

Children's Champion

Annual Report 2018-2019

Tim Baker MHK

Children's Champion Annual Report

December 2019

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Children's Champion Annual Report

December 2019

1. Background Introduction

I was appointed Children's Champion by the Chief Minister in May 2018. This followed a redefinition of the role and a short period in which there was no Children's Champion due to the resignation of the previous appointee Daphne Caine MHK.

The role of Children's Champion was originally introduced in response to issues identified, and recommendations made, by the Commission of Inquiry into the Care of Young People in May 2006, which was chaired by Mark Everall QC ("the Everall Inquiry").

This Independent Statutory Inquiry followed the deaths in 2004 of Samantha Barton and George Green, two young people who were then in the care of Isle of Man Government.

This, my first annual report, covers the approximately 18 month long period from my appointment to date.

2. Scope of Role

A copy of the terms of reference for the role I was appointed to undertake can be found from the following link: <https://www.gov.im/media/1361845/isle-of-man-childrens-champion-terms-of-reference-2018-v3.pdf>.

My role can best be summarised as being a voice and an advocate for 3 specific categories of young people who are classed as vulnerable, namely:

- Looked After Children
- Children with Complex Needs
- Young Carers

The role also includes chairing the Corporate Parenting Group, the cross-departmental group which oversees parenting of Looked After Children.

This is a far more focused role than that which my predecessor Mrs Caine had previously undertaken. However this revised scope aligned the role more closely with its original purpose.

Following my appointment there was an initial public expectation that my remit was more wide-ranging than had been defined. Accordingly, it was necessary for me to clearly identify those issues which were within scope and those which fell outside my remit.

For those issues over which I have no jurisdiction as Children's Champion, my approach has been to clearly explain the role which I have and to direct the issue to either to the relevant Department or to the appropriate constituency MHK.

3. Engagement

In undertaking the role I have had extensive contact with a range of stakeholders, in particular:

- Ms Debbie Brayshaw - Director of Children and Families, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Ms Sue Mowle – Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding, Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC)
- The other members of the Corporate Parenting Group
- The Voices in Participation (VIP) Council – a formally established representative group for Looked After Children
- Ms Glen Johnstone OBE – Independent Chair, Safeguarding Board
- Mrs Kerry Sharpe MLC - Political member of DHSC with responsibility for Social Care
- Mrs Ann Corlett MHK - Political member of DESC with responsibility for Safeguarding

I am grateful for the assistance I have received from each of the above and the input from other organisations and individuals with whom I have had contact in this role.

4. Focus to date

The majority of my time as Children's Champion to date has been focused on Looked After Children ("LAC"). For various reasons, which will become clear through this report, numerous important and urgent issues relating to LAC have required attention in this period. This has been on both a pro-active and reactive basis.

In contrast, relatively few issues have come to my attention within the other two categories of young person that are within the scope of my role. In this context I am aware of the excellent work of Crossroads, which provide an established voice and advocacy for Young Carers.

As a result the majority of this year's report will focus on LAC. However I expect the balance of emphasis may change in future years.

5. Corporate parenting

Corporate Parenting refers to the situation where Government has taken over parental responsibility for a child's welfare and the individual has thereby become a "Looked After" Child.

Whilst the Isle of Man currently does not yet have Corporate Parenting legislation in place, it aspires to follow best practice in this role.

In this situation the child's future is highly determined by how well Government undertakes its responsibilities. Best practice requires that Government collectively should have the same aspirations, and provide the same kind of care, that any good parent would provide for their own children.

Effective Corporate Parenting requires commitment from all elected members, and Government employees in a Government wide approach. It is about prioritising children and young people's needs, listening to what they want and supporting them to make the most of their lives and opportunities. This applies to:

- all those children and young people in the care of the Isle of Man Government;
- those placed for adoption;
- those cared for by another family member;
- those subject to special guardianship orders;
- and care leavers.

6. IOM Government as Corporate Parent

The cross-departmental Corporate Parenting Group ("CPG"), which meets bi-monthly, is central to overseeing Government's performance as Corporate Parent. It contains senior representatives from the principal Government Departments which impact Looked After Children (DHSC, DESC and Department of Home Affairs), together with personnel from St Christopher's, a contracted provider of key services.

As Children's Champion I am responsible for Chairing this Group.

The first CPG after my appointment was held on 1st July 2018. I requested Ms Brayshaw to Chair the first meeting in order that I could orientate myself to the issues. I have chaired each of the subsequent meetings from September 2018 onwards.

My initial impression of CPG was of a forum which had the potential to be effective. However it lacked both clear purpose and energy. There was little sense of issues being identified and addressed, or of tangible outcomes being achieved. I was surprised to discover a noticeable absence of data and little sense of accountability. A number of attendees confirmed this perspective to me informally in comments outside the meeting.

A little over one year on, substantial progress has been achieved. The CPG is fulfilling its purpose. It has a clear focus. It is identifying key issues, agreeing actions and subsequently delivering against them. The CPG meetings are participative and have a sense of attendees working to deliver improved outcomes collaboratively across departments in an open and accountable manner.

Whilst further work is required, I believe it is now an effective forum, demonstrating Government and external providers working collaboratively towards a common purpose.

Key issues covered by CPG over the past year have included:

1. Defining a Corporate Parenting Strategy
2. Monitoring the Care of LACs
3. Educational performance of LACs
4. Health outcomes of LACs

The key foundation for effective Corporate Parenting is a clear and effective Corporate Parenting Strategy combined with transparent and timely monitoring data. This is now in place.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been developed by the Group and the final version was signed off in June 2019. A copy is attached at Appendix 1. It is however recognised that this is a living document. It will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant. Progress will also need to be clearly tracked to ensure the strategy translates into improved outcomes.

This strategy is also accompanied by a “**Promise**” to Looked After Children which is entitled **Our Children – ‘The best possible opportunities in life’**. This sets out a framework within which Corporate Parenting should operate (see Appendix 2) and was devised in part by the Voices in Participation Council.

Within the Corporate Parenting Strategy, a defined series of “Balanced Scorecard” data measures have been agreed. These data measures will be updated and reviewed by CPG at each of its bi-monthly meetings throughout the year – though some measures will be updated less frequently where appropriate (e.g. educational metrics may be measured termly or annually).

The balanced scorecard is comprehensive, but in summary seeks to cover the key monitoring data by which the success, or otherwise, of the Government as Corporate Parent can be judged. This includes:

- LAC demographic information
- Analysis of Placements Mix
- Foster carer capacity/turnover
- Care Home capacity
- Corporate Parenting Key Performance Data measures

The most recently reported data measures are attached in Appendix 3.

This reporting framework will be supplemented by more detailed analysis of particular aspects as required and will also evolve further over time.

7. Children's Champion's Perspective – December 2019

As Children's Champion a range of issues come to my attention, through both formal and informal channels. My approach is to deal with each one in the appropriate manner as soon as is possible, not to wait for an annual report. Equally it needs to be recognised that a number of these issues are ongoing reflecting, for example, structural or legacy issues.

Accordingly this section of my report provides an overview of the key issues from my perspective as Children's Champion, outlining the significant developments during the year and the current position, as follows:

1. Key Trends

As a small jurisdiction the Island can be affected by relatively small variations in numbers of Looked After Children. When I took up the role, basic demographic was available but the availability of wider analytic data was surprisingly limited. This is improving as a result of the actions that have been taken during the period; however it still needs further refinement.

It is vital to have robust and transparent data and to understand both the trends in the numbers and how this compares with benchmarks of expected levels (derived from experience elsewhere). Key aspects are that:

- a. Numbers of Looked After Children have increased steadily through the period. This has increased from a baseline of 85 through to 93 when reported at the end of September. I am advised that on 2nd December it was 104, which is at the upper end of the benchmark range of 90-105. It must however be recognised that the numbers of children in care fluctuate and that month-end snapshots do not give a complete picture.
- b. In parallel, the proportion of Looked After Children in family placement (those in fostering, kinship or adoption) has dropped from a baseline of 73% down to 69% at the end of September. This is 6% below the benchmark target of 75%.
- c. Accordingly the numbers of children in care homes has risen from 27% to 31%. This is likewise 6% above the benchmark target of 25%.
- d. With a combination of the increased numbers of Looked After Children and the rising proportion of them accommodated in care homes, the actual numbers of children in residential care has increased significantly. This also includes younger children than would normally be the case, including some of primary school age who are in residential care.
- e. This is an indicator of the significant challenges still being experienced within the Family Placement Service. This particularly relates to a lack of fostering capacity. It falls well short of what would be regarded as best practice.
- f. As an indication, at the end of September, the Corporate Parenting balanced scorecard data showed that 51 out of 53 foster placements were filled, with only 2 available. Since then the numbers of Looked After Children has increased by 11.

This has only been accommodated by the Department making some pragmatic short-term decisions. This has relied on a flexible response from St Christopher's and the goodwill of existing Carers. This approach is not sustainable.

2. Family Placement Services

- a. Fostering Services on the Isle of Man are delivered through the Family Placement Service (FPS). This has been integrated into DHSC ("the Department") since insourcing the service on 1st October 2018. Prior to that date it was operated on an outsourced basis by the Isle of Man Children's Centre.
- b. It is acknowledged that this reintegration has proceeded far more slowly and has been far more difficult than the Department anticipated.
- c. Some progress has been made in working to address the issues. However the current situation is still far from satisfactory. Expectations were built, particularly amongst the Foster Care community, when the service was transferred from the Children's Centre. However these expectations have not been met to date. Indeed, from an external perspective there is little tangible sign of progress.
- d. A plethora of challenges have had to be faced in the period. The service had experienced high levels of staff turnover prior to the transfer and a new management team needed to be put in place. Initially this was reliant on interim staff, though these have now largely been replaced by permanent appointments. There was also a need to improve training and develop robust and consistent operational policies and procedures. This partly reflects legacy issues from how the service was previously operated. However more progress should have been visible by now.
- e. The desire to ensure robust foundations are in place for future service provision is commendable. However, there have been adverse implications whilst this lengthy, and still incomplete, transition has been taking place. This has compromised aspects of service delivery and is also reflected in the poor relationship between the service and Foster Carers (see below).
- f. As a result of the lack of resilience in the service, some children have experienced more rapid placement moves and residential care has been used more extensively than would normally be the case in a high functioning family placement service.
- g. In addition, the service has used measures to increase capacity, such as short-term exemptions (temporarily increasing the number of children a carer may foster) and commissioning additional residential accommodation. These are pragmatic responses to alleviate the pressure, but are not sustainable solutions.
- h. It is essential that this recovery process is completed urgently and that normal service is resumed from very early 2020. The tangible indicators of a return to "business as usual" will be re-starting the recruitment of foster carers, delivery of a coherent training programme for carers and increased capacity in the foster care service.

- i. A key assessment measure is the proportion of Looked After Children who are accommodated within foster care, rather than residential accommodation. The use of residential accommodation (care homes) has expanded in 2019 beyond acceptable levels. The Department recognised the need to redress this and has reflected this in its forward plans.

3. Relationship between the Department, Family Placement Services and Foster Carers

- a. This relationship has been heavily strained for a long period of time. Work is underway to improve it, however it is slow.
- b. It is clear that the relationship between the Department, FPS and Foster Carers has been perceived as very poor for a significant period of time. Trust and confidence are in very short supply. Improving that is clearly essential to future successful service delivery.
- c. In response, a project was initiated during Summer 2019 following discussions between myself, concerned foster carers and Debbie Brayshaw on behalf of DHSC. The intention was to engage Foster Carers in a process which would allow their voices to be heard in a safe and constructive manner. This required a structured, facilitated and independent process. It was designed to produce an output document which would provide the foundation for improvement action to be taken by the Department.
- d. The results of this exercise have been summarised into a report entitled "Improving Foster Care on the Isle of Man - Foster Carer Workshops - Autumn 2019". This report was issued in draft form on 30th November to Debbie Brayshaw and is now with DHSC for consideration. A comprehensive response is expected in the coming weeks, setting out the specific actions which will be taken to address the issues identified.
- e. Once this action plan has been defined and communicated it will provide the basis against which I will monitor and hold accountable FPS in the coming year.

4. Accommodation for Care Leavers and other vulnerable young people

- a. It is clear that the quality of accommodation in which Care Leavers reside has a profound impact on their life chances.
- b. Too many Care Leavers move into unsuitable accommodation, living in poor conditions and surrounded by bad influences. This has been their experience for many years in the Isle of Man.
- c. It is compounded by a reduction in support when young people reach the age of 18. This removes many of the mechanisms which could assist them cope with the transition to adult lives. Care Leavers often find it difficult to access alternative support from other agencies.
- d. Being Children's Champion gave me a clear insight into this issue which has gone on unchallenged for far too long. I was therefore delighted that in

November 2018 Tynwald unanimously supported my motion “That Tynwald appoints a Select Committee of three members to investigate and report on the provision of accommodation for vulnerable young people, with special reference to those leaving care and people with autism”.

- e. The Committee reported in June 2019 (see <http://www.tynwald.org.im/business/pp/Reports/2019-PP-0088.pdf>), making a comprehensive set of 21 recommendations. These were widely supported in the Tynwald debate in October 2019, with 20 of them being approved (see pages 359 to 444 of <http://www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard/20002020/t191017.pdf>)
- f. As stated when summing up the Tynwald debate, I believe that these approved recommendations lay the platform for a fundamental improvement in this situation going forward. Much work is ahead of Government to deliver this, which will be led by DHSC. I was encouraged by the reassurances given by Ministers and the willingness of Minister Ashford to be held accountable for delivering on these actions. The transparency offered by his commitment to provide regular (6-monthly) updates to Tynwald will ensure that this remains clearly in focus.
- g. This will fundamentally change the life chances for these individuals for the better. We owe it to our vulnerable young people, particularly Care Leavers, to ensure that this is delivered as promised.

5. Educational provision for Looked After Children

- a. Education is one of the key aspects monitored by the CPG and an area which is also fundamental to the children’s future prospects. Again this needs improvement.
- b. Progress has been made with an enhanced process for their Personal Education Plans (PEPs) introduced during the year, following a period of review. These changes had a number of objectives, including making it easier for the Looked After Children to engage with the process. Feedback to date is positive on the changes made, though further improvement opportunities have been identified from the first audit review. This is ongoing work in progress.
- c. Recent analysis has highlighted a higher percentage than expected of Looked After Children who have been classed as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), when compared to the non-LAC community. This needs further analysis and understanding, ahead of formulating the appropriate policy response.
- d. The number of Looked After Children who are on modified timetables is a significant concern, particularly those who are in residential accommodation. This may indicate that they are not receiving an appropriate education. Detailed work is underway between DHSC, DESC and St Christopher’s to explore the issues underlying this and to formulate an appropriate response.

- e. This is not helped by difficulties in sharing information across Departments regarding Looked After Children in school. This needs to be addressed between DHSC and DESC.
- f. DESC's decision during the year to appoint an Additional Needs and Standards Advisor, incorporating the role of "Virtual Head-Teacher", is very welcome. This appointment will be very helpful in addressing the above issues. Their remit will be wider than just Looked After Children, including responsibility for children with both additional needs. This appointment recognises that monitoring and raising of standards for this particular group is vital and will bring a focus to the education of these groups of children which is currently lacking. I understand that the appointee will be taking up this role around Easter 2020. This should ensure that future provision for the education of LAC improves significantly.

6. Employment opportunities for Care Leavers

- a. As with all young people, employment opportunities for Care Leavers are another important element of securing their long-term futures.
- b. Whilst their employment opportunities have improved over recent years, they remain constrained by the real and perceived barriers which these young people face. The issues highlighted above regarding their accommodation and education mean that they are disadvantaged compared to other young people. Yet, Looked After Children provide a valuable resource for the Island's job market, which can help fill gaps for employers who often report a shortage of available workers.
- c. St Christopher's initiatives play a key role in helping Care Leavers into employment. Their general support for Care Leavers is very valuable. Furthermore, their recently initiated 'Support Into Employment' scheme will improve Care Leavers' job prospects by creating closer links to sympathetic employers and ensuring Care Leavers are better prepared for both interviews and the world of work.
- d. I believe Government needs to do more to engage with this initiative and provide real job opportunities within the public service. As Corporate Parent it is uniquely placed to appreciate these Young Peoples' situations and qualities. As the dominant employer in the local job market, it has a unique opportunity to do something about this. It needs a clear lead from the centre of Government to ensure the whole of the public service engages with this.

7. Adoption

- a. Concerns have been raised with me, predominantly by prospective adoptive parents, about the difficulty of the adoption process; the length of time adoption takes; and the apparent low volumes of Looked After Children being adopted on the Island – which are understood to be typically around 4 to 6 per annum.

- b. Given the numbers of Looked After Children and the obvious benefits of a stable family environment, there would seem to be a real opportunity to, and benefits from, improving Adoption provision on the Island. Whilst there are many complexities involved in adopting these children on-Island, this has the potential to improve outcomes for children and is worthy of further exploration.
- c. The Department's impending new Adoption Bill will improve the legal aspects of Adoption. This needs to be delivered according to the most recently communicated timetable, which would see legislation introduced into the branches within the next year.
- d. The adoption process is also lengthy, with some prospective adopters reporting having been waiting for 2 to 3 years without a definite outcome. This would be helped by shortening the time taken for care proceedings, which I understand currently, take on average 72 weeks. A recent agreement with the judiciary to introduce a target level of 40 weeks will greatly assist this.
- e. There would also seem to be an opportunity to introduce a process of "Fostering to Adopt", which is currently not supported by the existing legal process. This would require a specific assessment, preparation and support mechanism, but could work for carers willing to take a child initially on a foster basis, with an intention to potentially adopting if circumstances develop appropriately.

8. Children and Families Division

- a. DHSC is currently in the early stages of its Healthcare Transformation programme, following Sir Jonathan Michael's review. This is undoubtedly going to be a period of major change for the Department.
- b. There is a significant risk that Social Care generally, and particularly in this context the Children & Families division, experience collateral damage from this transformation programme. This may arise either from the unintended consequences of some of the structural changes, diversion of resources, or simply due to senior management attention being focused elsewhere.
- c. It is clearly vital that this risk is recognised by the Department and appropriate action taken mitigated this risk in order to avoid negative consequences. In particular, adequate funding levels for Social Care and FPS need to be maintained to ensure effective service provision.

8. Key priorities for 2020

The over-riding objective for the coming year must be to complete the FPS recovery process and for it to be successfully integrated into DHSC Children & Families division.

It is now well over a year since responsibility for the service was transferred back into the Department. It is time that the Recovery phase was completed and normal service is resumed. Much work is required to deliver this.

The key elements of this recovery process are that:

- Fostering capacity must be increased - currently with 104 Looked After Children fostering capacity is stretched absolutely to the limit. This results in very limited options for the care of LACs. In some cases individual children are being accommodated in ways which would not be the preferred manner. This cannot continue.
- An effective foster carer recruitment process recommences in January, as planned - this is critical to improving the fostering service. There will be a lead time of several months from re-commencing recruitment to seeing the benefits in additional fostering capacity. This is therefore urgent.
- The relationship with Foster Carers must be quickly improved - this will only happen if the Department embraces the issues summarised in the “Improving Foster Care on the Isle of Man - Foster Carer Workshops - Autumn 2019” report it has recently received. It must respond in a constructive manner and then deliver against these commitments.
- Confidence and trust in this service is rebuilt - this requires foster carers being able to see that operational delivery issues are being rectified and that the service operates in a consistent, coherent and transparent manner. It also requires stability in staffing.

The other key priorities to improve outcomes for Looked After Children are that:

- DHSC delivers on its legislative promises in bringing forward a new Adoption Bill and updating the Children and Young Persons Act. These pieces of legislation are of fundamental importance to improving outcomes for Looked After Children. Both would be compromised if legislative resources are diverted elsewhere to other “higher priorities” such as the creation of Manx Care.
- In parallel, the legal process for care proceedings needs to be significantly quickened.
- Improving the provision of education for Looked After Children, and their attainment levels, needs to be a high priority for the new Additional Needs and Standards Advisor being appointed by DESC.
- Finally, significant progress needs to be made in delivering the agreed recommendations of the Tynwald Select Committee on the provision of accommodation for vulnerable young people.

9. Closing Thoughts

It is a privilege to be the Isle of Man's Children's Champion, to be a Voice and an Advocate for the most vulnerable in our society; those for whom the Government is their Parent.

The applicable test is whether something would be good enough for one's own children. If not then it cannot be good enough for our Looked After Children. And, if that is the case, then action needs to be taken.

Reflecting on the 18 months since my appointment, progress has been made in many respects. In particular, the profile of Looked After Children, and the issue of Government's role as their Corporate Parent, has been embraced positively by Tynwald and brought to the heart of legislative and policy change.

In addition, the Corporate Parenting Group now provides an effective forum in which the whole spectrum of issues associated with Looked After Children can be raised and addressed in an open and transparent manner. This group is now driving some significant changes which will positively benefit the outcomes for our Looked After Children, both now and in the future.

I believe that the issues are recognised and there is a real desire to address them. Mechanisms are in place to move forward.

However the pace of improvement is frustratingly slow. Good intentions and positive statements are not yet sufficiently translated into actions.

So much more needs to be done. We are nowhere near where we need to be. Whilst progress has been made over the last 18 months, the momentum of this must be maintained across Government services so that outcomes for our Looked After Children improve.

For too long in the Isle of Man being brought up "In Care" has meant poor life chances. We must change this scenario. The next 12 months will be fundamental. The promises and good intentions that have been made need to be turned into tangible actions.

I look forward to seeing a clear move forward when I prepare my next Annual Report in 12 months' time.

TIM BAKER MHK

ISLE OF MAN CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

7th DECEMBER 2019

Appendices:

- 1. Corporate Parenting Strategy**
- 2. Corporate Parenting Promise**
- 3. Corporate Parenting Group balanced scorecard/KPI data as at 30 November 2019**



Parenting Superheroes

THE CORPORATE PARENTING
STRATEGY

IOM

2019-2021

Foreword

The Corporate Parenting Group is delighted to endorse and fully commit to delivering the Strategy to support children and young people in care on the Isle of Man. This Strategy sets out the actions to achieve the PROMISE made to children and young people in care. It is important their voice is heard and their needs addressed. This Strategy has been developed fully with them through the Voices in Participation Council of children and young people in care. It will be delivered across the next 3 years and will both develop the concept of and successfully deliver on the Island's Corporate Parenting obligations.

Tim Baker

MHK and Children's Champion



Debbie Brayshaw

Director - Children & Families Service, DHSC



Cathryn Bradley

Inspector - Isle of Man Constabulary



Linda Thompson

Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Service Lead for School Nursing & Health Visiting, DHSC



Susan Perry

Interim Manager, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Team, DHSC



Susan Mowle

Director Inclusion and Safeguarding, DESC



Stephen Taylor

Head of Children's Residential Services, St Christopher's Fellowship



Christopher Kohlhoff

Manager - Family Placement Service, DHSC



Sam Caine

Community Sports Development Officer, DESC



Amy Cairney

VIP Participation Officer, St Christopher's



Ellen Hoskisson-Ennett

Children's Rights Champion, Children and Families, DHSC



THE CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

Introduction

Harry Potter, Cinderella and superman are super heroes of popular culture. They are also children without a family who have used extraordinary skills to deal with extra ordinary situations. In the same way our Looked After Children and care leavers are superheroes.

This strategy is intended to apply to all those children and young people in the care of the Isle of Man Government, those placed for adoption, those cared for by another family member, those subject to special guardianship orders and care leavers.

When a child comes into care, they become “looked after” and best practice expects that the “State” will become their Corporate Parent. The Isle of Man Government does not have corporate parenting legislation currently but aspires to follow best practice in this role.

The Isle of Man Government is committed to being an effective corporate parent for any child or young person who is in its care irrespective of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, faith or ability.

What is corporate parenting? Corporate parenting is founded on the principle that the Government collectively [all departments] should have the same aspirations and provide the same kind of care that any good parent would provide for their own children.

Parents know children and young people require a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow and thrive, and which supports them in coping with the dangers and risks of everyday life. Parents are ambitious for their children and support them to progress and achieve their potential, celebrating in their achievements, however large or small. Consequently, a child who is cared for by the Isle of Man Government has the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that they would expect from a good parent in the community.

Being a good corporate parent means.....

For corporate parenting to be effective it needs commitment from all elected members, and Government employees in a Government wide approach. It is about prioritising children and young people’s needs, listening to what they want and supporting them to make the most of their lives and opportunities. It means:

- Seeking the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own child;
- Accepting responsibility for all children in care;
- Making their needs a priority and acting appropriately;
- Listening to the views of our children and young people and taking account of them;
- Giving young people leaving care the support they need as they move into adulthood.

The Isle of Man Corporate Parenting Group has made a **PROMISE** to children and young people in care, and this needs to be known, understood and acted upon everyday.

Corporate Parenting in action

Corporate parenting operates at strategic, operational and individual levels:

- Strategically there is not yet a statutory duty on departments to co-operate in promoting the welfare of Looked After Children and care leavers, but there is a commitment to pursue this in the Legislative Programme of the DHSC.
- Operationally, services will shift the emphasis from “corporate” to “parenting” making sure all moral and statutory responsibilities towards Looked After Children and care leavers are being fulfilled by all departments and agencies.
- Individually, the many professionals and carers who are involved in a child or young person’s life must work together and take a child centred approach to the delivery of services.

The Corporate Parenting Group

The Corporate Parenting Group meets regularly to monitor and implement the actions of the strategy. It will:

- Make sure that the whole Government and partner agencies **PROMISE** to commit to the principles of excellent corporate parenting.
- Set high expectations and **PROMISE** to improve long term outcomes for all children and young people in care – their happiness, wellbeing, educational success and future prospects.
- **PROMISE** that the voice of the child and young person in care influences both policy and the services that they receive, and that young people are engaged with any action intended to develop and improve services and in the recruitment of key staff members.

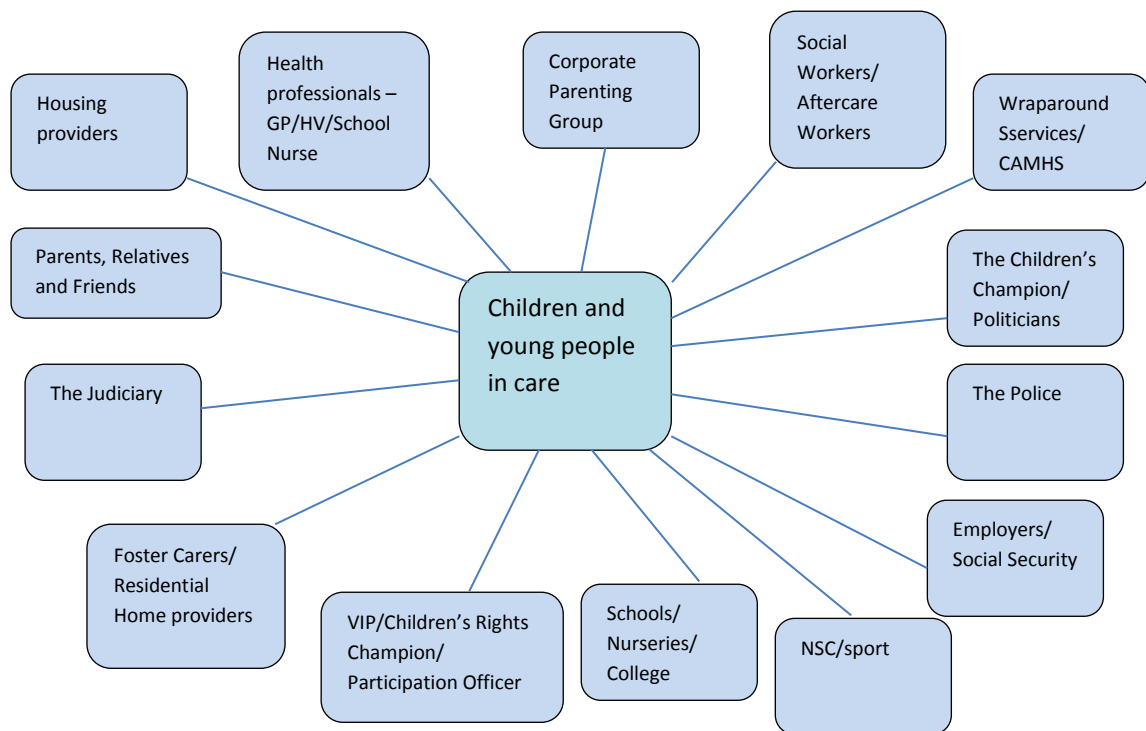
The multi-agency involvement in corporate parenting involves many people and services. See the diagram below:

Participation includes paying attention to the experiences of children, young people and care leavers so that they are able to feel fully involved and fully part of what happens to them, and what happens for others by influencing service change.

- Receive reports on qualitative and quantitative information about services and outcomes in a timely manner and review the progress of the promise STRATEGY with regards to Looked After Children and care leavers.

- Lead on the development, review and promotion of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and involve The Children's Champion, Voices in Participation [VIP] Council and agencies to improve services and respond to changing needs.
- Celebrate the successes of children in care and care leavers.

The many services and professionals who are corporate parents:



The story so far.....

Looked After Children are among the most vulnerable children in our community. They are unable to live at home with their immediate family, for any number of reasons, and when they become looked after, this may be through a voluntary agreement with parents or through a Court Order. Whatever their journey into care looks like, most Looked After Children will have experienced some form of emotional trauma, neglect, or harm in their lives. Research shows that outcomes for children, young people and adults who are in, or have left care, remain worse than for other children and is something for which we must take collective responsibility. Corporate Parents play a key part in narrowing the gap in outcomes between Looked After Children and other children in the community.

In 2015 the strategy identified that there were 5 children in care for every 1,000 children on the Island and that older young people were over represented. The number has continued to reduce further and is now at a rate of 4.8, in real terms a reduction from 96 to 84 children at year end.

Fewer older children are coming into care and changes in care planning does mean permanency is being achieved earlier. However there are legislative changes required to improve this further, and a commitment to consider that Legislation during 2019/2020/21.

The expansion of fostering placements has faltered after initial good progress and new arrangements are being made for the Family Placement Service which will operate from October 2018. Stability of foster placements has deteriorated although residential placement choices are successful. Stability will be a key outcome to achieve when new arrangements are in place in October.

Kinship places have been steady and Special Guardianship Orders have been used at a consistent rate and are now very much an option for some children and young people. However stability in care is not being achieved consistently. For our care leavers stability in the community as an independent individual is still out of reach. Accommodation is mainly only available through private renting and is often of poor standard and quality.

Work is in progress to be able to understand the educational attainment of children in care, and the inequalities of access to education. An overhaul of the Personal Education Planning process will mean new ways of working will be operational in 2019.

There remains professional anxiety for a small number of Looked After Children at any one time who use high risk strategies such as going missing, and self-harm to express their distress and trauma. A recent evaluation of the working protocol in respect of missing children, between agencies showed this to be effective and further improvements will be made.

The absence of legislation in key areas is now being addressed and amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act have been secured into the Legislative programme. This will include putting the Corporate Parenting role on a statutory footing, increasing legislative requirements for care leavers and establishing the legal authority of Independent Reviewing Officers. There will also be significant updates to Adoption legislation.

Other developments over the past three years include:

The development of a dedicated therapeutic support service for children and young people looked after – the Wraparound Service. It works with children and young people in care, foster carers, adoptive parents and care leavers to achieve greater placement stability; improved work in developing ‘edge of care services’; increased opportunities for leisure and cultural activities for children and young people in care, such as access to the sports and leisure facilities; improvements in the Independent Reviewing Service, and the accreditation of VIP with the “Investors In Children” award.

Voices in Participation VIP

The Voices in Participation has gone from strength to strength and celebrated its 10th birthday in 2019. Its impact on service delivery can be seen in projects such as the ‘PEP’ to improve education plans, ‘Flip the Script’ which charts the journey of partnership with professionals, ‘Through The Keyhole’ – their training package for professionals, and the ‘Drive Project’ to achieve driving qualifications for Looked After Children and care leavers.

They are equal participants in recruitment and hold Corporate Parents to account at the Corporate Parenting Group meetings.

The PROMISE

The Promise made to children and young people in care and care leavers was developed with VIP and established the corporate parenting ambition.

Ambition, Outcomes, and Strategic Themes

Our ambition remains as follows: ***to seek for children in care the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.*** In other words:

Our PROMISE to our children and young people in care.....

- P**rovide you with a safe, stable place to live that you are healthy and happy in
- R**espect your privacy and individuality
- O**ffer you opportunities to pursue your interests
- M**ake sure you are listened to and understood
- I**nform you of what is happening and when things might change
- S**trive to make sure you have the same opportunities as other young people
- E**quip you with the skills you need to live as an independent adult

This ambition was first articulated in the 2015 strategy and still holds good. Progress has been made on many of the priority areas, but “good enough” is not good enough to be sure that we are truly being as ambitious for the children and young people in our care as we would be for our own children.

This is a local strategy but will take account of national guidance and best practice in other jurisdictions. Recently in the UK there has been guidance in respect of Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children, a report into Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children in England and evaluations of relevant Social Care Innovation Programmes.

This strategy also sits within a local strategic framework which includes the overarching Children and Young People’s strategy produced by the Childrens Services Partnership and laid before Tynwald, and the Plan for Govt.

The following strategic outcomes will form the basis of our work, and its effectiveness measured through the data set accompanying it.

Strategic outcomes

The strategic outcomes identified commensurate with the Promise are:

Promise	Strategic outcome	Priority Actions
Provide you with a safe, stable place to live that you are healthy and happy in	Placements are safe and of high quality, matched to the long term permanency needs of children and young people.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with foster carers, adoptive parents, VIP and staff to develop a new vision and delivery model for the Family Placement Service. 2. Ensure that permanence planning is robust and placement stability long term is achieved in a timely way. 3. Develop an agreed framework across family and residential care for evaluating successful placements, and a mechanism for learning if they break down.
Respect your privacy and individuality	Children and young people in care are not all the same. Their circumstances, backgrounds, capabilities and aspirations are unique to them and our policies and practices need to be capable of reflecting this.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop shared training events for carers and staff and make "Through The Keyhole" mandatory event for carers. 2. Ensure that children and young people are supported to build, maintain, and sustain positive relationships with their birth families, siblings, carers and their peers.
Offer you opportunities to pursue your interests	Children and young people receive a planned and stable education which enables them to fulfil their educational, social and emotional potential, and to have high aspirations for their future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with schools, VIP and carers to complete the review and implementation of the new PEP system. 2. Extend the reach of the NSC initiatives for children and young people in care to access facilities.
Make sure you are listened to and understood.	Children and young people are treated with respect, and have their views listened to. They know how to get the information, advice and support they need, and how to complain.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with VIP to review and streamline the complaints process for children and young people in care. 2. Further improve the sharing of information and decision making with children young people and their families.
Inform you when things are happening and what might change.	Children and young people are involved in, and understand, the decisions made about their lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the information pack for Children and Young People in Care. 2. Establish profile information of carers and care homes for use with children and young people entering a placement for the first time.
Strive to make sure you have the same opportunities as other young people	Ensure the advice, guidance and support for children and young people promotes the optimum education, training and employment options.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work together to tackle the challenges around educational attainment. 2. Embed the 'Drive Project' in arrangements available to care leavers. 3. Explore the possibilities for bespoke apprenticeships across govt along the lines of those established by St Christopher's.
Equip you with the skills you need to live as an independent adult.	Young people enter adulthood in a planned way, with a home to live in, the skills to look after themselves and the ability to earn a living or continue in education, and they feel confident about the future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure there is a sustainable range of accommodation options for care leavers. 2. Consider introducing the concepts of "staying put" and "staying close" for care leavers. 3. Ensure that young people aged 21-25 can be

		supported to return to learn with financial support, if they wish to do so.
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There is also a need for a strategic outcome for the Corporate Parenting Group

CPG	Strategic outcome	Actions
To make a reality the ambition – to seek for children in care the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children	Ensure that all of the actions that flow from this strategy are delivered and outcomes are measured.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the remit and TOR of the CPG. 2. Ensure that all Govt Officers, Elected Members and Departments are aware of their responsibilities and play an active role in CPG. 3. Support the introduction of relevant new legislation to establish Corporate Parenting as a statutory duty. 4. Support the introduction of new legislation to strengthen key functions in relation to children and young people in care and care leavers. 5. Introduce a new performance scorecard for children and young people in care

DATA

Data measures – demographic- position at year end March 2019. Some areas of data will not be available until September and others are not currently collated but will be available by year end when a baseline will be set. The details remain here to show what will be scrutinised.

Number of looked after children	Target	%age per thousand population	Target rate
85	90-105	4.7	5-5.9

Child/YP information		Placement type	No/%	Target
No Lac 0-4	14	Mainstream fostering	44/ 52%	
No LAC 5-9	19	Placement with friend or relative	12/ 14%	
No LAC 10-15	35	Placed with parents	5/ 6%	
No LAC 16+	17	Placed for adoption		
	85	Sub total	72%	75%
No male	45	Childrens home/semi- independent / secure/off island	23/ 28%	25%
No female	40	Sub total	28%	25%

The number of Looked After Children has been consistent for three years now with more or less the same number coming into care and leaving care each year. It runs at below average target which is good.

The service aims to match placements with needs of children and young people and to have 75% of children placed with families – either relatives and friends or foster cares or adoptive parents. Currently the target is slightly below at 72%.

Foster Carer information	Activity	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Number of de-registrations	0				
	No of resignations	1				
	No of allegations MASM	1				
	No of approved households	46				
	No of placements not available	36				
	No of placements available	15				

Care home information	Activity	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	No of allegations MASM	2				
	No of homes	5 small 1 large 2 semi-independent 2 independent				
	No of placements total	13 small 5 large 9 semi-independent				

		2 independent				
	No of placements available	2 small 3 large 0 semi independent 0 independent				

2019 -2021 corporate parenting key performance data							
	Indicator	Target	Current perf	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Number of looked after children/YP	90-105	85	82	88	87	85
	% LAC in family placement[foster/kinship/adoption]	75%	73%	74%	70%	73%	72%
	% LAC in care home	25%	28%	26%	30%	27%	28%
	% LAC in stable placement [2.5 yrs +]		Tbc				
	% LAC with 3+ moves in 2 yrs		Tbc				
	% LAC disruptions fostering		Tbc				
	% LAC disruptions care home		Tbc				
	% LAC reviews on time	90-100%	92%				
	% pathway plans in place	90-100%	71%				
	% children/YP participating /contributing to care plan review	90-100%	90%				
	% of LAC involved in VIP [care home]		Tbc				
	% of LAC involved in VIP [FPS]		Tbc				
	% of LAC involved with participation officer [care home]		Tbc				
	% of LAC involved with participation officer [FPS]		Tbc				
	% children/YP in care with annual health assessment	90-100%	100%				
	%children/YP with annual dental assessment	90-100%	Tbc				
	No of LAC engaged with MSR in sport and recreation services		Tbc				
	% LAC with current PEP	90-100%	Tbc				
	Number of LAC in foundation stage		3				
	Number of LAC achieving GLD		1				
	Average attendance		95%				
	Number of LAC in KS 1		9				
	Number of LAC attaining end KS1		Sept				
	No of LAC KS 1 on modified time table		0				
	No of LAC KS 1 suspended/excluded		0				
	Average attendance KS1		95%				
	Number of LAC KS 2		14				

	Number of LAC attaining end KS 2		Sept				
	No of LAC KS 2 on modified timetable		3				
	No of LAC KS 2 suspended/excluded		3				
	Average attendance		90%				
	Number of LAC in KS 3		12				
	Number of LAC attaining KS 3		Sept				
	No of LAC KS 3 on modified timetable		3				
	No of LAC KS 3 suspended/excluded		2				
	Average attendance		Tbc				
	Number of LAC in KS 4		17				
	Number of LAC attaining end KS 4		Tbc				
	No of LAC KS 4 on modified TT		9				
	No of LAC KS 4 suspended/excluded		tbc				
	Number of LAC achieving 5 GCSE A*-C		2				
	Attendance average		Tbc				
	Number of LAC attaining A levels		2				
	No of care leavers at university						
	No of care leavers at college						
	No of care leavers employed						
	No of care leavers unable to work						
	No of care leavers in stable accommodation						
	No of care leavers in quality accommodation						

Our Children – ‘The best possible opportunities in life’.

The story so far..... (Children in Care and Care Leavers)

Our Children in Care

Our goal is to improve significantly the life chances of the Children in Care and Care Leavers .

The numbers of Children in Care is 88, (4.5/1000: Qtr2 2018 fig) numbers are reducing and currently below the UK average. There is a similar ratio of males to females and children are entering care at an earlier age with a small reduction in over 16 yr olds.

Kinship arrangements continue to expand, now Special Guardian ship is an option and off island placements are only made when it has been the right decision for the child.

Stability in fostering has faltered and there remains a reliance on residential care homes for older young people.

Attainment inequalities are still not yet understood.

Looked After Children who are missing or absent are now responded to in an agreed way between relevant agencies, and a new dedicated therapeutic service is available to children young people in care and care leavers.

Legislation changes have been agreed in the legislation programme for DHSC.

Our ambition for Children in Care

‘To seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children’

Our PROMISE to our children and young people

Provide you with a safe, stable place to live that you are healthy and happy in

Respect your privacy and individuality

Offer you opportunities to pursue your interests

Make sure you are listened to and understood

Inform you of what is happening and when things might change

Strive to make sure you have the same opportunities as other young people

Equip you with the skills you need to live as an independent adult

Key priorities for our Children in Care

- New vision for provision of family placements
- New Legislation for corporate parents, care leavers and adoption.
- Sustainable good accommodation for care leavers
- Educational arrangements – PEP and attainment measures.

The Corporate Parenting Challenge

To ensure all children and young people in our care feel safe and supported

All children and young people in care should receive a visit from an ‘Independent Reviewing Officer’ and have their views taken seriously.

All children and young people leaving care should have an identified ‘Personal Advisor’ to support them

Children only become ‘Looked After’ when it is impossible to keep families together in a safe way

Improve the educational support and overall achievement of children and young people in care

Children and young people in care are supported to engage in education, training, employment and activities they enjoy

All Children and young people in care have a Care Plan that they know and understand and meets’ their needs

All Care Leavers should have access to suitable accommodation

To ensure that Corporate Parenting is everyone’s business

To ensure robust monitoring and measuring of the delivery of Corporate Parenting

What the national research tells us:

Whilst Children in Care have a right to expect the same life opportunities and outcomes as other children, they may nevertheless experience disadvantage. Research indicates that they experience significantly poorer outcomes across a range of measures, including health and education.

- Children in Care are more likely to have a diagnosable mental health condition
- Care Leavers are more likely to sofa surf or be housed in unsuitable accommodation
- Children in Care are more likely to become teenage parents
- Children in Care are more likely to find difficulty gaining future employment
- Former Children in Care are disproportionately represented within the prison population

Local data has not yet established these measures.

Our Priority Outcome Indicators:

Education Attainment levels

Increase % of children who report they influence services that affect them

Barriers to participation for children in care are understood and removed

Improve Placement stability

Increase % of Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation

Increase % of Children in Care positively engaged in education

What Good looks like:

Our Children and Young People Grow up:

- **Safe**
- **Healthy**
- **Achieving**
- **Resilient**
- **Positively Engaged**

Children in Care have a safe, stable place to live where they are healthy and happy in

Children in Care feel their privacy and individuality is respected

Children in Care feel listened to and understood

Children in Care pursue their interests, and are positively engaged

Children leaving care feel equipped and supported to become independent

Corporate Parenting is evident across all Departments

Corporate Parent Group, vision and values: 'children in care will have the best possible opportunities in life'.

- **Respect:** Services are inclusive where difference is respected and mutual respect exists between organisations and professionals
- **Caring:** Services are delivered in partnership and are child focussed, empathising with feelings of children, and young people through the creation of a safe environment in which concerns can be shared
- **Listening:** The child's and young person's voice is heard, their experience understood and responsibility taken to act in their best interests
- **Professionalism:** High quality services delivered with integrity by a competent and knowledgeable team, working in partnership to keep children and young people safe
- **Fairness:** Decisions are made openly, consistently and lawfully, always in the best interests of the child and young person and that discretion is used appropriately
- **Curiosity:** There is a thirst for knowledge, analysing, understanding and sharing information appropriately and never missing an opportunity to find out more about the child or young person's experience

Corporate Parent Group UPDATE:

CPG DATA – Quarter 2 2019

Data measures – demographic - position at year end March 2019. Some areas of data will not be available until September and others are not currently collated but will be available by year end when a baseline will be set. The details remain here to show what will be scrutinised.

Number of looked after children	Target	%age per thousand population	Target rate
93	90-105	5.0	5-5.9

Child/YP information	Base line	Q1	Q2	Placement type	No/% Q1	Q2	Target
No Lac 0-4	14	13	16	Mainstream fostering	46/ 53%	54%	
No LAC 5-9	19	18	21	Placement with friend or relative	11/ 13%	12%	
No LAC 10-15	35	35	37	Placed with parents	3/ 3%	3%	
No LAC 16+	17	21	19	Placed for adoption	0	0	
	85	87	93	Sub total	60 /69%	69%	75%
No male	44	43	43	Childrens home/semi- independent / secure/off island	27/31%		25%
No female	41	44	50	Sub total	31%	31%	25%

The number of Looked After Children has remained consistent with small fluctuations. At the end of the second quarter it was 93 and running within the expected range.

The Service aims to match placements with needs of children and young people and to have 75% of children placed with families – either relatives and friends or foster carers or adoptive parents. At quarter two this is unchanged at 69% and continues to reflect the Family Placement Service and its transformation planning.

Foster Carer information	Activity	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Number of de-registrations	0	0	0		
	No of resignations	1	1	1		
	No of allegations MASM	1	1	0		
	No of approved households	48	48	43		
	No of placements not available	36	36	51		
	No of placements available	15	15	2		

Care home information	Activity	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	No of allegations MASM	2	0	0		
	No of homes	5 small 1 large 2 semi-independent 2 independent	5 Small 1 Large 2 Semi-independent 2 Independent	As Q1		
	No of placements total	13 small 5 large 9 semi-	15 Small 6 Large 10 Semi-	As Q1		

		independent 2 independent	independent 2 Independent			
	No of placements available	2 small 3 large 0 semi independent 0 independent	3 small 0 Large 0 Semi- independent 2 Independent	1 small 1 large 2 semi independ ent 0		

2019 -2021 corporate parenting key performance data							
	Indicator	Target	Baseline	Q1 [Apr-Jun '19]	Q2 [Jul-Sep '19]	Q3 [Oct-Dec '19]	Q4 [Jan-Mar '20]
	Number of looked after children/YP	90-105	85	87	93		
	% LAC in family placement[foster/kinship/adoption]	75%	73%	69%	69%		
	% LAC in care home	25%	28%	31%	31%		
	% LAC in stable placement [2.5 yrs +]			40/46%			
	% LAC with 3+ moves in 2 yrs			9/10%			
	% LAC disruptions fostering				2		
	% LAC disruptions care home			0	0		
	% LAC reviews on time	90-100%	92%	97%	92%		
	% pathway plans in place	90-100%	71%	52%	74%		
	% children/YP participating /contributing to care plan review	90-100%	90%	93%	95%		
	% of LAC involved in VIP [care home]		Tbc	12%	4%		
	% of LAC involved in VIP [FPS]		Tbc	21%	10%		
	% of LAC involved with participation officer [care home]		Tbc	20%	6%		
	% of LAC involved with participation officer [FPS]		Tbc	4.75%	3%		
	Number of care leavers involved with VIP				21		
	% children/YP in care with annual health assessment	90-100%	100%	100%			
	%children/YP with annual dental assessment	90-100%	Tbc				
	No of LAC engaged with MSR in sport and recreation services		Tbc	20	31		
	% LAC with current PEP	90-100%		40/57 70%	70%		
	Number of LAC in foundation stage		3	4	4		
	Number of LAC achieving GLD		1	TBC	1		
	Average attendance		95%	97.8%	97.8%		
	Number of LAC in KS 1		9	6	6		
	Number of LAC attaining end KS1		Sept	TBC	2/2		
	No of LAC KS 1 on modified time table		0	0	0		
	No of LAC KS 1 suspended/excluded		0	0	0		

Average attendance KS1		95%	94.8%	94.8%		
Number of LAC KS 2		14	19	19		
Number of LAC attaining end KS 2		Sept	TBC	0		
No of LAC KS 2 on modified timetable		3	0	0		
No of LAC KS 2 suspended/excluded		3	2			
Average attendance		90%	97%			
Number of LAC in KS 3		12	15			
Number of LAC attaining KS 3		Sept	TBC			
No of LAC KS 3 on modified timetable		3	2			
No of LAC KS 3 suspended/excluded		2	36			
Average attendance		Tbc	90%			
Number of LAC in KS 4		17	16			
Number of LAC attaining end KS 4		Tbc	TBC			
No of LAC KS 4 on modified TT		9	6			
No of LAC KS 4 suspended/excluded		tbc	0			
Number of LAC achieving 5 GCSE A*-C		2	TBC			
Attendance average		Tbc	79%			
Number of LAC attaining A levels		2	TBC			
No of care leavers at university			TBC			
No of care leavers at college			TBC			
No of care leavers employed			10 FT 15 PT	10 15		
No of care leavers unable to work			28	28		
Stability of accommodation rating			3.23*	3.23		
Quality of accommodation rating			3.88*	3.88		

*See appendix for explanation