help young people who live or go to school in Somerset. We collaborate on the CYPP with children, young people, parents and carers and the professionals and volunteers who support them.

DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The body in England and Wales which looks after providing criminal records checks for employers or employees.
EHCP	Education, Health & Care Plan	Schools in England must provide support to children with special educational needs (SEN) as part of their standard offer to children. Where a child requires additional support that goes beyond what a school, college, or nursery can typically deliver from their own budgets or staffing then they may need an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
EHE	Elective Home Educated	A choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time.
ETE	Education Training Employment	The status given to a young person who has been supported into Education, training and/or employment.
ICB	Integrated Care Board	The ICB commissions most of the hospital and community NHS services in the local areas for which they are responsible.
IHA	Initial Health Assessment	A statutory health assessment that is required to be completed within 28 days of a child coming into care. It is completed by a paediatrician or a designated CLA nurse.
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer	Person who chairs reviews for children living in children's homes or foster care.
IV	Independent Visitor	Adult volunteers who provide independent, one-to-one befriending support to children in care. Their role is to "visit, advise and befriend" the young person with whom they are matched. In Somerset, this service is provided by Route One Advocacy.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training	Young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training.
P2i	Pathway to Independence	Offers housing and advice for young people aged 16-24 across Somerset. It is a jointly commissioned initiative by Somerset Council, District Councils working with a consortium of provider organisations.
	Pathways Plan	<p>From 16 years, a child should be supported to leave care using a Pathway Plan. The plan shows how the young person will be helped to prepare for the future and includes what's happening with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Finance • Health and wellbeing • Emotional Issues and behaviour • Education, training, employment, work experience and volunteering • Relationships with family, friends and support networks • Identity, such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation • Hobbies, sport, leisure, social life • Parenthood (for those about to become a parent) • Keeping safe • Practical skills and other skills for living independently

PEP	Personal Education Plan	All looked-after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. The PEP (pre-school, to age 18) should be initiated as part of the care plan.
PP	Pupil Premium	Pupil premium is funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Evidence shows that disadvantaged children generally face additional challenges in reaching their potential at school and often do not perform as well as other pupils.
QA	Quality Assurance	Work that is carried out in children's services that supports learning and service improvement includes audits and practice reviews.
RHA	Review Health Assessment	A statutory assessment for all children looked after and supports and informs the child's care plan, undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 6 months for children under 5 years old • Annually for children and young people aged 5-18
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	The strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) is a short behavioural screening questionnaire for children aged 3 to 16. The questionnaire is used to assess children's mental health, and can be completed by children and young people themselves, by their parents or by their teachers. It can be used for various purposes, including clinical assessment, evaluation of outcomes, research and screening.
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities	A child or young person aged from 0 to 25 years old is said to have special educational needs or a disability if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a learning difficulty or disability which makes it much harder for them to learn than the majority of other pupils of the same age • require special educational provision to be made for them because they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools
SENDIAS	Special Education Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support	Somerset SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support) can give children, young people and their parent carers information, advice and support about SEND. This can include information on Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and Plans. The service is free, confidential and impartial.
SiCC and SLCC	Somerset In Care and Somerset Leaving Care Councils	Somerset's in care councils where children and young people in care can share their experiences of the care system, to help their 'corporate parents' get things right and look after them properly.
Stat Neighbours	Statistical Neighbours	Statistical neighbours provide a method for benchmarking progress. For each local authority (LA), these models designate a number of other LAs deemed to have similar characteristics. These designated LAs are known as statistical neighbours.
SSCP	Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership	The partnership responsible for safeguarding children in Somerset made up by three organisations –Somerset Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group –have joint and equal responsibility to safeguard children and young people.

UASC	UnAccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	Children who are outside their country of origin to seek asylum in the United Kingdom, are separated from parents and relatives, and are not in the care of someone who is responsible for doing so. Before the age of 18, separated children are the responsibility of the local authority who assesses the child's needs and provides accommodation, education and health care.
VS	Virtual School	The Virtual School is a statutory service which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of children in care. The Virtual School Headteacher must be able to demonstrate how the pupil premium and other funding is raising the achievement of looked-after children.
CYP	Children and Young People	An abbreviation often found in reporting in children's services.

