



## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY

August 2016 - March 2020



Working in partnership for  
children, young people & families

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Bournemouth's Children's Trust Looked After Children Strategy.

The purpose of Children's Trusts is to bring together all partners with a role in improving outcomes for children to agree a common strategy on how they will cooperate to improve children's wellbeing and to help embed partnership in partners' routine delivery of their own functions.

Bournemouth Children's Trust is committed to delivering effective services that ensure children and young people are safe and their welfare is secured through effective commissioning processes.

We are proud of our achievements in recent years but recognise there remain a number of key challenges and areas for improvement. We have built strong and effective partnerships and laid down the foundations to secure improvements by working together. We remain committed to improving the outcomes for children, young people and their families and want to help them to build a better life for themselves.

Bournemouth's Plan for Children Young People and their Families sets out our shared ambition and our commitment to improving outcomes for all children and young people in Bournemouth, and those in our care who live outside the area.

For our Looked After Children we strive to be excellent Corporate Parents, working with them to raise their aspirations to achieve their potential. We do this by ensuring our Looked After Children have all the opportunities we would give our own children through good access to high quality education, health and social care services. We set out how we are going to achieve this in our Ambitions Plan.

This is our Looked After Children Strategy that focuses on how we are going to work across the partnership to meet the needs of looked after children. Our shared belief is that in most circumstances children and young people are best looked after within their own families. The decision to look after any child or young person is one that we take very seriously, and one taken only after all appropriate options for children to be cared for within their own families has been exhausted.

(When the words 'we' and 'our' are used in this strategy it refers to Children's Trust Partners).



**Councillor Nicola Greene**  
Cabinet member for Education  
and Children's Services



**Jane Portman**  
Executive Director - Adults & Children  
Deputy Chief Executive

## **Our Mission, Vision and Principles**

### **Our Mission**

In all areas of our strategy we remain committed the mission and vision of the Children's Trust:

'To secure outstanding quality services to children, young people and their families so that they have the best possible start in life.'

### **Our Vision**

That all children and young people in Bournemouth should:

- ❖ feel they are cared for and that they are safe and secure.
- ❖ are healthy, happy and free from poverty.
- ❖ receive a good education that allows them to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions.
- ❖ are well prepared for adulthood and the world of work, making a positive contribution as active members of their communities

Hearing and listening to the voices of children, young people and their families is essential in us moving forward with our partners to realise our ambitions.

For the children in and who have left our care our ambition is for them to have the best possible life experience, and to be safe, happy, healthy, to have economic security, to have ambitions, to look forward to a positive future and to reach their full potential in their work and personal lives.

### **Corporate Parents**

The Council's role as corporate parent to Looked After Children and Care Leavers is one of its most important functions.

Our Corporate Parenting Panel acts as the strategic leadership forum to ensure that Council services are conscious of the wishes and needs of Looked After Children and care leavers, and the particular risks and challenges they face and take these into account when providing and planning services. Specifically, through listening and engaging with Looked After Children the panel will

- ❖ take a strategic overview of key themes affecting the lives of Looked After Children and care leavers

- ❖ raise the profile of the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers through a range of actions that are reflected in key plans, policies and strategies
- ❖ improve the life chances of Looked After Children in line with their peers, and to encourage, protect and support them in order that they grow up to contribute and participate as healthy citizens within their community
- ❖ ensure that services provided to Looked After Children and Care Leavers are of a high standard in order that they are empowered to build their adult lives and be constructive and productive members of society.

## The National Context

The Bournemouth Looked After Children strategy sits within a national and local context, is determined and driven by legislation and guidance, and aligns with other strategies and plans of our partner agencies, and local Boards. We all share a common aim of trying to improve the lives of the people of Bournemouth.

The legislation and policies which primarily impact on Looked After Children and Looked After Children services that have influenced the development of the plan strategy are as follows -

- ❖ Children Act (1989)
- ❖ Children's social care reform: a vision for change (2016)
- ❖ Putting children first: delivering our vision for excellent children's social care (2016)
- ❖ Residential Care in England: Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of children's residential care (2016)
- ❖ Raising Participation Age (2013)
- ❖ Future of Apprenticeships in England (2013)
- ❖ Children and Families Act (2014)
- ❖ Care Act (2014)
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)
- ❖ Care Leavers Strategy (2013)
- ❖ Promoting the education of Looked After Children - Statutory guidance for local authorities (2014)
- ❖ The Children and Families Act (2014) amends section 22 of the Children Act (1989) to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its Looked After Children is properly discharged. That officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH).
- ❖ Keep on Caring - Supporting Young People from Care to Independence (2016)

- ❖ Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (2013)
- ❖ Rights of the Child - European Commission -encouraging the right to a family life
- ❖ In Care, Out of Trouble (2016) report by Lord Laming on behalf of the Prison Reform Trust
- ❖ A Pan Dorset Protocol to Reduce Criminalisation of Children and Young People in Care

### National Profile of Looked After Children

- ❖ In England 69,450 children were looked after by Local Authorities at the end of March 2015. The numbers of Looked After Children have steadily increased since 2011, equating to an overall increase of 6%.
- ❖ The majority (61%) of Looked After Children are cared for by the state due to abuse or neglect.
- ❖ Over a third of Looked After Children are aged between 10 and 15 years old.
- ❖ The age profile of Looked After Children has been changing over recent years with the 10+ age group growing in numbers. In the last 2 years
  - the number of looked after 1-4 year olds has fallen reflecting higher numbers leaving care (8,500 per year) and fewer starting to be looked after (6,000 per year)
  - the number of looked after 10 + year olds has risen from 12,120 to 13,870.
- ❖ The ethnic breakdown of Looked After Children has stayed much the same since 2011.
  - 73% of all Looked After Children are from white British backgrounds, in line with the population of all children
  - Asian ethnicity is slightly underrepresented
  - mixed ethnicity is slightly overrepresented
- ❖ Since 2011 there has been an increase in the number of Looked After Children under care orders or voluntary agreements, and a reduction in Looked After Children with a placement order.
- ❖ Unaccompanied asylum seeking children accounted for 4% of the Looked After Children population in 2015

### Placements of Looked After Children in 2015

- ❖ 75% are placed with foster carers
- ❖ the number of children placed for adoption fell for the first time since 2011 by 15%, having steadily risen over preceding years.
  - the decrease has been linked to two relevant court judgements re B and re B-S <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/judgments/>

### Children who ceased to be looked after in 2015

- ❖ since 2011 the numbers of discharges from care have risen by 15%. In 2015 the number was 31,100
- ❖ the numbers of discharges from care continued to rise due to adoption, Special Guardianship Orders being granted, residence orders, or child arrangement orders
- ❖ the reasons behind children ceasing to be looked after are:
  - 10,620 returned home to live with parents or relatives
  - 8,100 returned home to parents or others with parental responsibility as part of the care planning process
  - 1710 not as part of the care planning process
  - the rest returned home to live with parents, relatives or other persons without parental responsibility
- ❖ 15,410 had been looked after under a voluntary agreement

## The Local Context

### Population

#### Demographic Overview

Bournemouth has a resident population of 191,400 (Mid-2014 Estimate).

Nearly 16% of the resident population is aged under 16 (30,500) and a further 3% (5,800) are aged 16 to 18.

The percentage of under-16s is lower than England and Wales (19%), the proportion of 16-18 year olds is also smaller than England and Wales (4%). It should be noted that these figures may include a small number of non-dependent children, particularly those attending Bournemouth's two universities.

At the time of the 2011 Census there were 32,006 dependent children in Bournemouth (17% of the total population). This compares with 18% in Dorset, 20% in Poole and 22% in England and Wales.

According to the short-term sub-national population projections produced by ONS (2012 based) the number of 0-15 year olds is expected to increase by just over 16% between 2012 and 2022. In contrast to this, the increase in England over the same period is just over 9%.

Since 2007 the overall number of births has exceeded the number of deaths, reversing the previous long term trend.

### Bournemouth Story

- ❖ The 0-17 children population of Bournemouth is estimated to increase by 12% by 2021
- ❖ Looked After Children numbers in Bournemouth reached a peak in the year ending 2013-14 at approximately 275. Since the beginning of 2016-2017 Looked After Children numbers have fallen.

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	August 2016
205	250	265	275	260	248

### Reasons for Placement Requests

- ❖ The reasons most indicated for placement requests are neglect, emotional harm, parent's ability to protect and current placement breakdown.

### Leaving Care

- ❖ The proportion of children and young people leaving care to return home is high in Bournemouth. Here we see a third more children and young people leaving care and returning home than the national average.

In Bournemouth we have faced a significant challenge with a rising trend of Looked After Children numbers, which we are now reversing. We continue to recognise that it is vital that we focus efforts on reducing the existing pressure to enable us to care well for those children and young people who absolutely need to be in care, and to assist children and young people who need to be in care to have stable life-enhancing placements which enable them to develop their full potential.

Our teams are looking at ways of rehabilitating young people who are in care, and in the Looked After Children and fostering teams we are considering exit planning, for all section 20 children and young people, either by reunification with their families or onto an SGO. The numbers are now starting to decrease slowly in a safe and healthy way. The target is set for the end of March 2016 to 250 and over the next two years our aim is for the number of Looked After Children in Bournemouth to be no greater than the national average per 10,000 population.

There will be some seasonal variation, however with the clear processes we will have in place we should easily be able to meet these targets.

Our evidence suggests that to safely reduce the number of Looked After Children in Bournemouth we need to focus on four aspects of our service: firstly, we need to expand our capacity for the early identification of vulnerable families and our capacity to intervene early to support children and families in need and at risk. This will reduce admissions of children into care. Secondly, we need to strengthen our



focus on permanency, increase the number of children leaving care and reduce the amount of time children spend in the care system. This means ensuring those who can return home do so as soon as it is safe, and that families are supported to build the capacity to keep children safe, reducing the risk of returning to care. Thirdly we have to rigorously and thoroughly case manage every child and young person in the care system to ensure that their needs are met, and early opportunities are taken to help them return to their families. Fourthly for those children who cannot return home, it means finding a suitable permanent home without unnecessary delay.

To ensure that only children at significant risk of harm become looked after our multi agency legal planning panel regularly meets to consider individual cases and provide robust professional challenge to accommodation decisions. The panel also ensures that imaginative, comprehensive and effective packages of support are considered when children and young people are at risk of accommodation.

Once a child is in care, to reduce the period of time children spend in our care, we start seeking earlier opportunities for children to return home - where it is safe to do so. We have introduced Best Care Panel to look at each individual child in care, assessing and challenging options around reunification, Special Guardianship Order (SGO), adoption and longer term permanency plans.

### **Raising aspirations**

Significant improvement plans are underway, such as extension to the Virtual School, restructure of the Care Leavers service and multi-agency arrangements. The permanent Post-16 Lead for the Virtual School started on 22 February 2016, whilst the Post-16 LAC Education Caseworker started on 12 April 2016. There has been a significant increase in the number of young people attending higher education since 14/15.

The percentage of Bournemouth Children Looked After for 12 + months subject to a conviction, Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution fell during 2015. Performance exceeds national and statistical neighbour comparators.

## **Becoming a Looked After Child in Bournemouth**

The term looked after child has a specific legal meaning based on the Children Act (1989). A child will be classified as a looked after child if they have

- ❖ been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in section 20 and 21 of the Act
- ❖ placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part iv of the Act.

There are 3 main routes by which children and young people come into care

- ❖ Care orders made by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act (1989).

- ❖ Voluntary accommodation arrangements under section 20 of the Children Act (1989) where parents / carers seek a care placement for their child/ young person.
- ❖ Police protection orders or involvement with the youth justice system; since 2013 all young people who are remanded into custody within the youth justice system.

## The Strategy

Our strategy sets out how we will deliver good and effective corporate parenting for children and young people in our care and is built on the commitment across the partner agencies in Bournemouth to ensure that the life chances of every child and young person in our care are maximised, through tackling disadvantage to reach their full potential.

This strategy will underpin improvements in outcomes for children and young people and enable budgetary pressures around the expenditure of Looked After Children to be managed successfully.

This strategy aligns with the Plan for Children, Young People and their Families sharing the 3 main priority areas are expressed through ambitions as set out below.

### Improving prospects - reaching potential

All children have the best possible start in life

Children, young people and families are resilient when faced with challenges

All children and young people receive a good education that allows them to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions

All young people are well prepared for adulthood and the world of work, making a positive contribution as active members of their communities

### Keeping safe and well -enjoying good physical and mental health, and living a healthy lifestyle

Children grow up healthy and happy, choosing positive lifestyles

Children are safe from harm, neglect and exploitation

Children in Bournemouth enjoy good mental health and emotional wellbeing

### Tackling inequalities - improving life chances

Looked After Children and Care Leavers receive high quality support to enable them to achieve better outcomes

All children are healthy and free from poverty

Children and young people enjoy living arrangements that are stable and permanent

All children feel they are cared for and that they are safe and secure

## Improving prospects - reaching potential

### All children have the best possible start in life

#### What do we know?

There are unique advantages for children experiencing family life in their own birth family, and in most cases children's needs are best met by being cared for within their immediate or extended families.

However, there will always be some children and young people for whom being in local authority care offers the best and safest arrangements for their wellbeing and development.

Children enter the care system having had significant trauma in their lives. For such children, removal from their family is a major additional trauma and they sometimes find it both difficult to attach to new carers, and may experience difficulty maintaining a significant relationship with their birth families.

This can lead to moves of placement, changes of school and a breakdown in their identity. For their families, the loss of a child often further compounds their sense of failure, isolation and deprivation.

#### What are we going to do about it?

**Outcome - Only those children who need to be admitted to care are admitted to care, when they need to be.**

Develop more targeted early intervention and prevention services to keep families together across agencies, keeping children safely supported at home with their parents.

- ❖ focus on timely and proportionate interventions
- ❖ ensure there are tight gate-keeping processes and deliver rapid rehabilitation plans to enable children to return home quickly when they do become looked after - unless the care need is for alternative permanence

Effectively assess the quality of care children are experiencing and where parenting is not good enough assessing parental capacity and motivation to change.

Keep assessments child focused, using risk assessments, parenting assessments, and our core assessment to make effective decisions at an early stage of a child's life.

Operate in a way that keeps older children out of care, and ensure that substitute family care is of the best quality.

Continue to commission and develop the market for good and excellent local provision within 20 miles Bournemouth.

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**All children and young people receive a good education that allows them to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions**

**What do we know?**

It has been recognised for some time that the national picture is of children and young people who are looked after achieving poor outcomes in their education.

Not all Looked After Children will achieve 5 A-C GCSEs when they are 16 years old.

**What are we going to do about it?**

**Outcome - all children in Bournemouth have a high quality education**

Upon receipt of a C9003, all Looked After Children will be allocated a LAC Education Caseworker who will initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 10 working days. They will work alongside them through the termly PEPs, at times of transition, when challenges appear and guide them to make sound choices.

The Virtual School will work with education providers and other agencies to ensure children enjoy attending school, thereby improving attendance and reduce any fixed-term or permanent exclusions.

The Virtual School will also maintain an overview of the Pupil Premium (Plus) monies available to ensure educational support for looked after children.

Looked After Children will receive extended support from the Virtual School during exam periods.

Looked After Children will remain on the Virtual School cohort and be supported beyond the age of 16 to achieve qualifications.

**All young people are well prepared for adulthood and the world of work, making a positive contribution as active members of their community**

**What do we know?**

Most children make successful transitions into adulthood in Bournemouth. However young people from vulnerable groups between the ages of 16 and 18 tell us that they need more emotional support, more help to get into and stay in education, and more housing options. Young People also tell us that they need more advice and information on community activities and employment options.

**What are we going to do about it?**

**Outcome - young adults are ready for life and work**

- ❖ To improve the experience of Bournemouth's young people transitioning into adulthood we will: -
- ❖ Raise our aspirations for what our Looked After Children can achieve, helping them to access new opportunities and experiences that inspire them to set ambitious goals for themselves.
- ❖ To listen and hear the voices of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers through our Click and Respect groups to influence the development of services into the future.
- ❖ Increase participation of our Looked After Children e.g. *Opening Doors* and improve the monitoring, tracking and targeted support of Post-16 LAC/Care Leavers.
- ❖ All 16-25 year olds in education are now tracked and offered support accordingly.
- ❖ Ensure that all Post-16 LAC and Care Leavers have at least two Next Steps reviews that feed into the Pathway planning process at the age of 18, to ensure a smooth transition into adulthood.
- ❖ Ensure that Pathway Plans focus on creating opportunities for sustainable independence for living, education and employment.
- ❖ To expand the offer of apprenticeships at the Council.
- ❖ To create an in-house Traineeship within the Council.
- ❖ Work closely with colleagues in housing to achieve their strategic aims in supporting young people in housing.

- ❖ Work with housing colleagues and other providers to improve housing choices.

## Keeping safe and well - being healthy, safe and active

### Children grow up health and happy, choosing positive lifestyles What do we know?

Children and young people in care have many of the same issues as their peers e.g. missing appointments with Doctors, opticians, dentists, language and speech specialists, sexual health professionals, or for immunisations, leaving health issues unresolved; however, the extent of these is often greater because of their backgrounds and past experiences which make them particularly vulnerable to poorer health outcomes. Disrupted childhoods and inconsistent and broken attachments with parents and families are likely to result in the experience of emotional health problems, and difficult in making new attachments.

Delays in identifying and meeting needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.

### What are we going to do about it?

#### Outcome - children and young people have healthy lifestyles

NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group have increased their commissioning investment for the Looked after Children's Health Team, creating a workforce profile that can meet both the physical and emotional and mental health needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The additional resource in nursing posts will include 2 full-time Mental Health Nurses, to take the lead in meeting the emotional and mental health needs. They will work alongside the existing specialist clinical psychology Looked after Children's CAMHS teams and CMHT team for Care leavers.

The NHS Dorset CCG will:

- Support our co-located Looked after Children's and Care Leavers health team, in delivering creative emotional and mental health initiatives, following identification of need by their mental health nurses. Ensure the step up and step down pathway to CAMHS and CMHT for Care Leavers is available and understood by our young people and their professionals working with them, especially during transition.

Inform young people that they will receive a Health Passport from the Health Team, containing their childhood health chronology and

immunisation history, which is completed with them. The young person will take ownership of their passport at their final Review Health Assessment prior to the young person turning 18.

Bournemouth Children's Social Care will -

Work with NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group and their health providers to maintain the co-location working arrangements of the Specialist LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN Health Team (Dorset Health Care) to support enhanced partnership working in meeting the health needs for Looked After Children and young people.

Ensure health outcomes and trends are sought to inform the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to inform future planning of services for Looked after Children.

Support the Nursing and Medical Teams to act as health advisors to both Social Workers and the wider multidisciplinary team supporting children in care. Ensure notification of Looked After Children status and any changes to status or placement is informed to health to enable access to health provision where ever the child or young person is placed, including the transition period from 15 years into adulthood as care leavers.

Commence transition work earlier (15yrs) in consultation with health to ensure an informed and smooth transition to adult health provision if required so that young people are part of the decision making process and are clear about expectations.

Enable enhanced partnership working to ensure initial and review health assessments are completed within the statutory time frame. Meet the health needs of Looked After Children.

Ensure the statutory completed health assessments are used to inform the child's and young person's overall care plan and reviewed in line with their LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN Reviews by the Independent Reviewing Officers, so that young people take ownership of their health needs and be proud of their developing emotional resilience, to lead and maintain healthy choices.

Support the Health Team If the young person initially refuses their health assessment, to work creatively in engaging the young person, to ensure health needs are identified and met.

Inform young people that they will receive a Health Passport from the Health Team, containing their health chronology and immunisation history which is completed with them from their medical and nursing health information. The young person will take ownership of their passport at their final Review Health Assessment prior to the young person turning 18.

### Tackling Inequalities

- ❖ Looked After Children and Care Leavers receive high quality support to enable them to achieve better outcomes.

#### What do we know?

We know that Looked After Children and Care Leavers will have faced many challenges in their lives and are likely to need much more support than other young people as they make their transition to adulthood, and are making that transition at a much younger age than their peers.

#### What are we going to do about it?

**Outcome - Children who have been in care go on to have fulfilling lives where they achieve their potential**

For Bournemouth looked after children:

- ❖ Implement our Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategies which incorporate the priorities of the Corporate



To address this more targeted interventions need to be in place to enable Looked After Children to lead fulfilling lives after leaving care.

- Parenting Panel, improving education, training and placement outcomes both in and out of borough.
- ❖ Ensure that services which are commission for Looked After Children and Care Leavers are of high quality and good value and are sufficient for needs.
- ❖ Act upon the relevant strategic intentions of the *Commissioning and Sufficiency Plan* for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, specifically around the provision of accommodation closer to home and good care planning.
- ❖ Continue to reduce the current number of Looked After Children placed greater than 20 miles from their biological parents' address and improve the availability of suitable local provision.
- ❖ Implement and review the annual Virtual School Improvement and Post-16 Looked After Children plans.
- ❖ Implement the Care Leaver's Action Plan. (neither Tracey Tomlin or Suzie Levett have heard of this)

We will also give children the stability and permanence they need as quickly as possible, and develop better support for Care Leavers such as developing a Staying Close programme for those leaving residential care.

## Children and young people enjoy living arrangements that are stable and permanent

### What do we know?

Good quality local placement provision is most likely to achieve positive outcomes and long term stable placements for children, and we know that this is something we need to ensure more of in Bournemouth, and enable young people ultimately to return to their own families and communities.

### What are we going to do about it?

**Outcome - Children and young people live in homes or suitable accommodation with people who care about them.**

We will work with partner agencies to align commissioning arrangements and processes to have sufficient and appropriate arrangements to meet the care and accommodation needs of the

Where it is not in their best interest, for safeguarding reasons, we will endeavour to secure stable and permanent substitute family care wherever possible.

children and young people in the Borough and within a radius of 20 miles.

- ❖ promoting permanency through adoption and special guardianship
- ❖ continuing the promotion of long term placements with Connected Carers
- ❖ Continuing to improve the number and choice of high quality in-house placements
- ❖ effectively managing the use of external residential and Independent Fostering Agency placements
- ❖ commissioning consistently high quality services.

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## All children feel they are cared for and that they are safe and secure

### What do we know?

The balance between ensuring that children are safeguarded with their needs met by their families, and the need to intervene effectively when children are in need of protection is at the heart of children's safeguarding.

The impact of neglect and abuse on children is damaging and far reaching. In Bournemouth the number of children in need, children on Protection Plans, referrals to Social Care and numbers of Looked After Children continue to increase.

We are committed to identifying and responding effectively to neglect at the earliest stages so that the most vulnerable children in our society do not remain too long in families where they are at risk.

### What are we going to do about it?

#### Outcome - children are safe from neglect and abuse

In Bournemouth we will:

- ❖ Seek to improve our understanding of the extent of neglect locally and develop shared strategies to work with neglectful families
  - ❖ Develop our early help offer to support families that are struggling
  - ❖ Strengthen social care interventions to prevent escalation resulting in children becoming looked after
  - ❖ Implement the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategies.
  - ❖ Act upon the strategic intentions of the Commissioning and Sufficiency Plan for Looked After Children and care leavers.
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# Ensuring delivery of our plan

## Governance

Bournemouth's Children's Trust consists of two parts:

- ❖ The Children's Trust Board - the key strategic group, with responsibility for developing the vision and direction for the Trust, including the plan for Children, Young People and their families.
- ❖ The Programme Group - who have responsibility for managing the day to day functions of the Children's Trust and are the 'delivery arm' of the Children's Trust at a local level.

The Children's Trust in Bournemouth represents a wide range of partner agencies who work with children, young people and their families.

This plan will be monitored by the Board and the Programme Group.

The delivery of the Looked After Children Strategy will be subject to the Scrutiny of Bournemouth's Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

This strategy will be implemented and monitored through Bournemouth's Corporate Parenting Panel, Legal Gateway Panel and Best Care Panel.

The Looked After Children Strategy aligns with the plans and work programmes of the Children's Trust Board, the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and the Bournemouth and Poole Health and Wellbeing Board.

This strategy seeks to complement, not replicate, the activity undertaken by others to improve outcomes for looked after children.

## Measuring our success

How we will know our strategy is helping looked after children.

In order to find out how well our strategy is working we will do the following:

- ❖ We will seek the views of looked after children
- ❖ We will seek the views of the parents and carers of looked after children
- ❖ We will monitor and challenge our own progress
- ❖ We will monitor the trends in our Looked After Children population
- ❖ We will monitor the outcomes of our Looked After Children to the age of 25
- ❖ We will work with outside bodies and review our services

Success should be directly measured against the outcomes experienced by looked after children.

We believe that if we get this right we will have achieved success and this is how it will look -

- ❖ only children of significant risk are being looked after
- ❖ all Looked After Children are receiving good and effective services that meet their needs
- ❖ children return to parental care when it is safe for them to do so
- ❖ having a good range of high quality external services commissioned and available
- ❖ having effective interventions for adolescents in place that have risk identification and relationships at its heart in order to build teenage resilience
- ❖ successfully helping our Looked After Children population to achieve good outcomes
- ❖ having good support in place for family and friend carers
- ❖ effectively delivering our statutory duties

Our key performance indicators will be:

- ✓ An increase in the numbers of Looked After Children that achieve good outcomes
- ✓ For the number of Looked After Children in Bournemouth to be no greater than the national average per 10,000 population
- ✓ A growth in our in house placements and a reduction of Independent Fostering Agency placements
- ✓ An increase in the number of children diverted from care through the provision of family support packages
- ✓ An increase in the numbers of children and young people reunified back to family safely

- ✓ A reduction in the numbers of Looked After Children that are placed more than 20 miles away from their homes
- ✓ Improvements in the quality and timeliness of assessments, plans and reviews
- ✓ A Kinship Service in place that includes a support service for family / friend carers, SGO and reunification
- ✓ Improved education, training and placement outcomes for looked after children, both in and out of borough
- ✓ Protocols in place with partners for the provision of services to be offered to support young people moving to independence or returning home.
- ✓ Increased multi agency input to edge of care services.

## Key achievements from 2015/16

1. As a result of work undertaken on the Ofsted Action Plan and the work following the recent Peer Review of the Children's Social Care Service, we have been able to move forward with a more focused service Ambitions Plan. The external PEER review highlighted strengths within the service including aspirations of Care Leavers being met, children in care services are good, quality and consistency of supervision and management oversight is good, workforce stability improving and elected members are knowledgeable and engaged. The Service has also achieved a refurbishment and occupation of the second floor of Milton House, creating 2 new training flats for looked after young people, to extend the number of young people able to have their first experience of independent living.
2. Ofsted Inspection of residential children's home as 'outstanding'.
3. Ensuring that costs and budget implications form part of every decision made regarding the care of children and young people, has helped to contain budget pressures.
4. Implementation of the Best Care Strategy, which has improved care planning for children on the edge of care, and reduced numbers.
5. Numbers of children achieving permanence through Adoption remains consistently high in comparison to National trends and statistical neighbours.
6. Decrease of 7.2% in LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN numbers during 2015/16 which is in contrast to the trend nationally which is rising.
7. The 2015/16 year is the first year in which the number of in house fostering placements have exceeded those of Independent Fostering Agencies.

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