

'We care because you matter'

Looked after Children and Care Leavers' Strategy

2018 - 2021

November 2018

Looking after, and protecting, children and young people is one of the most important jobs North Yorkshire County Council does.

We have a plan for the children and young people of North Yorkshire. It is called Young and Yorkshire 2 and it sets out our ambition for all children and young people in the county to live happy, healthy lives, and do as well as they can.

Most of our children and young people are able to do this, but sometimes families need support if they are having a difficult time, or their circumstances change.

When this happens, we work with families to help them stay together, but if it isn't safe for a child or young person to stay at home, we will step in to give them the care, support and stability they deserve.

The vision for our strategy for looked after children and young people - '**We care because you matter**' - is that all children and young people in our care will have a stable and loving home, with the same life chances as their friends. We will give them the support they need to help them achieve the best they possibly can. When they leave care, they will have the support and skills they need to be able to live independently.

The Multi-agency looked after children's partnership (MALAP) is responsible for delivering the strategy, along with the corporate parenting board (Looked after children members group), overview and scrutiny group and executive group, working closely with the Young People's Council, a group of care experienced young people.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 outlines our responsibility as ‘corporate parents’ to the children and young people we look after, and to young people leaving care. We work with many different partners to deliver our corporate parenting responsibilities, including district councils, schools, Safeguarding boards, fosters carers and adopters, North Yorkshire Police, the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board, and youth justice service.

There are seven ‘corporate parenting principles’ outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017:

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

There are also seven priorities outlined in the strategy that we will work with partners to achieve:

- wherever possible to ensure children and young people are cared for with their birth or extended family;
- to aim high and have high expectations for young people;
- to continue our parenting responsibility when a young person leaves care;
- to focus on the needs of the child, rather than the services available;
- to ensure the views, opinions, needs and priorities of looked after children and care leavers inform everything we do;
- to deliver high quality innovative services; and
- to ensure children and young people have positive and stable relationships with those who support them.

We look after young people in a number of different ways, including placing them with families, foster care placements and within children’s homes query?. How they are looked after depends on their individual needs and what the young person wants. We try to minimise the number of times a child is moved, as young people have told us that stability is very important to them.

We also try to ensure that changes in social worker are minimised so that young people can build a trusting and stable relationship with their worker over time.

The strategy includes our promise to young people in North Yorkshire. The promise is based on what they have asked us, and makes it clear what they can expect from us.

We will support children and young people in our care to:

- make sure they have the health appointments they need and support to attend them;
- have access to information needed so they can make decisions about their health;
- share information on foster carers and introduce them before they move in;
- pursue hobbies and interests;
- share quality time with adults; and
- be listened to by adults and see any notes taken during meetings.

How will we know if we are delivering our strategy?

These outcomes for looked after young people will be used to measure how we perform in delivering our pledges:

1. Improved physical health
2. Improved mental health
3. Placement stability and safe homes
4. Educational attainment
5. Support for care leavers to prepare for adult life

To read the full 'We care because you matter' strategy, please go to www.northyorks.gov.uk/wecare

Contact us

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