

Dorset's Corporate  
Parenting Strategy  
2020 – 2023

Making Dorset  
the best place  
to grow-up



Dorset  
Council

# Corporate Parenting Ambitions & Priorities

- 1** Increase opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account.
- 2** Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improved access to health information and services.
- 3** Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their education, training and employment.
- 4** Ensure safe and stable accommodation within the family home or close relatives and friends. If not possible, children are moved to a permanent placement without delay.
- 5** For our children to have a good and enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.
- 6** Effective governance and planning arrangements are in place to mean the Corporate Parent can be the best they can be.

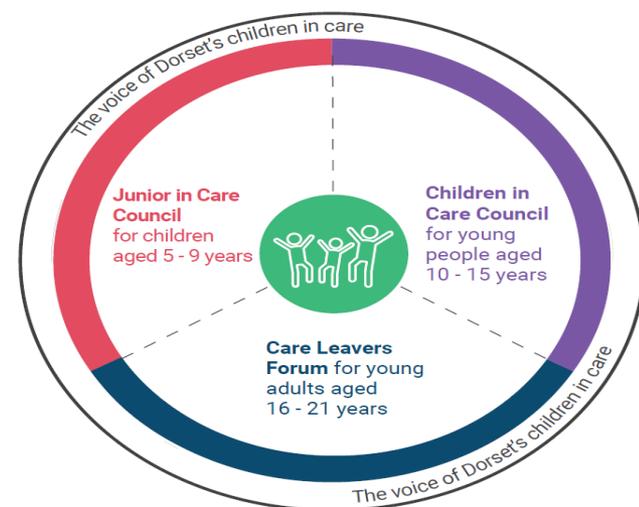
# 1 Increase opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account.

## Positives

1. Participation services now moving in house
2. Workshops are being co-produced and delivered with our young people in the next Corporate Parenting board
3. Child in Care Challenge Cards have been refined and this will be developed as part of the in-house services with our young people.
4. Updating Annual CIC survey findings coming to next Corporate Parenting Board. This will be co-produced with young people.
5. Young people are contributing to our recruitment process - examples can be seen in our Harbour recruitment of staff.

## Area of Focus

1. The move from Participation people to in house services has begun and planning continues to ensure good transitions.
2. The number of children and young people involved in the Children in Care survey and panels requires improvement.



## 2 Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improved access to health information and services.

### **Positives**

1. Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) are well sighted each month on the Strengths and Difficulties Questioner (SDQ) data.
2. Adhoc report on Emotional Health and Wellbeing presented to Board Jan 2021.
3. Strengthening Services Plan in place (SDQ) and progress is starting to be seen.
4. Initial Health Assessment (IHA) completed in 20 days is seeing steady improvement

### **Areas of focus**

1. SDQ Training workshops have been delivered and recorded, policy and practice guidance has been signed off and a workflow guide completed. Refining our data remains a focus.
2. Initial Health Assessment - whilst rates of completion are improving, this remains a focus
3. Dental checks for our Children in Care and Care Leavers - there has been a decline in accessing dental checks nationally during the pandemic.

### 3 Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their education, training and employment.

#### Positives

1. There is now a clear focus on exclusions in the Virtual School including an expectation that there will be follow-up immediately after a fixed term exclusion, and all children who have had exclusions are a focus in the monthly pupil progress meeting.
2. The drop in attendance during lockdown is to be expected. The figures on return following full opening are promising: 225 children have 100% attendance since full school re-opening. 124 have rising attendance. 138 have sustained 95%+ attendance since September.
3. Spring term PEP completion has not yet closed so will be reported on next month.

#### Areas of focus

1. Increased uncertainty from young people around future job prospects. (Dorset Young Researchers)
2. Focus on reducing the number of Care Leavers that are NEET and have created a 'team within the team' to focus on supporting Care Leavers around their employment, education and training.
3. Focus on Care Leavers who are NEET but are available for education, employment and training.

- 4 Ensure safe and stable accommodation within the family home or close relatives and friends. If not possible, children are moved to a permanent placement without delay.

### **Positives**

1. Established improved management oversight processes
2. Joint Viability Assessments completed between the children's social worker and a fostering social worker.
3. Well established Fortnightly Permanency Panel established October 2020 ensuring timely permanence planning. (improvement in children achieving permanence)
4. Permanence training for social workers completed
5. Enhanced Tracking by Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers QARO
6. Multi agency Transitions Operational group set up to ensure smooth transitions of our children and young people.
7. Harbour Project and edge of care support developing

### **Areas of focus**

1. Better use of Family Group Conferences
2. Fostering Strengthening Services underway
3. Improve quality of permanence plans and timeliness of achieving permanence:
  - Best Practice Permanence Planning Guide completed and shared with staff
  - Refined Long Term Fostering Process completed and shared with staff
  - 12 Week Reunification Process and Guidance completed and shared with staff
  - Special guardianship pathway refined and Policy being updated
  - Refined Adoption and Early Permanence pathways completed in draft

## 5 For our children to have a good and enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.

### Positives

1. Independent Advocacy services for our Children In Care age 8 years and older (opt out)
2. Children in Care Awards well established
3. Personal assistant co allocated from 16 Birthday
4. Multi agency operation and Strategic Transition working group underway
5. Low placement instability in comparison to national and statistical neighbours.

### Areas of focus

1. Strengthening the in-house fostering offer to ensure that children are local and to build local links and access to local services.
2. Too many of our children are placed out of area and we remain focused on bring our children back to Dorset where appropriate. We are reviewing these children via our permanence panel
3. Transition working group in place and processes are being refined and embedded. We are developing consistency across Children Services however some of our children are still having their transitions planned at late stages of their journey in our care.
4. Life story development work with staff underway, complimenting external training already offered.

- 6** Effective governance and planning arrangements are in place to mean the Corporate Parent can be the best they can be.

### **Positives**

1. Corporate Parenting Strategy Launch for 2020 - 2023 linked with other existing policies.
2. Corporate Parenting Strategy update at formal meetings and an Annual Report will be provided.
3. CPB Forward Planner in place until 2022.
4. Data pack comparing our performance against statistical neighbours and national trends for formal meeting

### **Areas of focus**

1. Corporate Parenting Training to form part of new starters induction to DC.
2. Mandatory training for all Corporate Parenting Board members being developed
3. Informal sessions to be co-developed and delivered with our young people