



# Corporate Parenting Strategy

2022 – 2026





**“Young peoples’ input into the Corporate Parenting Strategy is massively important as we have the lived experience of what it is like to be a child looked after in Lancashire.”**



**“We have first-hand experience of what the local authority is like as a Corporate Parent and what could be done to improve this so we get the best experience possible.”**

**“We want to be kept informed of decisions that are made and the reasons behind why they have been made. This is our strategy and we want to affect how services are run and make sure they work for us.”**

**“We want our voices to be heard and what we ask for and discuss to be acted upon.”**

Thank you to LINX and the Care Leavers Forum for helping us shape our strategy.

# Introduction

## **Our children and young people are the future.**

This strategy sets out our ambition to ensure the children for whom we act as corporate parent have what they need to live the happy and fulfilling life they deserve.

Being a good corporate parent is one of our Council's most important duties. It's about caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our county, and we embrace this responsibility as the foundation of our corporate parenting principles.

We always act in the best interests of the children and young people in our care and those leaving our care, and we have the highest aspirations for them all. We work collaboratively with our partners to enable children and young people to access and make the best use of our services and strive to listen to and act upon what children and young people tell us about their experiences.

Together with our partners, we act as corporate parent to more than 3,000 children and young people across Lancashire. Each one of them deserves the best possible standard of service from us. This strategy has been designed with our young people and we hope you agree that their voice comes through clearly. This matters because it is the children and young people who are best placed to tell us what they need from us. The objectives and plans we have set out to achieve this are ambitious, they embrace the principles of corporate parenting, and we believe that they can be delivered.

## **Thank you for supporting us**



**Angie Ridgwell**  
Chief Executive  
of Lancashire  
County Council



**Cllr Philippa  
Williamson**  
Leader of the  
County Council



**Cllr Cosima  
Towneley**  
Cabinet Member  
for Children and  
Families



**Cllr Stephen  
Clarke**  
Chair of Corporate  
Parenting Board



# Contents



1. What is Corporate Parenting?	1
2. Who are we looking after?	2
3. Why do we need a strategy?	3
4. What are we going to do?	4
5. How will we know we have made a difference?	11
Appendix 1 - Top Tips to Good Corporate Parenting	13
Appendix 2 - How we will know we have made a difference	14
Appendix 3 - Education Attainment	14
Appendix 4 - Legislation	16
Appendix 5 - The role of Elected Members/District Councils/Partners	16
Acronyms	



# 1. What is Corporate Parenting?

Sometimes it is not possible for children and young people to be looked after safely by their families without support from social workers. When this happens they come into care and live with foster carers, residential carers, with extended family or in other types of homes. The obligations of their parents become the responsibility of everyone at the council and our partner organisations. The law says this means being their Corporate Parent and “All children need love and stability in order to thrive. A strong corporate parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own.” (Applying Corporate Parenting Principles 2018).

As a Corporate Parent we have the same goals for children in our care and moving on to independence as every good parent. We will always ask ourselves. If this was my child, would this be good enough?



**We will strive to ensure everything we do is underpinned by the 7 corporate parenting principles:**

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

**Our Top Tips for Good Corporate Parenting were developed with young people. Please see Appendix 1.**



## 2. Who are we looking after?



LIVING AT HOME

LIVING WITH AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY



IN RESIDENTIAL



YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN A STAYING PUT ARRANGEMENT



OTHER TYPES OF HOMES

# 3. Why do we need a strategy?

In Lancashire we are very proud of our children and young people and everything they achieve.

This strategy will provide direction to the various services within the local authority and our partners to improve provision and opportunities to children and young people in our care and our care leavers. We want the very best for our children and young people and will support them to ensure that they can reach their fullest potential.

We know from research that children and young people who are looked after by the local authority have to overcome trauma and additional challenges that can lead to poorer outcomes than their peers. They are more likely to leave school with fewer qualifications, have a higher risk of being involved with youth justice services and of not being engaged in education, employment and training.

We have four areas of priority to work with our partners and improve outcomes for the children and young people in our care and leaving care.

## 1) Achieving Permanence

Our aim is to achieve legal, physical, and psychological permanence as quickly as possible, through building strong relationships, involving our children and young people in everything we do, supporting their Life Story and identity, advocating for them, providing creative and innovative support and to challenge the discrimination they can face.

## 2) Improving sufficiency to provide the right home at the right place

Our goal is for all the children and young people we support to have supportive and lasting homes – homes in the right areas and communities, homes that will be a home for as long as needed, homes that provide a sense of family, belonging and care.

## 3) Improving social, physical, emotional and mental health support and outcomes

Building resilience and supporting the health and wellbeing of the children and young people in our care and leaving care is a priority for us. We are committed to ensuring that our children and young people get the very best support for their health, through early intervention, quick & easy access to targeted services and effective partnership working.

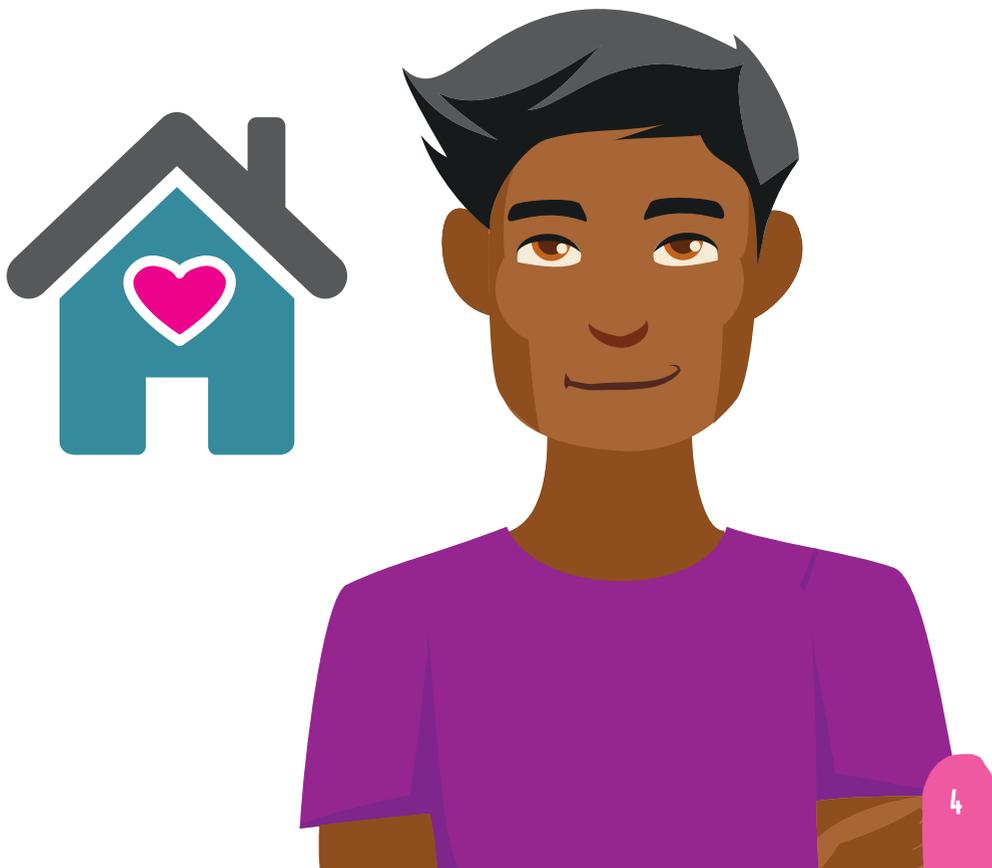
## 4) Improving education, employment and training opportunities and outcomes

We want our children and young people to have exciting opportunities for education, employment, and training, offered by partners and business who understand their needs, and who can offer additional support to help them succeed and overcome their early disadvantage and trauma.



## 4. What are we going to do?

We have listened to our children and young people and jointly produced eight key objectives that will improve the care and support for them under our 4 priorities.



## Objective 1

**Children and young people have a voice in the way we deliver our services.**

*'To ensure that children and young people are consulted and actively participate in the decisions we make about how we deliver our services'.*

*'Nothing about me without me'.*

We enable children and young people in our care and care leavers to engage and collaborate with us on everything that is important to them. We ensure their voice is heard during visits and in meetings, assessments and plans are co-produced with their involvement and they have a say in the decisions we make.

We will continue to consult with as many children and young people as possible and support their engagement with the Children in Care Council (LINX and POWAR), the Care Leavers Forum and the Corporate Parenting Board. They will have a say, be able to influence change and their ideas and recommendations will shape our services for them.

**POWAR**  
**LINX**  
**Care Leaver Forum**  
**Corporate Parenting Board**



## Objective 2

**Children and young people will have a sense of belonging, security, continuity, support and stability.**

*‘Achieving permanence is at the heart of every decision made by us and our partners’*

*‘Working with our partners to build strong communities for the children and young people in our care and care leavers to live in’.*

We use trauma informed and strength-based practice and encourage our partners to do the same. Children and young people in our care and care leavers are involved to improve permanence practice.

We have revised our Life Story Policy and are working with our partners to embed a more holistic and continued approach to Life Story.

Children and young people in our care are supported to maintain connections to those important to them and care leavers are supported to build strong and effective personal support networks. It is important that wherever children and young people live they

are supported to feel included in their local communities.

Care Leavers are provided with a Local Offer that is regularly reviewed and we will be working with the Care Leaver Covenant to further improve the offer from our partners to care leavers across the region.

We stand by our Corporate Parents Promise and continue to build a stronger corporate family for the benefit of the children and young people in our care and care leavers.

**Lancashire’s Local Offer for care leavers**

**Care Leaver Covenant**



## Objective 3

**Children and young people will have a safe, suitable and lasting home to live and be cared for.**

*‘To ensure that we have a range of suitable and appropriate homes to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the children and young people in our care and for care leavers.’*

All children and young people in our care and care leavers are provided with exceptional love, care and kindness where they live and from the professionals around them.

We work with our partners to ensure children and young people are provided with the right home, at the right place and at the right time. For children and young people who can return to live with their families safely they are well supported to achieve this.

Our sufficiency strategy and lasting home process increases permanence for children and young people in care, young people move from fulltime care to high quality semi-independent living provisions when they are ready, and our Joint Housing Protocol with District Councils ensures care leavers can access lasting homes in adulthood.

We work with our partners as a corporate family to ensure our children and young people feel happy and safe where they live, and care leavers have continued support to manage and maintain their lasting homes.

We support young people in foster care to continue living with their carers under Staying Put and ensure our Staying Put offer is current and attractive.

Our Housing Advisors work alongside the Leaving Care Teams and we work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to prevent homelessness.

## Objective 4

**Children and young people are well prepared and supported when leaving care.**

*‘to ensure that all care leavers feel supported and can access a range of services to promote their continued wellbeing into adulthood’.*

*‘to enable care leavers to set up and maintain their own home’.*

Young people in our care will be provided with a Personal Advisor alongside the continued support from their Social Worker when they are 16 years old.

Together with their carers and the professionals around them young people are supported to develop the relevant knowledge and skills needed to leave care as a young adult.



Our independence preparation includes general and practical preparation, social and emotional support as well as financial education. Our financial support exceeds statutory expectations to provide additional financial security in adulthood for example, with additional rent payments, an increased setting up home allowance and our council tax grant.

We know independence preparation doesn't stop at 18 and the interdependence of doing things independently and accessing support when needed continues in adulthood. Hence, Personal Advisors form strong and supportive relationships with our young people and we offer support from an allocated Personal Advisor up to a young person's 25th birthday.

During the pandemic, we provided additional financial assistance to care leavers by paying a Leaving Care Top Up in line with the increased Universal Credit rate and ensured young people have the technology to stay connected with those important to them

## Objective 5

**The health and wellbeing of our children and young people in care and care leavers will be a priority for everyone.**



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*'To improve the health and wellbeing of the children and young people we care for'.*

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It is important that wherever a child and young person lives they are encouraged and supported to experience positive social and leisure activities to encourage their wellbeing.

All professionals have a responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of the children and young people in our care and care leavers. Health partners have a significant role in identifying, delivering and improving the health of our children and young people.

Health assessments are completed timely and identify the support needed to improve the health and wellbeing of the children and young people in our care. Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires are completed at least annually to contribute to the completion of health assessments and help accessing the right emotional wellbeing support for those young people who need it.

We widen our work with dentists across Lancashire to improve access for our children and young people, our SCAYT service provides therapeutic social work support to carers and designated children looked after nurses liaise effectively with the wider health economy to ensure health needs are met in the best way.

Young people leaving care are provided with a health summary and continue being supported to access the relevant health services.

# Objective 6

**Children and young people are protected from harm and risk of exploitation.**

*‘To ensure that children and young people are protected from harm and exploitation,’*

Partner agencies work together to ensure a coordinated response to children and young people most at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, missing from home and trafficking.

Young people in our care identified as being at risk of missing are offered a comprehensive package of support that reflects their individual needs, return home interviews are completed and missing from home meetings conducted. Monthly missing from home panels are held where the young people most at risk are discussed in a multi-agency forum to inform their care plan.

Social Workers from the Child Exploitation Teams work with young people in our care and professionals involved to address pull and push factors. Multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) meetings are held monthly and interlinked with the Missing from Home Panels and Missing Education Panels.

Children’s Services, Child and Youth Justice Service, Lancashire Constabulary and the Crown Prosecution Service have joint working arrangements to keep our children in care out of trouble.



Young people in care and leaving care can experience different types of exploitation including emotional or financial exploitation. Hence, we are developing a comprehensive safeguarding protocol for Care Leavers.

# Objective 7

**Children and young people will be supported to achieve their own goals and be ambitious in education, employment and training.**

*‘To close the achievement gap between the children and young people in our care and those cared for by their own families’*

Young peoples’ likelihood of success in life is much better if they are supported into education, employment, and training. We recognise that children and young people in our care and care leavers will often need additional access to these opportunities and we are committed to ensuring that this support is available.



We are aware that many children and young people have gaps in their education, and we are keen to ensure the children in our care are confident to access a range of educational settings, achieving success in whatever they choose to do. We want all our children to be their best.

The educational attainment of our children at Key Stage 1 and 2 is improving and generally in line with the national comparison. The attainment of our Key Stage 4 Year 11 is closing the gap between ourselves and other similar Local Authorities as our average Attainment 8 and Progress 8 score has improved. The percentage of our young people attaining Grade 4+ in English and Maths improved at a greater rate than the national average or regional Local Authorities. However, we know there is still much to do to enable our young people to reach their potential.

Lancashire's Virtual School aims to provide support and challenge to schools, education providers, social work teams, and other key partners.

Social Workers and Personal Advisors have high aspirations for our children and young people evidenced in Personal Education Plans and Pathway Plans. The Virtual School monitors and tracks attendance, progress and outcomes and the quality of Personal Education Plans. This is supported through our new Personal Education Plan document.

Carers are provided with advice, guidance, and training to help them support our children with learning and our Empower Academy raises aspirations and improves access to Higher Education. Our Employment and Support Team helps our young people aged 14-25 years with the next steps into employment, apprenticeships, training, volunteering and work experience.

We are improving our partnership with education providers, the department for work and pension and utilise our influence as a corporate parent to improve opportunities for our children and young people.



# Objective 8

**Having big dreams and goals, supporting our children and young people to achieve their dreams and goals, and celebrate all their successes**

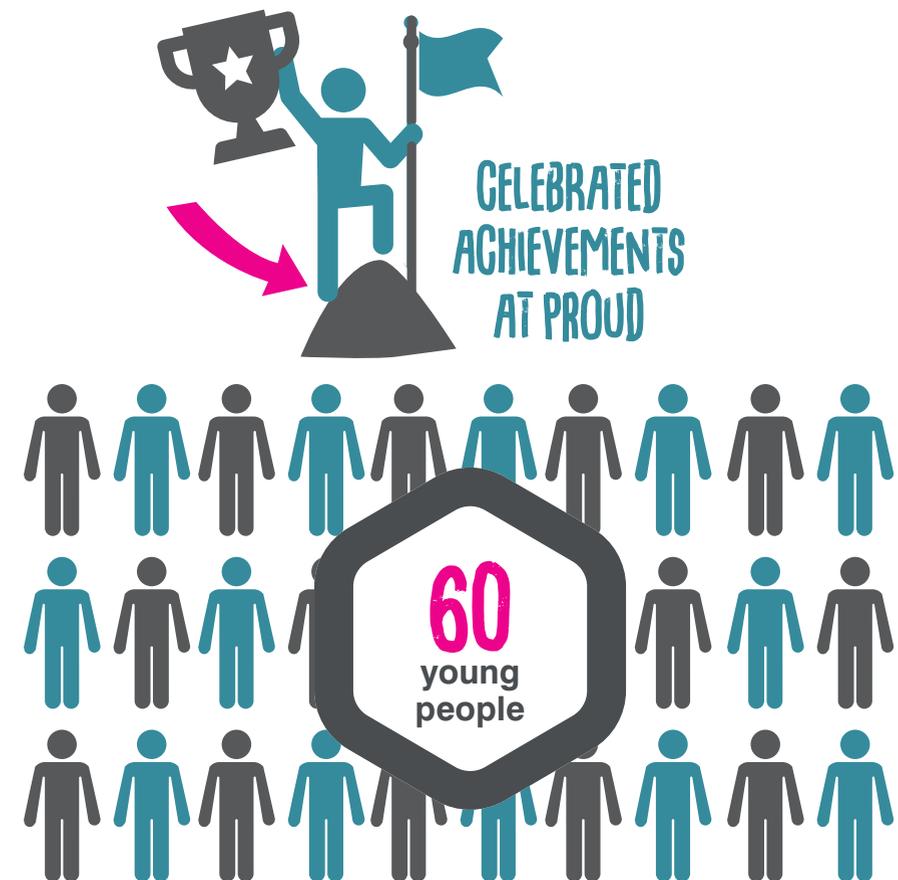
*‘To ensure that the children and young people we look after and have looked after, are recognised for their achievements and successes’.*

Children in our care and care lavers have a variety of opportunities to celebrate their achievements. PROUD is the biggest event of the year with young people nominated by a wide range of key workers and agencies. PROUD Awards are an opportunity for Corporate Parents to come together with our children and young people to celebrate their achievements. Approximately 60 young people and their guests attend PROUD each year. It serves as a timely reminder of our children and young people’s resilience, many talents and successes despite the adversity and challenges many have overcome.

Due to Covid, we have not been able to host the PROUD Awards in 2020 and 2021 but planning for the next PROUD Awards have resumed. This annual event will continue to celebrate our young people and show them how proud we are.

We also celebrate our young people as part of National Care Leavers’ Week every year where we bring together young people, councillors and professionals for a themed event co-produced with

our young people. We don’t forget the small achievements either that carers, social workers and personal advisors celebrate with our children and young people.





## 5. How will we know we have made a difference?

What will young people say?

I feel good about my future

I feel proud of my achievements

I feel supported and cared for

I feel able to share my views and feelings

What will partners say?

We understand how we can contribute & support

We work as a team and value our different roles



## What will Corporate parents say?

We build trusting relationships with our children & young people

Our Children and young people are supported to achieve their best in education and employment

I am proud of our children and young people

We value and respond to what children & young people tell us

Our children and young people feel safe and cared for

I want the best for our children and young people

# Corporate Parenting Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Top Tips to Good Corporate Parenting What our Children and Young People say

01

#### Know My Story

Understand why I am in care from reading my file, listening to me and getting to know me.

02

#### Where I Live

Know where I live, who with and why I live here. Understand what has been difficult for me about where I have lived before, what I enjoy about my home now, how I am getting on with everyone and whether there are any worries.

03

#### Family Time and Staying Connected

Understanding my family is important to me, know who I want to stay connected with and support me to keep in touch with those important to me. Is there a person I am not allowed to see? Then help me to understand why. Think through where, when, how often and how I want to meet with my family and friends.

04

#### Purpose

Visit me regularly, keep in touch and understand why you are visiting me.

05

#### Assess and Plan

Include me in assessments, plans and decisions about me. Know what you are saying (recommending) and why. How are you supporting me to achieve a sense of belonging and stability and is the plan still the right one?

06

#### Ambition

Have high ambition for me for all parts of my life but also make it achievable for me.

07

#### My voice and my 'lived experience'

Listen to me, empower me to tell you what I really think and write it down. Are there other people important to me that can tell you what I want and how I feel? Think, how it feels being me.

08

#### Visit

Spend time with me to do fun stuff and build a relationship. See me on my own, take me out and do unannounced visits on occasion to see what my everyday looks like unstaged. Think about the purpose of the visit and what needs to be achieved.

09

#### Include Others

Other agencies have information about me, my past, worries, what I like, dislike etc. They may also see me more often than you and can help you in building up a picture of what help I may need and how my care plan should look like. My family may also have some important information.

10

#### Know your Resources, Support and Community

Know what is out there that may benefit me and help me to access it.

11

#### Child/Adolescent Development

Understand the trauma I have experienced, how it impacts on me and what growing up means for me.

12

#### Identity and Diversity

Be aware of what is special and specific to me and embrace this with me. Challenge discrimination on my behalf and help me overcome difficulties.

## Appendix 2

### How we will know we have made a difference

Progress against our objectives is measured by a variety of key performance indicators and reviewed periodically through Performance, Audit, Challenge, Track (PACT) meetings and Data, Quality & Performance (DQP) meetings at senior manager, head of service and director level.

Progress and effectiveness are also monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board through service specific key performance indicators for Children's Services and partners.

To monitor and improve the effectiveness of our Corporate Parenting Strategy we are developing outcome measures with our partners and the Corporate Parenting Board. The document Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2026 Outcome Measures is published and updated in addition to this strategy.

## Appendix 3

### Education Attainment

#### Key Stage 1 (end of year 2: 7 years old) and Key Stage 2 (end of year 6: age 11-year-old)

Due to the impact of the pandemic and several lockdowns the DFE removed the duty for schools to provide end of KS1 and KS2 outcomes in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The last data for these groups was the school year 2018-19. Although GCSE examinations were suspended in the year 2019 and 2020 young people were still awarded grades through teacher assessment based on their class work and assignments throughout their Year 10 and 11.

- Lancashire KS1 CLA achieved above national average for CLA in every subject area: Reading, Writing, Maths and all three combined, and well above average in Writing and the combined measure for reading, Writing and Maths.
- Compared to 2015-16 our KS1 CLA increased attainment in all subject areas and above the rate of increase for CLA nationally.
- Lancashire KS2 CLA achieved above the national average for CLA in Reading, Maths, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, and in Reading, Writing and Maths combined.
- Writing assessment was lower for our KS2 CLA than the national average, though we had a higher % of pupils (9%) who achieved Writing at greater depth than the national average (6%).



### Key Stage 4: Year 11 leavers 2019-20 GCSE

- Average Attainment 8 score increased by 3.9 from previous year.
- % Achieving both English and Maths GCSE at Grade 4+ increased by 7.6%
- % Achieving both English and Maths GCSE at Grade 5+ increased by 1.7%
- Lancashire average attainment 8 score increased more than any of our statistical neighbours and national and regional scores.
- The % of our children achieving Grade 4+ in both English and Maths increased more than any of our statistical neighbours and regionally and nationally.
- The % of our children achieving Grade 5+ in both English and Maths increased more than our statistical neighbours with data reported. We were closely in line with regional data.

### Key Stage: Year 12 and 13 (16+ to 18 years old) 2019- 2020

- 51% of year 13 students achieved qualifications- ranging from A Level to Entry Level.
- The % of year 11 leavers (2021) with unknown plans or non-engagement has reduced significantly over 3 years, which reflects the impact of the bespoke CEIAG, and support provided by the Employment Officers and is very encouraging in the context of the pandemic

- Small reduction in the total number of our young people in higher education after an increasing trend over 4 years. This is likely to be due to the impact of the pandemic and young people choosing to delay courses for a year. However since
- 2016 the number of our young people has increased from 32 to 62.  
10 students graduated in 2020.
- The % of 17/18 years old in Education, Training and Employment has increased from 79.3% in Oct 2020 to 82.2% in January 2022.
- The % of 18–20-year-old care leavers in EET has increased from 45% in Oct 2019 to 50%. January 202

## Appendix 4

### Legislation

- **The Children and Social Work Act 2017**
- **The Children Act 1989**
- **The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, July 2021**
- **Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers; Revision January 2022**
- **The independent review of children’s social care, May 2022**
- **Ofsted – Inspecting local authority children’s services; April 2022**
- **NICE Guidance for looked-after children and young people; October 2021**
- **Promoting the health and well-being of looked-after children; 2015**
- **Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children; 2015**
- **Keep children in care out of trouble; 2016**
- **In care, out of trouble; 2016**
- **Keep on caring; 2016**
- **Lancashire County Council’s procedure manual for children in our care and care leavers**

## Appendix 5

### The role of Elected Members/District Councils/Partners

- Have a clear understanding and awareness of the issues for looked after children and care leavers in the authority area and those placed out of area
- Champion the interests of looked after children and care leavers in all they do
- Ask questions about outcomes for children and challenge appropriately
- Ensure looked after children and care leavers have a say in how decisions are made about the services that affect them, so they can influence those decisions. This includes councillors engaging with the looked after children council and the leaving care council
- Provide meaningful work based training opportunities, including apprenticeships for care leavers within the council and its partners and contractors to improve their future prospects
- Ensure children placed out of county receive an equal service
- Ensure that the council, as Corporate Parent, is keeping the promise it has made in the Care Leavers Pledge
- Require evidence of improving positive outcomes and aspirational progress for Lancashire’s looked after children
- Ask how all elements of council business have an impact for looked after children
- Make connections and links between council plans, strategies and decision-making for looked after children



## Acronyms

Care leavers fall into four categories which have been defined in the Children Act 1989;

1. Eligible
2. Relevant
3. Former relevant
4. Qualifying

CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services  
CFW - Child, Family and Wellbeing Service  
CLA - Child looked after  
CME - Child Missing Education  
CP - Child Protection Plan  
CSC - Children's Social Care  
CSE - Child Sexual Exploitation  
DfE - Department for Education  
GP - General Practitioner (doctor)  
KS - Key Stage (in reference to education)  
LA - Local authority  
LAC - Looked after child (Health)  
LCC - Lancashire County Council  
LCS - Lancashire's recording system

LINX - Children in Care Council  
LSCB - Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board  
MACSE - Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation  
MASH - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub  
MFH - Missing from Home  
PA - Personal advisers  
PEP - Personal Education Plan  
SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability  
SW - Social Worker





