



Oldham's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-2022



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FOREWARDS

Oldham's Commitment to Corporate Parenting

Our ambition is for Oldham to be a place where children and young people thrive.

In simple terms, we want Oldham to be a place where children and young people:

- are safe and supported
- are healthy and happy
- have opportunities to learn and achieve their potential
- have a voice and feel part of a community
- are ready for life and work
- feel proud
-

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out our vision for improving the life chances of children looked after and care leavers, our shared approach for making this happen, and how we will know we are getting it right. Children looked after and care leavers have been integral to its revision and have a part to play in making sure we deliver on our promises to them through the Children in Care Council and their role on the Corporate Parenting Panel. This is a three-year strategy which will be refreshed annually. Our children looked after and care leavers have told us what is important to them and their views are reflected in the priorities identified in the Action Plan for this year (2019).

I am delighted to share the strategy with you and look forward to working together to make Corporate Parenting count for our children looked after and care leavers.



Cllr Amanda Chadderton
Cabinet Member for Children's
Services



Merlin Joseph
Interim Director of Children's Services,
Oldham Council

Children in Care Council Oldham

We welcome this three-year Corporate Parenting Strategy and the commitments to children looked after and care leavers from Oldham's senior leaders and elected members.

We welcome the support this strategy gives to help us overcome the additional challenges we may face as children looked after and care leavers and your encouragement to help us reach our full potential, especially when we are facing difficult situations.

Our voices are not only being heard but are at the centre of decision making and are acted upon.

The Children in Care Council look forward to working with elected members and all council services to ensure children looked after and care leavers are at the heart of your work and that children and young people's voices can help to shape further this work.



INTRODUCTION

Our role as Corporate Parents – what the law says

Children and young people should grow up within their families, unless it is not safe for them to do so. Where this is not possible, a child becomes 'looked after' when the local authority arranges for the child to live somewhere other than at home. Young people who were looked after for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday are care leavers and can access support from the local authority up to the age of 25.

A local authority has a Corporate Parenting responsibility to all of its children in care and care leavers, regardless of where they live.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven Corporate Parenting Principles for children looked after and care leavers up to the age of 25. For the first time, it enshrined our collective responsibility in a duty to:

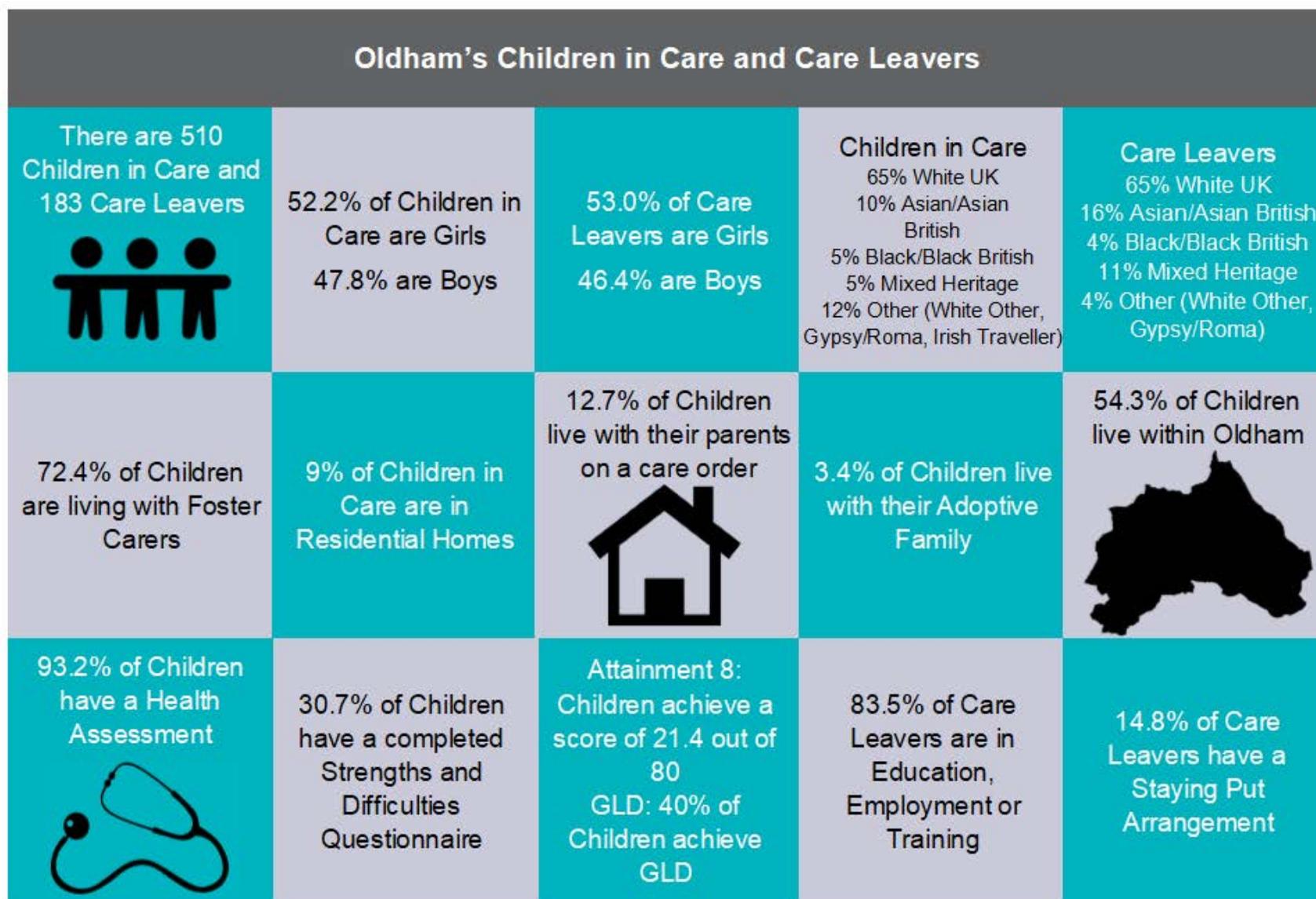
- Act in the best interest, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children in care and care leavers;
- Encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- Take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- 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;
- Promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- Be safe, have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- Prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

In Oldham, we take our Corporate Parenting responsibilities very seriously. We have high aspirations and are ambitious for our children looked after and care leavers, just like any good parent.

Our role as Corporate Parents – what our children and young people ask of us



Who are our children looked after and care leavers?



OUR VISION

Oldham is a place where
children and young people thrive

As corporate parents, we are committed to doing everything we can to give our children looked after and care leavers the best chance of achieving a positive future.

We will make being looked after an enriching experience so that our children looked after and care leavers grow up to be confident and resilient adults who achieve success in life and are proud to live, work and socialise in Oldham.

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan sets out how we will work together to achieve our strategic objectives and deliver on our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers.



Making Corporate Parenting count

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will treat you with respect and ask ourselves “would this be good enough for my children?”
- We will have a conference each year so that all adults who make decisions about your care and who provide services for you can find out what they can do to help you reach your goals

Our priority is to embed corporate parenting across the Council and partner agencies through a more robust governance structure. We will work with the Children in Care Council to raise awareness about what it means to be a good corporate parent and make sure that the Corporate Parenting Panel has the right information about the experience of children looked after and care leavers to be able to monitor their progress, be strong advocates for them and provide effective challenge so that things improve, just like any good parent would.

Our shared approach to corporate parenting means making sure that children looked after and care leavers:

- Are safe and supported
- Are healthy and happy
- Have opportunities to learn and achieve their potential
- Have a voice and feel part of a community
- Are ready for life and work
- Feel proud

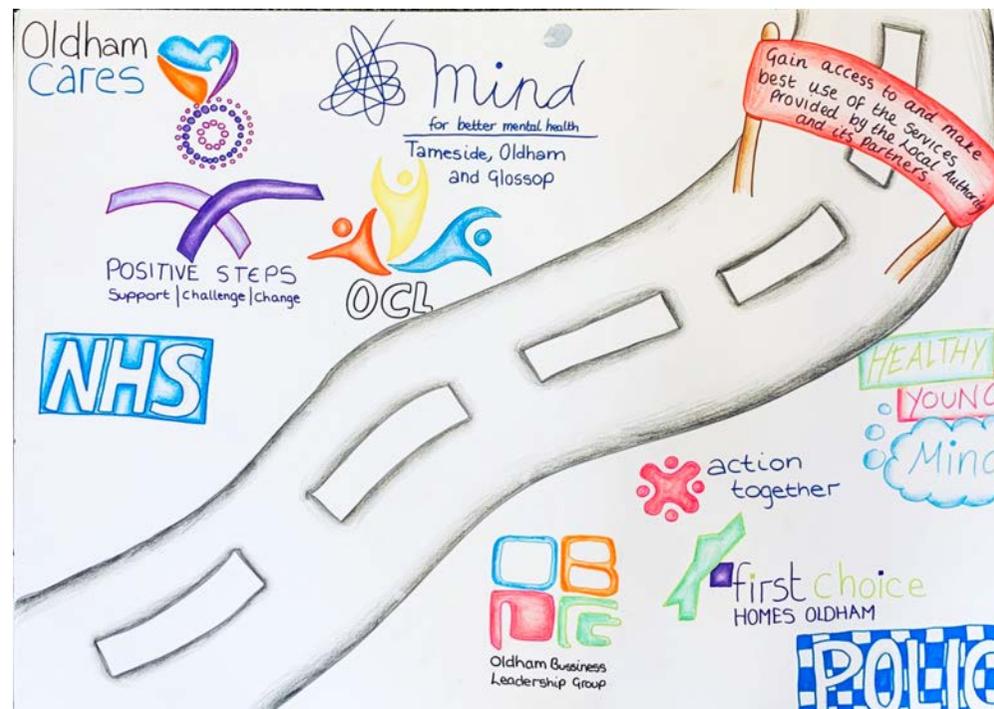
Safe and supported

Our children looked after and care leavers have asked us:

“How are you supporting me to be safe, enjoy where I live and have security in my life?”

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will provide a home where you feel safe and secure
- We will help you to keep in touch and spend time with your family and friends
- We will make sure you have photographs of your time in care for you to look back on later in your life
- We will make sure that the people who look after you and work with you, care for you, support you, and encourage you in everything you do



We will make sure that we have enough of the right placements, in the right place at the right time, so that more children and young people can grow up in Oldham, close to the people who are important to them. We will establish a permanent workforce and make sure that everyone who works with, or cares for, children looked after and care leavers understands how best to support them and has the skills to do so. We will work together to tackle youth violence and exploitation so that children and young people feel safe at home and in the community.

Healthy and happy

Our children looked after and care leavers have asked us:

“How are you best supporting us to keep ourselves healthy?”

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will make sure you get what you need to stay healthy
- We will support you to take part in positive activities



We will make sure that our children and young people are fit and healthy and have access to services that support their emotional health and wellbeing. We will stick with them through good times and when things are not going so well, encourage them to take chances and pick them up if they fall. We will make sure children looked after and care leavers have access to activities which build on what they are good at, allow them to try new things, develop skills and have fun.

Have opportunities to learn and achieve their potential

Our children looked after and care leavers have asked us:

“How are you best supporting us to achieve our potential?”

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will support you to get the best education



We will make sure children looked after can attend good schools and get the help they need to learn and make progress. We will all be ambitious for our children and young people and inspire them to dream big and achieve their goals.

Have a voice and feel part of a community

Our children looked after and care leavers have asked us:

“How are you listening to us and understanding our stories, feelings and needs and what are doing about the things we are telling you and how do you let us know?”

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will make sure that you are involved in decisions that affect you
- We will support the Children in Care Council (CiCC)
- We will provide a Children’s Rights Service to make sure you can get extra support and advice when you want it



We will give children looked after and care leavers a voice, listen to them and act on what they tell us about how well services support them and how they can they can be improved. We will teach children and young people to care about themselves and others and feel proud to be part of their local community.

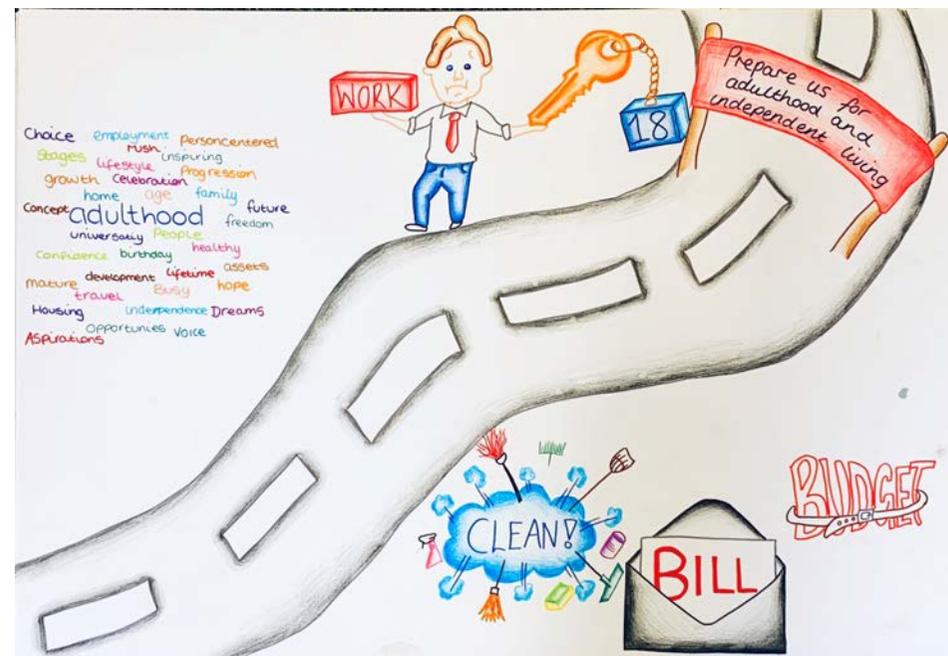
Are ready for life and work

Our children looked after and care leavers have asked us:

“What are you doing to best support me to be independent?”

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will create opportunities for traineeships, work experience and apprenticeships so that you are ready to work



We will make sure that care leavers are set up for life by supporting them to develop the practical skills and emotional resilience they will need to live independently. We will make sure that care leavers are aware of what services are available locally to support them on their journey to independence. We will create opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships across the Council and in partner agencies so that care leavers can go on to get a job and lead a successful and rewarding life.

Feel proud

Our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers:

- We will run an event every year to celebrate good things you have done

Our Stars in Our Eyes event celebrates the achievements of children looked after and care leavers and gets bigger and better every year.



GOVERNANCE

The Corporate Parenting structure

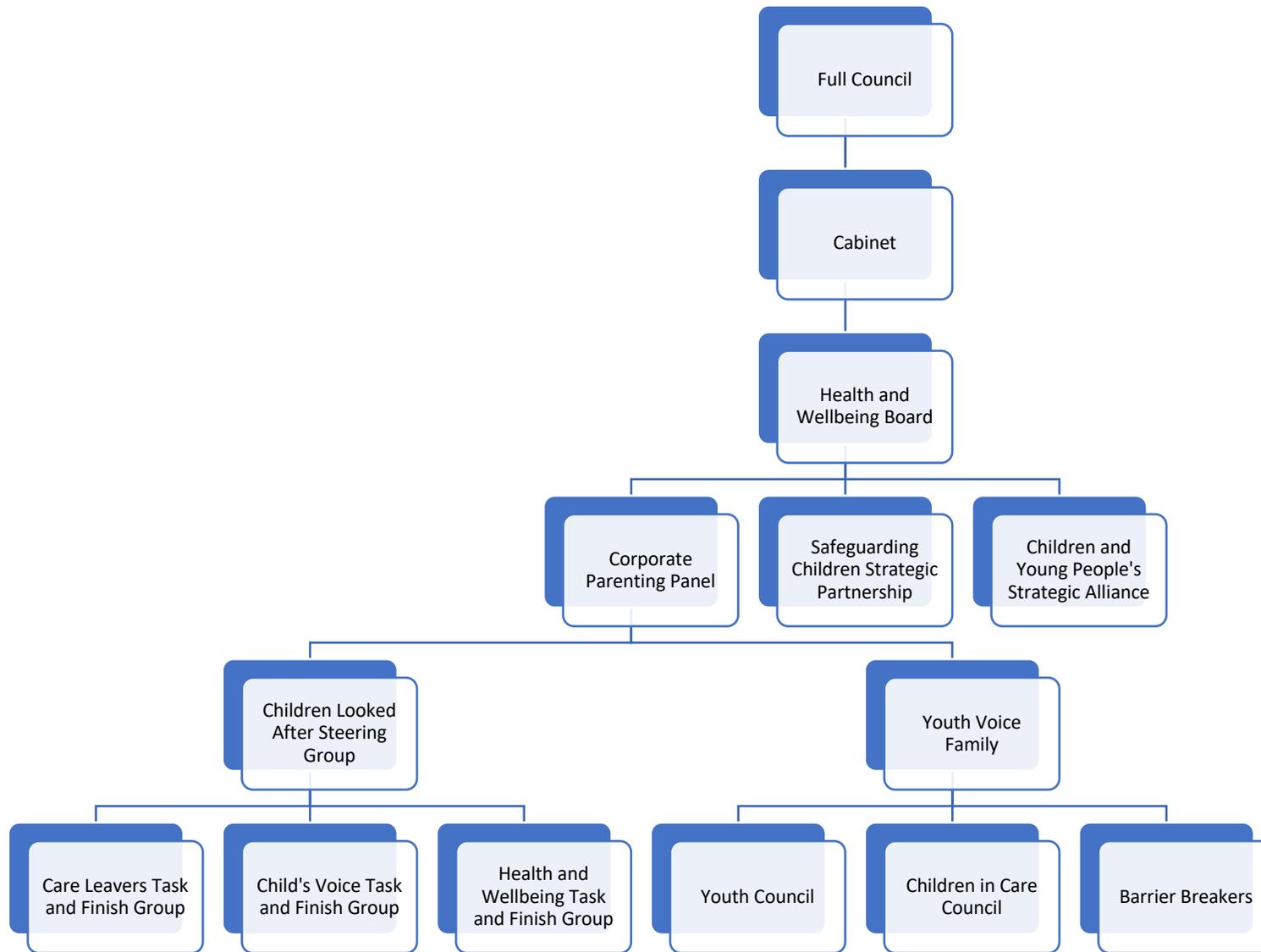
We have reviewed our corporate parenting governance structure to provide more effective leadership of the corporate parenting agenda in Oldham in order to improve outcomes for our children looked after and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Panel is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The Panel is a multi-agency forum made up of Elected Members, strategic leaders from across the Council and partner agencies, foster carers and members of the Children in Care Council. Its role is to ensure that the Council and partner agencies are discharging their corporate parenting responsibilities effectively, to champion the needs of children looked after and care leavers, and to drive the corporate parenting agenda with a relentless focus on improving outcomes.

The Children in Care Council sits alongside the Corporate Parenting Panel and has a standing item on the agenda to report on its activities and issues that are important to children looked after and care leavers. The views, wishes and feelings of children looked after and care leavers are central to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, with the children and young people reviewing the reports submitted and providing a young people's perspective on the issues for discussion.

The CLA Steering Group sits below the Corporate Parenting Panel and is responsible for driving the Corporate Parenting Action Plan and ensuring that the Council is delivering on its Pledge to children looked after and care leavers. The Steering Group has a key role in reporting on progress as well as barriers to effecting change and making recommendations for how issues can be resolved in order to improve the lived experience of children looked after and care leavers.

Task and Finish Groups are aligned to the strategic priorities and pledges made to children looked after and care leavers. These are multi-agency groups to ensure that the needs of children looked after and care leavers are well understood across all agencies and that everyone plays their part to improve services and outcomes for children and young people. The groups undertake specific pieces of work to progress the key priorities set out in the Corporate Parenting Action Plan. The work of the Task and Finish Groups is overseen by the CLA Steering Group with progress being reported back to the Corporate Parenting Panel. The terms of reference for the corporate parenting governance structure can be found on Oldham Council's Website.



Measuring success

We are committed to making Corporate Parenting count in Oldham. Measuring progress and understanding what we need to do to improve is central to the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Responding to the views, wishes and feelings of children looked after and care leavers is a priority for the Corporate Parenting Panel and this is achieved via a “you said, we did” model of feedback to the Children in Care Council. The annual children looked after and care leavers survey gains the voices and experiences of children and young people and the findings from this informs our success measures and drives our actions to continuously improve services.

Progress against the Corporate Parenting Action Plan is reviewed at each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel. The questions our children looked after and care leavers have put to us in relation to our corporate parenting responsibilities are at the heart of how we measure success:

- How are you supporting me to be safe, enjoy where I live and have security in my life?
- How are you best supporting us to keep ourselves healthy?
- How are you best supporting us to keep ourselves healthy?
- How are you listening to us and understanding our stories, feelings and needs and what are doing about the things we are telling you and how do you let us know?
- What are you doing to best support me to be independent?

These questions are incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Dashboard, which includes qualitative as well as quantitative measures to give the Panel an understanding of the impact of services for children looked after and care leavers. The Dashboard provides an overview of what is working, what we need to do better and what needs to happen next and provides the basis for effective challenge and drive towards improvement from the Panel.

More detailed oversight of the Corporate Parenting Action Plan and Dashboard takes place at the CLA Steering Group where the Task and Finish Groups report on their progress.

Progress and barriers to progress are reported to the Cabinet and Full Council via the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Strategic links

This strategy sits within a range of activity that supports our aim to improve services and the impact of being looked after for children and young people, including:

Oldham's Pledge to children looked after and care leavers

An active and influential Children in Care Council

Children looked after sufficiency and commissioning strategy

- Setting out how will ensure that we have enough high quality placements, in the right place, at the right time to meet the needs of our children looked after and care leavers

The Oldham Plan 2017 - 2022

- The Oldham Partnership which is made up of public, private, community, voluntary and faith organisations in Oldham, has created the Oldham Plan. This is a collective statement explaining how we can work together to help our people, businesses and communities in a co-operative borough

The Corporate Plan 2017 - 2020

- The Corporate Plan outlines both the Council's contribution to achieving the vision and outcomes outlined in the Oldham Plan as well as the priority areas of focus and delivery for the organisation.

Oldham's Getting to Good Plan



Oldham's pledge to Looked After Children and Young People



These are the promises that the council and children and young people agreed upon.



We will provide a home where you feel safe and secure.



We will support you to get the best education.



We will make sure that you are involved in decisions that affect you and support the Children in Care Council.



We will make sure the people who look after you and work with you, care for you, support you and encourage you in everything you do



We will make sure that you get what you need to stay healthy



We will give you the chance to go on work experience, courses and maybe get a job in Oldham.



We will make sure you have photographs of your time in care for you to look back on later in your life.



We will provide a Children and Young People's Right's Service to make sure you can get extra support and advice when you want it.



We will help you to keep in touch and spend time with your family and friends.



We will make sure that you are involved in decisions that affect you and support the Children in Care Council.



We will support you to take part in positive activities.



We will run an event every year to celebrate good things you have done.



We will have a conference each year so that all adults who make decisions about your care, and who provide services for you, can find out what they can do to help you to reach your goals.



We will treat you with respect and ask ourselves "would this be good enough for my children?"