

Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26

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Foreword

In Cheshire East, we believe caring for our cared for children and care leavers is one of the most important responsibilities held by elected members, partner agencies, and individual staff working with children and young people in the care of the local authority. We are committed to cared for children and care leavers having the love, care, and opportunities we want for all our children.

It is important that we get this right. Early experiences in childhood and growing up shape future happiness and set the foundations for what can be achieved throughout their adult lives. This strategy sets out how we will work together to advocate and champion the needs of cared for children and care leavers in everything we do, having high aspirations for their future, keeping them safe, happy, and healthy and supporting them into adulthood. We will celebrate their successes and support them when things don't go so well. We will be here for our children and always consider 'would this be good enough for my child'.

This strategy has been developed TOGETHER with children and young people. The 'Pledges' that we make to them are based on the things that they have told us matter most to them. The commitment to improving the lives of our cared for

children and care leavers is more than a priority; it is the way in which we behave, think, and feel about our children and young people in every aspect of our work. Through the implementation of this strategy, we intend to improve the experiences and outcomes for all our Cheshire East cared for children and care leavers.



Deborah Woodcock
Executive Director of
Children's Services



Cllr Kathryn Flavell
Chair of the Corporate
Parenting Committee

Introduction

Children in care and care leavers, the Cheshire East picture.

- The number of children in care in Cheshire East fluctuates daily as new children come into care and children leave care. On 31 March 2022 we had 522 cared for children and 364 care leavers (aged 18-25).
- Children come into care for many different reasons, 80% of children in Cheshire East came into care in the last 12 months because of abuse or neglect.
- We are in touch with 99.5% of care leavers aged 18-21.
- 97.5% of care leavers aged 18-21 are in suitable accommodation.
- We have a slightly higher number of males than females in care, with 285 males, 236 females and 1 indeterminate.
- 315 of our cared for children are living within Cheshire East.

**The above figures change daily, data as at 31 March 2022*

Seven principles of Corporate Parenting

Corporate parenting means doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver – to give them the opportunities that children who are not in care get. In 2017 the Children and Social Work Act introduced a set of Corporate Parenting Principles for children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25 years. We are committed to these principles and have developed this strategy to support all our services to address them:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take account of their views, wishes and feelings
4. To help them 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 those children and young people
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
7. To prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood.

Glossary of terms for working with Care Experienced Children and Young People

Advice to workers from My VOICE: “These are recommendations of how care experienced children and young people would like to be spoken to or about—when you start to work with someone new, please ask them how they would like to be spoken to because everyone is different.”

What workers say:	What we would like you to say:
Looked After Children (LAC)	We don't LAC in anything! Call us children, young people, or cared for children. We are people, not a case number or statistic.
Contact	Family time, going to see family, social time. It's important for us to see our family as much as possible.
PEP (Personal Education Plan)	One young person said: “I thought it was about pets not school”. Please explain acronyms! We prefer school review, education meeting or just meeting.
Placement	Home or the place we live.
Birth Parents/Biological Parents	Mum and Dad, Parents, Tummy Mummy.
Reunification	Going home, reunited with my family.
Permanence	My long-term home, my home without disruption.
Respite	Day out, temporary care, time off, time out, sleep over.
Care Plan	Future plan, my plan, “Help me to achieve my goals”.
Foster Carer	The person who cares for me, carer.
Corporate Parenting	Call strategies, meetings and plans ‘cared for children and care leavers’ instead.

This glossary has been written, designed, and approved by My VOICE, Cheshire East's Voice of in care experience.

Pledge One: We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would

Feedback from our children and young people:

Children and young people told us that they don't like the phrase 'corporate parent' as it is too clinical. We have updated the name of this pledge to reflect this. Children and young people told us that support from their PA (personal advisor) and social worker can make a big difference to their life, things like helping them to get to college and appointments and knowing when they need this support.

What are our priorities:

Staff and elected members will understand their responsibilities and be ambitious in their roles to support cared for children and care leavers. They will advocate and champion their needs in everything they do. They will strive to ensure that the wider community shares our understanding and offers support wherever possible.

We will know ourselves and the needs of our cared for children and care leavers well, and design and deliver services that meet these needs. We will always work TOGETHER with children and young people when developing and reviewing services.

Decisions about children and young people's lives, and the services that support them will be made with them and for them. We will always value their views, where we can't act on a child or young person's view or follow their wishes, we will always explain why.



1. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
1.1	Develop a new governance structure to deliver the new Cared for Children and Care Leavers strategy and actions.	A new governance structure will be in place by October 2022, with each workstream lead and groups to be accountable for their action plan to support delivery of the strategy, and to share regular updates with the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group for further scrutiny.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.2	Establish a 'directory' of available resource and support contacts in the permanence service.	The directory will be in place and being used to benefit cared for children and care leavers.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.3	Provide ongoing training and support to our elected members, stakeholders and employees around being the best parents to our cared for children and care leavers.	Our Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc) will have a good understanding of their responsibilities, to offer robust challenge and support.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.4	Continue to work with cared for children and care leavers to change the language we use.	New language will be agreed and being used across all of children's services.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Participation Team.

1.5	Review our strategy on an annual basis to ensure progress is monitored and actions and priorities remain relevant.	Children and young people will be able to tell us about the difference actions are making to their daily lives. We will monitor progress of our success measures. % of cared for children's reviews in timescales. % of children and young people involved in their reviews.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Participation Team.
1.6	Continue elected member frontline visits to cared for services, aligned to the cared for children and care leavers outcomes.	Annual rota of frontline visits in place and changing practice.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.7	Work together to ensure that the right children become cared for and deliver our strategy on Creating a Sustainable Future for Children's Social Care.	Reduction in the number of cared for children, an increase in the stability of our homes for cared for children. An increase in matched homes for children and young people.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.8	Regularly celebrate the achievements of our cared for children through events such as the star awards and national care leaver week. Celebration of individual achievements such as, exam results and settling at a new home.	Our children and young people feel valued through the development of certificates, celebration events and recognition opportunities throughout the year.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.9	We will change the name of our Corporate Parenting Committee to reflect children and young people's wishes regarding the language we use.	The pledge will be agreed by the full council.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.10	Review and update our scorecard to align with our new Cared for and Care Leavers Strategy.	New scorecard will be in place by September 2022.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

Pledge Two: We will improve education, employment, and training outcomes

Feedback from our children and young people:

A Care Leavers survey was conducted during October and November 2021. 76 completed surveys were received in total, 90.07% of young people told us that they know how to access education, employment, or training. Children and young people also told us about the importance of being able to stay in the same school when going into foster care.

What are our priorities:

We will have high aspirations for every child and young person and will help them to achieve their ambitions, including using opportunities in the 'family business' and our contacts so that they can be happy and successful in their education, training, and employment.

Every child and young person will have an education plan that is targeted, to enable them to reach their full potential.

We will strive to that ensure that every child and young person will have access to consistent, high-quality, well-matched opportunities in education, training, and employment.



2. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
2.1	Develop opportunities for apprenticeships within the council and local businesses. Offer support to care leavers in preparing for and undertaking apprenticeships from our Apprenticeship Coordinator Role.	<p>There are a range of apprenticeship opportunities available for our children and young people and support is available for young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), to help them to become ready to complete an apprenticeship.</p> <p>There is an increase in the number of children and young people on apprenticeship programmes within the council from 7 young people to a target of 12 by August 2023.</p> <p>Number of care leavers in Higher education.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Deputy Virtual School Headteacher.</p> <p>Post 16 Adviser.</p>
2.2	Share success stories across the authority and local community, promoting the benefits for all.	Success case studies shared through virtual schools headteacher's report annually, and through communications during the year such as the NEET programme.	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p>
2.3	Continue to improve the completion rate and quality of PEPs across all years from early years to post 16.	The completion rate of PEPs has increased. The number of PEPs graded as good or outstanding has increased.	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p>
2.4	Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes (narrow the gap and lost learning) and attendance, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of pupil premium.	<p>Improved literacy and communication of early years and primary aged children.</p> <p>Pupil premium requests and impact will be monitored termly.</p> <p>Ensure effective support and interventions are in place for cared for children to support attainment and progress, ensuring children are accessing full time education.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p>

2.5	Strengthen the children and young people's voice to support the strategic development across all areas of the virtual school.	<p>Children and young people annual surveys will capture their voice.</p> <p>We will have incorporated new ways of gaining wider children and young people's voice within the strategic development of the virtual school.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p> <p>Post-16 Adviser.</p>
2.6	Ensure that agencies providing opportunities for our children and young people are supported and equipped to understand and meet their needs.	<p>An effective annual training will be in place and being delivered through the virtual school for agencies / services / schools and settings.</p> <p>Additional whole school training for inset days will be available throughout the academic year.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual school Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.</p>
2.7	Ensure a robust action plan is in place to reduce NEET and encourage re-engagement opportunities for our care leavers.	<p>A monthly review of education plans during challenge meetings with the senior PA and virtual school. Feedback to be shared with Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group for further scrutiny.</p> <p>6 monthly dip sampling of children's records to monitor progress and address any identified worries.</p> <p>Extension of opportunities and direct work with young people to re-engage in education, employment, or training.</p> <p>Number of 16–18-year-old care leavers that are NEET.</p> <p>Number of 19–21-year-old care leavers that are NEET.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual school Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.</p>

Pledge Three: We will be truly aspirational to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe.

Feedback from our children and young people:

Children and young people told us that they don't like the word permanence as it's too clinical. We have changed this pledge to reflect this.

What are our priorities:

We will strive to ensure that every child and young person will have the opportunity to live in a good, safe home locally, either with their family or in another long-term home. All decisions will be made and reviewed with them, without delay.

We will respect those people who are important to our children and young people and make sure that these safe relationships are sustained.

We will keep children and young people safe.



3. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
3.1	Further strengthen our communication and engagement with foster carers and involve them in service development.	<p>Increased attendance at our quarterly Foster Carer forum.</p> <p>Foster carer representation on development groups.</p> <p>Our annual foster carer survey will tell us that foster carers feel our communication is good.</p> <p>Foster carers feel supported by their peers.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Fostering service manager.</p>
3.2	Review all residential placements monthly to ensure that children and young people can have the opportunity to live within a family.	<p>Reduction in the number of children and young people placed in residential provision.</p> <p>Every child to have a trajectory for permanence and timescales.</p> <p>Increased fostering sufficiency and step-down plan to be considered for all children and young people in a residential placement.</p> <p>% with 3 or more placements in a year % leaving through adoption / Special Guardianship Order (SGO).</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>
3.3	<p>Continue to ensure that cared for children and young people can live in good, safe homes locally, as early as possible.</p> <p>Development of a discharge team for children that are already living with their family or parents to reduce the need for care orders and ongoing intervention.</p>	<p>Increasing our in-area placement sufficiency through fostering recruitment and effective matching.</p> <p>Redevelopment of permanence policy, including stability and matching to be jointly developed between cared for children's service, fostering and commissioning.</p> <p>Development of caring for children at home services and support.</p> <p>Annual assessment of children's needs to be considered in children and family assessments to increase to a minimum of 80% within timescales.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>

		<p>Strengthen matching and transitions for our children within our current commissioned children's homes.</p> <p>Reduction in number of children and young people in residential care.</p> <p>Discharge team in place by September 22, within 2 years 15 SGO's and 47 care orders will be revoked.</p>	
3.4	Development of the No Wrong Door model and principles within Cheshire East which will provide support to young people who are within or on the edge of the care system.	<p>Decrease the number of children and young people in residential placements as a long-term care plan.</p> <p>Increased young people in family settings or with a plan of reunification to their families.</p> <p>Increased amount of young people in a long-term matched home. Review of every child's long-term match after 12 months in placement.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>
3.5	Increase support to cases where there is a possibility of adoption disruption.	<p>Increased early intervention with adoptive families prior to safeguarding concerns arising.</p> <p>Increased support and strategies to maintain adoptive children in their families.</p> <p>The adoption stability panel will be fully embedded.</p> <p>Adoption panel will meet bi-monthly.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Head of Service, Early Help and Prevention.</p> <p>Adoption Counts Regional Manager.</p>
3.6	Improve our decision making regarding Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs).	<p>Clearer decision making and effective support and challenge in achieving permanence through special guardianship.</p> <p>Embedded agency decision making process in place to consider SGOs.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Fostering Service Manager.</p>

	Develop a clear process and policy around entitlements and support for SGO's.	<p>Clearer pathway to understand financial and practical support within SGO support plans.</p> <p>Increase by 25% in the number of children placed with their families progressing to SGO within the next 12 months.</p>	Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers.
3.7	<p>Develop a pathway and forum for senior leaders to support the service to achieve permanence plans and ensure progress is reviewed regularly. Clear actions to be set to hold the service to account.</p> <p>Undertake a peer review of the permanence service to assist in driving developments forward.</p>	<p>Effective oversight and challenge of permanency plans for our cared for children, increase in placement stability.</p> <p>Care planning meetings to occur at a minimum of every 12 weeks to prevent drift and delay.</p> <p>Peer review to take place late 2022 to action plan and have a clear view of service strengths and areas of development.</p> <p>Permanence forum to be redeveloped to take place weekly from June 2022 to review all permanence plans regularly across the service.</p> <p>Number of children who have achieved permanence in foster care.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p>
3.8	We will ensure children and young people have opportunities to stay connected to their families and friends in the least restrictive way possible.	<p>Development of Family time policy and process to be in place by July 2022.</p> <p>Review of all cared for children's current family time arrangements and supervision levels to ensure that those children that can have unsupervised contact do and for those that can't, the most appropriate person in their network can be identified to supervise.</p> <p>All arrangements to be developed by July 2022 with ongoing review and scrutiny at each cared for review every 6 months.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>

Pledge Four: We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes

Feedback from our children and young people:

The Cared for survey was conducted from 22nd January 2021 until 12th March 2021, 87.34% of young people stated that they have someone that they can talk to if they have any health concerns. 78.70% of care leavers told us they feel well informed of how to make good choices regarding their health, and the local services to help them.

What are our priorities:

We are committed to understanding the health needs of our children and young people as early as possible and to ensure they are given the highest priority in every service.

We will ensure that practitioners understand and meet the diverse health needs of our children and young people, including those with health inequalities faced by race, ethnicity, ability and disability and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

We have ambition to ensure that we further improve responses to children and young people in relation to having their health needs met.

We will equip our children and young people to have high aspirations for their own health and wellbeing.

My Health Information		Additional information about your Health including conditions diagnosed with and tests carried out	
<p>O219 With you, all the way</p> <p>NHS Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust</p>		<p>O219 With you, all the way</p> <p>NHS Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust</p>	
Name		Date	
DOB			
NHS Number			
Current Doctor (GP)			
Birth Information	Weight:		
	Time of birth:		
	Additional information:		
Immunisations (this is sometimes known as jab or injection)			

4. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
4.1	Raise awareness across our workforce and promote and monitor access to a range of services and agencies available to support the health needs of our children and young people.	Increased referrals to emotional wellbeing services, increased health assessments and increased engagement with GP and dentist appointments.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
4.2	Track and monitor the health needs of our children and young people, including those who are currently living outside of Cheshire East, ensuring their needs are met.	Collection and use of data around the following outcomes will provide benchmarking and identify areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunisation status • Timeliness and quality of health assessments • GP registration • Completed strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQs) and their use to inform practice Timeliness of dental checks. % of under 5's with up to date immunisations.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
4.3	We will support children and young people in care to have improving emotional and mental health and wellbeing.	Decreased SDQ scores and effective use of this tool to inform care and education planning and support for our children and young people in line with statutory guidance. Early identification and response to emotional and mental health issues. Increased referrals and engagement with services for those young people that require support.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

4.4	We will ensure cared for children and care leavers have their health assessed in a timely way and that assessments are of a good quality and used to inform the care plan.	<p>Quarterly submission of key performance indicators will evidence timeliness and quality of health assessments.</p> <p>Threshold target of 90% completed in timescale (20 working days) to be achieved for children placed both in and out of Cheshire East area.</p> <p>Use of escalation pathway and tracker will evidence any issues related to timeliness or quality and enable appropriate action.</p> <p>Annual audit of care plan reviews will provide evidence that health assessments are being used as part of the care planning process.</p> <p>Number of care leavers with a health passport.</p> <p>Number of care leavers with a health passport.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>
4.5	Promote the New NHS England dental referral programme to ensure cared for children have access to timely dental health services.	<p>Target of 100% of children and young people will have been seen for their statutory annual dental check.</p> <p>Number and outcome of referrals will be tracked and reported quarterly.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>
4.6	Improve access and timeliness of full health screening for all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).	<p>Increased early intervention and support for UASC.</p> <p>Number of initial health assessments (IHAs) completed in timescales.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>
4.7	Development of an effective tool that can be used to measure health outcomes for cared for children.	<p>Increased understanding and tracking of the needs of our cared for children.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p>

			Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
4.8	<p>We will support timely and effective transitions from child to adult services.</p> <p>Information and data around the following themes will be used to inform service development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Long term/complex health needs • Transitions for those young people who do not have a diagnosis and yet will continue to need support from social care. • Young people aged 14-25 who are known to at least one mental health professional • Young people aged 14-25 who also have a diagnosis of learning difficulties and/or disability, attention deficit disorder (ADHD) or autism. 	<p>Clear pathways of support available for care leavers moving to adult services.</p> <p>Care leavers will report confidence in addressing their health needs and accessing services.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>

Pledge Five: We will prepare young people for adulthood

Feedback from our children and young people:

Young people told us it's important that they are supported to be able to make important decisions ahead of time, around finance and housing to help them feel comfortable, safe and secure when they leave care. 85.20% of care leavers told us that they feel in control of the decisions that affect their life.

What are our priorities:

We will support young people early with the skills needed to prepare for their future through access to a range of good quality services.

We will be a consistent guide for our young people. We will celebrate their successes and support them when things don't go well.

We will respect our care leavers as young adults and adapt our relationships to their needs.



5. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
5.1	Communicate with children and young people what our relationship and contact with them will look like, so they understand what to expect and know how to raise any worries they have around this.	Improved knowledge of rights and entitlements and effective pathway planning.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.2	Understand how children and young people want us to communicate with them and look at ways to develop our digital offer in line with their views.	Increased and sustained relationships with our cared for children and care leavers.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.3	Publish and publicise the local authority's care leaver offer in accessible ways, in line with statutory guidance. Ensure that care leavers know what they are legally entitled to and are helped to access support after they leave care. Review the care leaver offer in partnership with care leavers when there is an annual review.	Clear knowledge and understanding of rights and entitlements. Care leaver offer to be published by autumn 2022.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.4	Ensure that all children in care and care leavers know how to make a complaint and have access to advocacy services.	Clear bi-monthly tracking through our independent visitor and advocacy service. Increased complaints as well as increased satisfactory resolution.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
5.5	Involve children in care and care leavers in developing their plans for after care. Plans should take account of young people's wishes and concerns, when possible, including those related to feeling safe, where young people want to live, and what they want to do with their future.	Increased number of pathway plans completed and reviewed in timescale. % of care leavers in suitable accommodation.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.

5.6	Work with Mark Riddell, Ambassador for care leavers, as he visits and offers further support to Cheshire East on our journey to excellence with our care experienced adults.	Ensure connection and wider learning and challenge regarding our local offer.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.7	Allocate cared for children a PA as close to age 16 as possible, in line with statutory guidance.	Early intervention and effective pathway planning. Increased understanding of plans for independence.	Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.8	Celebrate the achievements of our care leavers, during national care leavers week.	Recognition and praise for care leaver achievements throughout the year. Increased wider council and community understanding.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.9	Ensure that care leavers who become parents are well supported and have prioritisation of access to services.	Increase in care leavers being able to care for their children. Earlier referrals to early help services and family nurse partnership.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.10	Ensure care leavers are supported to make decisions that affect their lives e.g., housing, jobs, etc.	Effective pathway planning. number of 16-18 year olds completing Bronze/ silver / gold independence packs. number of 19-21 year olds completing Bronze/ silver / gold independence packs.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.11	Embed family networking and safety planning to reduce 16/17 year old homelessness and support young people to return to live at home sooner.	Reduction in number of 16/17 year olds becoming cared for. Increase in the numbers of 16/17 year olds returning to live with a family member.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.

Pledge Six: We will work **TOGETHER** with children and young people

Feedback from our children and young people:

Children and young people have told us that the most important thing we can do is listen to them. We have developed an additional pledge to focus solely on participation (working together with children and young people) to ensure that children and young people are always at the heart of everything we do.

What are our priorities:

We will work **TOGETHER** with children and young people in all that we do.

We will work to make sure that participation is at the heart of everything that our staff, partners, and elected members do.

Cared for children and care leavers will be empowered to make decisions that affect their lives.

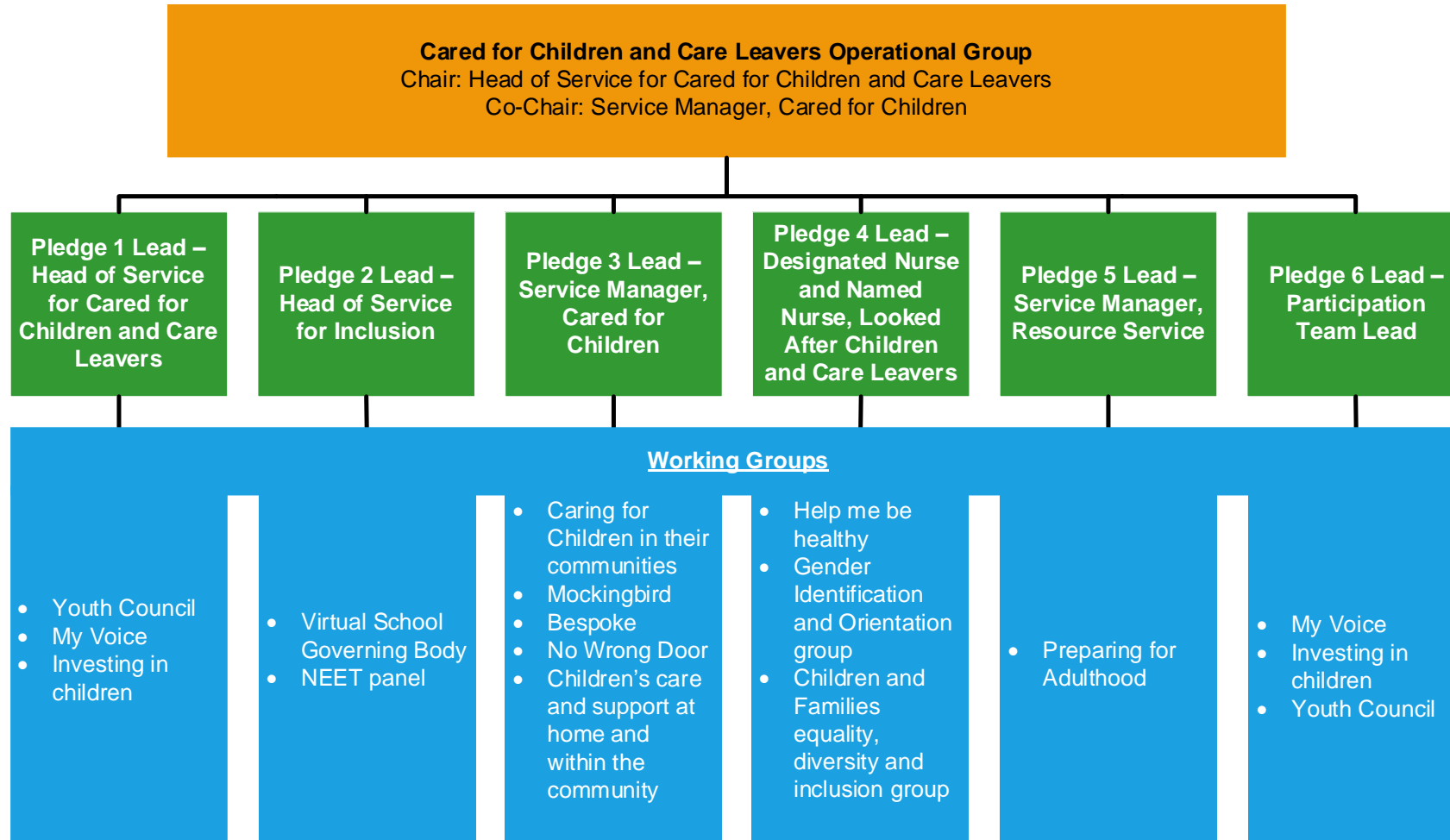


6. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
6.1	Embed the TOGETHER approach with our children and young people, making sure that all staff, partners, and elected members are working to listen to and act on what children and young people tell us.	<p>Annual cared for and care leaver survey will tell us that children and young people feel they are listened to.</p> <p>The voice of cared for children and care leavers is clear in our key strategies, plans and services across the council.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>All staff, partners, and elected members.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
6.2	<p>Increase the range of opportunities and number of children and young people engaging in activities in ways that are helpful to them.</p> <p>Children and young people who don't wish to attend groups are able to share their views via 1-1 sessions with frontline colleagues and digital communication.</p>	Increase the number of children who can share their views in a variety of ways.	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
6.3	Ensure opportunities for senior managers and elected members to hear direct from young people about their experiences and ideas.	Shadow Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc), evidence of change as a result of the voice of children and young people at Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc).	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>All staff, partners, and elected members.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
6.4	Following the annual survey of cared for children and care leavers, all services to evidence actions based on recommendations by children and young people.	<p>Each annual survey feedback will demonstrate how children and young people feel about the changes made.</p> <p>An increase in the numbers of children and young people completing the survey.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc) and Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>

		Children and young people will tell us that there have been positive changes as a result of the annual survey feedback.	
6.5	Ensure that the child's voice is evident in recruitment of all key posts in children's services.	All interview panels for key posts have involvement from cared for children and care leavers.	All services and teams, participation team to support where required.
6.6	Ensure that the child's voice is evident in the decision making when commissioning services.	Children and young people will be attending panels, presentations, judging and scoring.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Participation Team. Commissioning Team.

Governance





If you have any views on this strategy or how we can improve our services, please contact us at corporateparenting@cheshireeast.gov.uk

