



Corporate Parenting Board

Annual Report 2020 – 2021

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Foreword

Welcome to Stockton-on-Tees' Annual Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020 - 2021. This report summarises the work that has been undertaken in Stockton-on-Tees over the last 12 months to ensure good outcomes for children in our care and care leavers, ensuring that corporate parenting is at the forefront of everyone's agenda.

It has been an unprecedented year. The challenges we have all faced as a result of the pandemic have naturally been an area of focus as we have adapted to the various restrictions placed on us and therefore the manner in which we have delivered services. We have endeavored to ensure that the pandemic has not prevented the development of services and that the service remains committed to the promise made to children in our care and care leavers.

We want all children and young people to achieve, be healthy, safe and resilient. We want our Borough to be the best place for children and young people to grow up in regardless of that child or young person's background. As corporate parents to our children in care and care leavers, we have a special responsibility to make sure that children and young people who may have had disrupted experiences of family life and experienced trauma get the support that they need to live the happiest lives possible.

It is our responsibility to keep them safe, make sure their experiences in our care are positive and improve their on-going life chances. We recognise that no single service operating alone can achieve this and that we need to build close, coordinated working relationships with partners if we are to succeed in improving outcomes.



Councillor Barbara Inman

Children & Young People Select Cttee Vice Chairman
Corporate Parenting Board Chairman

What is corporate parenting in Stockton-on-Tees?

The Corporate Parenting Board is an advisory body which provides leadership and a governance structure for corporate parenting in order to drive forward positive outcomes for children in our care (CIOC) and care leavers. It oversees our children in care and care leavers strategy and promotes our pledges. It also provides challenge and scrutiny to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for children in our care and care leavers.

1. How does it work?

The Corporate Parenting Board meet bimonthly, and prior to the pandemic met face to face. Following lockdown, meetings were held remotely on the following dates:

- 7 August 2020
- 9 October 202
- 11 December 2020
- 12 February 2021

The legislation that allowed formal Council meetings, its committees and sub-committees to be held remotely expired on 6 May 2021. Therefore all relevant Corporate Board meetings from 7 May 2021 had to be held face to face, namely:

- 2 July 2021
- 6 August 2021
- 8 October 2021

The Corporate Parenting Board has the following aims, objectives and vision:

To be the best corporate parents we can be, working together to provide children and young people in our care and care leavers with happy and healthy childhoods, helping them reach and exceed their full potential and aspirations and supporting them into successful adulthood.

The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is to enquire and understand: set ambition and to champion and challenge our collective care of children in our care and care leavers. This is an assurance role that sits alongside multi agency operational work and organisational scrutiny. It is informed by our experts, our practitioners, children and young people and carers.

The commitments we pledge to help us realise our aims, objectives and vision:

- To make sure that the whole Council and relevant partner agencies commit to excellent standards of corporate parenting
- To seek improved long-term outcomes for children in their care and their families – for their happiness, well-being, educational success and future prospects
- To promote stability for all children in care

- To ensure that the voice of the child in our care is heard and influences both the services and the policies that we deliver
- To scrutinise, monitor and oversee key performance indicators in relation to health, education and well-being
- To ensure that all relevant strategies, plans and resources identify and are explicit about the contribution that they make to targets agreed for improvement
- To consider the outcomes of inspections and regulatory visits based on provision for children in our care and care leavers
- To receive regular reports on: provisions for leaving care, housing and training for care leavers
- To monitor the work of our adoption and fostering services
- To support work experience schemes
- To celebrate the achievements of children in our care, care leavers and their carers
- Undertake a programme of visits and listen to feedback from board members to ensure that provision is appropriate and effective
- Ensure that children in our care and care leavers are offered access to advocacy

The Corporate Parenting Board met seven times in 2020 - 2021 and considered the following reports:

1. Adoption (6 monthly)
2. Data and analysis (6 monthly)
3. Virtual school update (6 monthly)
4. Children in our care strategic group (CIOCSG) update (monthly)
5. Review of out of area CIOC
6. Dartington Project
7. Reunification work update
8. Accommodation update
9. Fostering panel and fostering service report
10. CYP emotional and health & wellbeing report
11. Post 16 and care leavers support and accommodation report
12. CIOC and care leavers strategy
13. CIOC and care leavers action plan
14. Sufficiency statement action plan
15. Representatives from 'Let's take Action' group

Children in our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG)

The CIOCSG is accountable to the Stockton-on-Tees Corporate Parenting Board and Stockton-on-Tees Council's Cabinet. Throughout the last year the group has continued to meet regularly and whilst bespoke pieces of work were identified for further exploration, much of the focus of the group has been on COVID-19 and the impact of this on service delivery for children in our care and care leavers. It is planned that moving forward the CIOCSG will become more of a stakeholder group, overseeing the priorities of the newly formed CIOC core group.

Our Family Strategy

Everything in our current Children in care and care leavers strategy (2018-2021) is about corporate parenting: it describes the way we will work to improve outcomes and life chances for children in our care, and how we will champion them, and support them to be the best they can be in life.

We have always taken the view that corporate parenting is best achieved across the extended family – working with our partners. However, there are specific duties on the Council which we must fulfil:

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children in our care and care leavers. This requires the Council to have regard to a set of corporate parenting principles when exercising its functions in relation to children in our care and care leavers (formerly relevant children):

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people
- To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- 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
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people
- For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote cooperation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate, in turn, with the local authority. Guidance in the act highlights that corporate parenting is a 'task that must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies'.

Our strategy sets out how the Council and its partners intend to fulfil these requirements. However, this is not just about fulfilling requirements, but about ambition and aspiration for the children in our care and care leavers.

We are determined to ensure that their needs are given the highest priority and that they are valued and cared about, not only by those who look after them on a daily basis, but also by those who make decisions politically, corporately and operationally.

This means...

- That we will work to deliver the priorities in this strategy, and that we will be open and honest about progress
- That we want to do more than deliver what we have to, and recognise the many individual and organisational ways in which we can achieve much more than our service or thematic roles as defined in our priorities
- Elected members of the Council will be clear about their roles, and the actions they can take to be good corporate parents
- That senior officers in the Council will go above and beyond their roles to achieve the best for children and young people in our care, using their personal authority and resources to do more
- That all of our partners in the Borough will take their corporate parenting role seriously, and will commit to do the best they can, as part of an extended family
- That all officers of the Council are clear about what they can do to contribute.

What have we done in 2020-21?

Despite continuing to drive improvement, the COVID-19 pandemic has inevitably had a major impact on the delivery of frontline services and the Corporate Parenting Board have continued to support frontline services to manage the effects of this wherever possible. For example, we revised our Statement of Purpose for all of our residential children's care homes to allow for greater flexibilities throughout the pandemic. Key principals have continued to underpin our work during these exceptional times:

- Child centred - promoting children's best interests: nothing is more important than children's welfare: children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need for help is identified
- Risk based – prioritising support and resources for children at greatest risk
- Evidence informed - ensuring decisions are justified and proportionate
- Collaborative – working in partnership with parents and other professionals
- Family focussed – harnessing the strengths of families in their communities
- Transparent – providing clarity and maintaining professional curiosity about a child's wellbeing

We continued to restore services through 2020 - 2021, and although the second national lockdown in November 2020 presented additional challenges for the delivery of children's services, arrangements were quickly put into place to reduce the impact. Family time for children did not return to virtual contact but remained a combination of both face to face and virtual time. All statutory CIOC reviews were held within timescales following a hybrid model. CIOC health and PEP's continued to be held within timescales again following a hybrid model.

Our numbers of children in care remained fairly static during lockdown (around 570) and we did not experience the significant rise in numbers that some local authorities experienced.

In part this is likely to have been due to our frontline social workers continuing to undertake face to face visits, subject to robust risks assessments, our Edge of Care services still keeping in touch with families in crises, albeit remotely, and our courts, although there were some delays during lockdown did hold hearings and children's plans were therefore progressed.

Despite the difficulties that have been experienced during the pandemic, we did continue to fulfil our statutory safeguarding obligations and our focus continues to be on delivering the essential work to support families in Stockton-on-Tees, to safeguard children and to maintain consistency across frontline services wherever possible were experienced during lockdown.

Health

A bespoke piece of work identified by the CIOCSG for further exploration was around our health assessments which data from the reporting period 2019 - 2020 had highlighted that the proportion of review health assessments for CIOC carried out within statutory timescales had dropped beneath the set threshold of 98%, particularly for the under 5 age group. In addition, for the same period the proportion of under 5's registered with a dentist and optician were noted to be lower than anticipated. Analysis carried out by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's commissioned 0-19 service concluded that:

- The majority of reviews that did not take place within the statutory time period were in relation to children placed out of area, were allocated review health assessments were carried out by health services outside of Stockton-on-Tees – this has been addressed by our local health trust
- A small proportion (1-2 per month) allocated to the Stockton-on-Tees service were also completed outside of statutory timescales. Investigation into this highlighted the following reasons:
 - Foster carer requesting a change in the appointment time
 - Foster carer forgetting about an appointment
 - Staff sickness

Childs Voice

The CIOCSG has been particularly keen on promoting the child's voice with some members being involved in work around the development of a tool specifically to support children and young people to share their thoughts, views and feelings – to provide them with a platform in which their voice is heard and is at the centre of all of our planning. One aim of capturing the voice of CIOC is to take any learning and see how this can better shape and inform our services moving forward.

Multi agency support for vulnerable teenagers

The CIOCSG has supported work to look at how best we can support some of our more vulnerable teenagers (including those in care) who are at risk of or who are suffering from some form of exploitation.

Some members, working alongside our Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership have helped develop a 'Contextual Safeguarding Model' – an approach which looks at how we can reduce and manage risk for those young people who are suffering from some form of exploitation outside of the family environment.

It is an approach that is based firmly on community and partnership working and offers an alternative approach to our current child protection processes which are focused on abuse which occurs from within the family. This approach was launched on 1 October 2021 and it is planned that evaluation will take place to inform us how effective we are in protecting these very vulnerable teenagers.

COVID-19 response

Arrangements to visit CIOC continued as before the start of the pandemic. Contact was maintained in line with procedures and followed a hybrid model i.e., mix of direct face to face contact and via a number of remote methods.

Due to the robust roll out of PPE and the implementation of risk assessments, relatively few COVID-19 cases were reported within our residential children's care homes or in foster homes. Those cases which were reported were managed well and the infection contained.

Family time continued to be offered for all CIOC although the level of direct contact did occur on a less frequent basis than before the start of the pandemic. Innovative ways were identified to offer children indirect contact with their birth families to ensure that contact was maintained.

A specific COVID-19 programme for those vulnerable children and young people who may have experienced loss or bereavement as a result of the pandemic was set up. This programme was shared with schools and was aimed at supporting those CIOC who might benefit from therapy but who did not necessarily meet the criteria for CAMHS.

Our virtual school used some of their budget to purchase additional laptops to ensure that CIOC had the appropriate ICT equipment to be home schooled when unable to attend school directly.

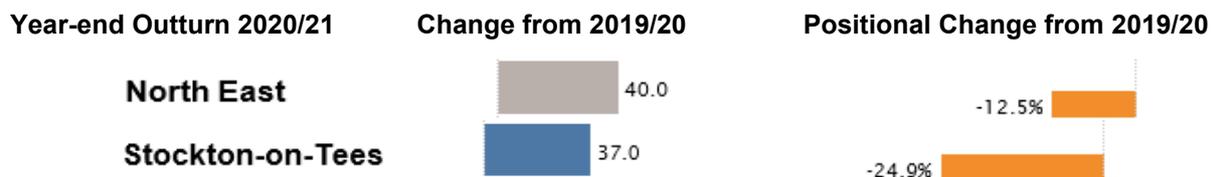
Pamper packs were made for our care leavers, in recognition of their vulnerability and the increased isolation as a direct result of COVID-19. These were very well received with many care leavers feeding back that it showed them that they were thought of and cared for.

The resilience of our staff in continuing to support and care for CIOC throughout the pandemic was commendable, despite the additional pressures felt on both a professional and personal level. The children in our care and care leavers themselves generally adapted very well to the restrictions and the changes in their lives brought about by COVID-19. The level of resilience shown was at times, humbling.

What impact have we had?

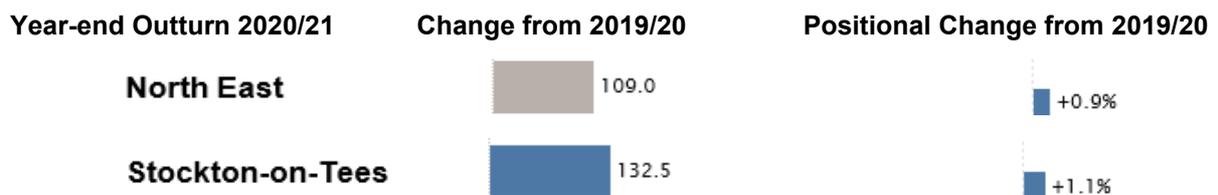
Children in our care and adoption performance

The rate of children who started to be children in our care per 10,000 children



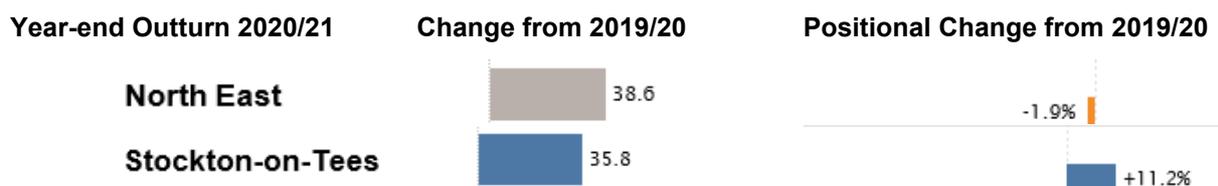
Stockton-on-Tees' rate of children starting to be CIOC has reduced significantly during 2020 - 2021 and is below the regional average at the end of March 2021.

The children in our care rates per 10,000 children



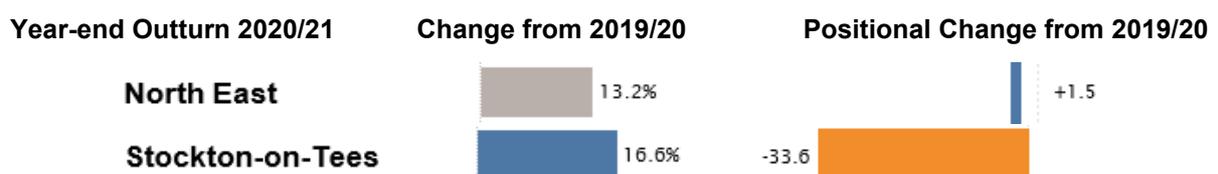
Stockton-on-Tees' rate of CIOC remains significantly above the regional average, with little comparative change during 2020/21.

The rate of children ceasing to be children in our care per 10,000 children



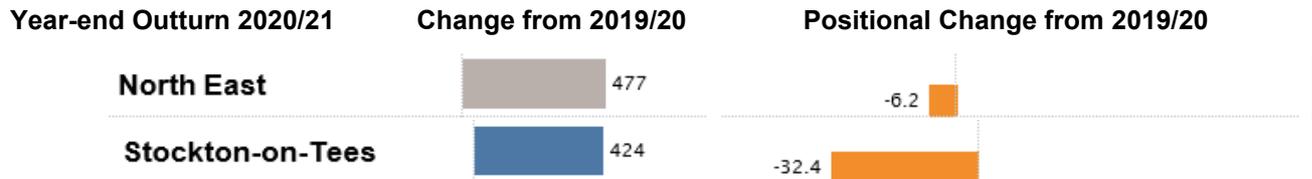
Stockton-on-Tees remains below the regional average for the rate of children ceasing to be CIOC, but that gap has closed markedly during 2020/21.

The percentage of children ceasing to be children in our care who were adopted



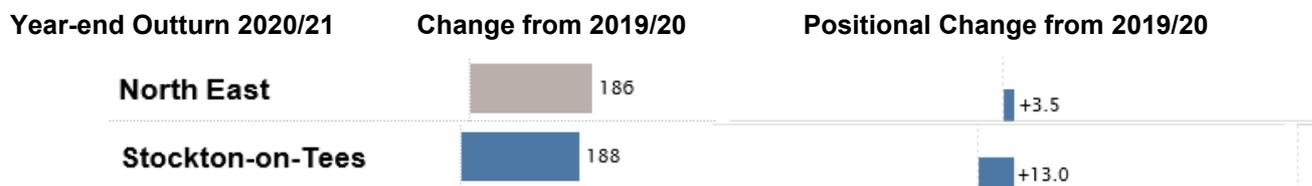
Stockton-on-Tees remains above the regional average for children ceasing to be CIOC who were adopted, even allowing for a significant reduction in performance during 2020-2021.

The average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (three-year averages)



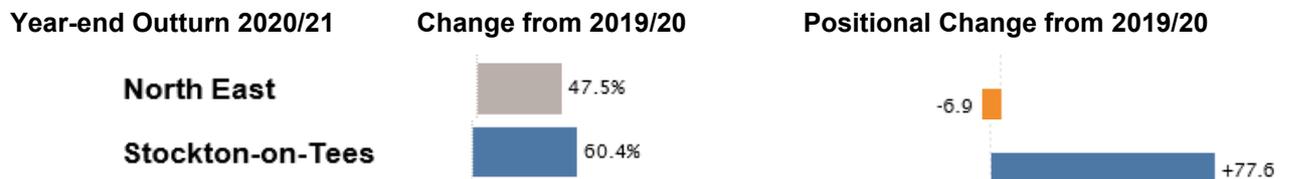
The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family has reduced markedly in Stockton-on-Tees and is now well below the regional average.

The average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (three-year averages)



Stockton-on-Tees' performance is now slightly above the regional three-year average for this measure following a significant increase during 2020-2021.

The percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family



Stockton-on-Tees' performance on the percentage of children waiting less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family has improved tremendously in recent years and the percentage is now significantly higher (better) than the regional average.

Quality and experience

- At the 1 October 2021 we had 568 children in our care. This number has remained generally stable over the last year
- At the 1 October 2021 our current children's homes judgements were:
 - 2 - Outstanding
 - 4 - Good
 - 1 - Requires Improvement (this was not a reflection on the care provided to our children)

- The current judgements for our Spark of Genius homes (joint venture) were:
 - 2 Outstanding
 - 1 Good
- We have continued to embed 'Our family – our strategy for children and young people in, and leaving, our care' and our Corporate Parenting Board, established in 2018. A new children in our care (CIOC) core group has recently been formed to help improve focus and delivery of our priorities
- We have reviewed and introduced new processes for managing Public Law Outline (PLO) through a new Legal Gateway Panel in response to inspection.
 - Feedback from external scrutiny via our Partners in Practice (PIP) in relation to our new Legal Gateway panel: 'It was clear that you have an improved oversight of children's journey and experience and that the Care Planning Panel is providing good oversight and grip at a crucial part in children's journey. Social workers and team managers were positive about improvements in practice reflecting that practice context is improved with structures and systems settling down and enabling them to work effectively. Your Care Planning and Legal Proceedings Panels have good impact'.
 - In May 2021 a themed audit into children subject to PLO was undertaken. The audits evidenced improvement around drift and delay, with one audit being graded as outstanding
 - We have developed a PLO toolkit from the 'Recommendations to achieve best practice in the child protection family justice systems' (March 2021). Additionally, in 2021 a Public Law self-assessment was completed, and this will continue to be reviewed to ensure our workforce are confident in pre-proceedings and early permanence planning
 - We have introduced improved tracking and reviewing mechanisms, with detailed monthly performance reports and higher level quarterly strategic meetings centred on ChAT analysis
- We have refreshed our resource panel processes to support decision making on children who could move placement but where there may be a need for additional support to ensure plans can be implemented
- We have continued to develop and refine our Edge of Care service, relocating it to new premises
- We have refreshed our approach to Regulation 24 placements. All regulation 17/24 placements are reviewed within Care Planning Panel, alongside all S.20 placements
- We continue to host Adoption Tees Valley, the 10th regional adoption agency to be established nationally who are leading on work around early permanence/foster to adopt on behalf of the 5 Tees Valley Councils
- We have refreshed our procedures to support joint working between social workers and Adoption Tees Valley and to ensure that early permanence is achieved. This includes a recommendation to seek legal advice at the earliest opportunity for an unborn baby, where it is clear within the referral that adoption will be included in the planning.

- Our Virtual School (VS) has introduced an EPEP. During COVID-19 trauma informed practice continued to be rolled out to schools (virtually) with additional support offered where it was apparent that some pupils were facing additional difficulties. The extended responsibilities of the VS are under development to ensure all those children who have or have had a social worker are provided with extra support. The VS has been successful in their bid for post 16 Pupil Premium Plus. This will support much more comprehensive data for care leavers in the future
- Our Pathway Plan Reviewing Officer came into post in November 2020 to ensure that pathway plans were reviewed and developed within timescales. A tracking and monitoring system is now in place, communications for young people have been redesigned and through working closely with our leaving care team, records are completed in a timely manner

What has been the impact?

- Less drift and delay and greater oversight. We have received positive feedback from the courts on the quality of our care plans as a result of our actions, though we have also had some challenges throughout COVID-19 and a delay in some cases being brought to court
- Our new Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements continue to result in a more robust review, audit and challenge process which is being feedback faster to frontline practitioners
- The work from our Edge of Care service has prevented several children from coming into care. The offer of respite, along with intensive parenting interventions has seen positive change
- We have secured more proportionate legal orders for some young people as a direct result of the financial support that has been available. This has prevented some children from becoming the subject of interim care orders or care orders solely for financial reasons
- An increase in the number of children placed in foster to adopt placements has meant that children have benefitted from the opportunity to form an immediate attachment with the carers who, it is planned, will go on to become their adopters
- We responded to COVID-19 restrictions and completed risk assessments for individual children so plans could be progressed, and they could move to their adoptive placements without delay
- There has continued to be noted improvement in the quality of child permanence reports which have been completed and presented to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in good timescales
- We have seen an improvement in the time between receiving court authority to place the child for adoption and deciding on a match to an adoptive family. There has also been an improvement in the timeliness between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family. We anticipate there will be further improvement at the end of March 2022
- There has been an increase in the number of Placements Orders granted compared to previous years with less children waiting to be matched with adopters. Timescales for this have reduced
- We have seen an increase in new-born babies being placed in fostering to adopt placements upon discharge from hospital following birth
- There have been no adoption placement disruptions which is an improvement from previous years

- Audits undertaken in relation to unborn babies where proceedings had been initiated upon birth evidenced improved practice: The risks were clearly identified and understood, and proceedings could not have been prevented
- Audits undertaken in relation to Regulation 24 placements demonstrates that learning from our Inspection of Local Authority Services is well understood and is embedded in practice
- Our Virtual School has run a series of hubs for children in our care to receive additional support and guidance. In relation to further education, we currently have 27 care leavers who attend university with two of these young people having recently commenced their master's in Medical and Molecular Virology and Law and Legal Practice respectively

Impact on practice and outcomes

Making good decisions for children

- We base our decision making for children on thorough assessment of their needs
- We are currently focusing on consolidating the use of Valuing Care to support children in our care and will use the experience and expertise of our staff and feedback from our children and young people when we roll out the use of the tool across our wider teams. We have developed an action plan to support us to embed the Valuing Care approach
- Principle of families staying together – this is a priority for the refreshed children in our care core group and will be embedded into our new Children in Our Care and Care Leavers Strategy for 2022
- Edge of Care – we will continue to develop our edge of care services to increase early interventions to those families at risk of/in crises
- 75 children came into care over the past six months, which is 34/10,000 and in line with the national average, with 11% of these children having been in our care previously. (Evidence Source: ChAT Q1 2021-22)
- We continue to monitor and track all children subject to S.20 at our Care Planning panel. An analysis of each child's case record was last reviewed in April 2021. All cases had a clear rationale as to why a child had become a child in our care and decision making was found to be appropriate. As of April 2021 – 8% of all children in our care were recorded as being subject to S20 which is a low overall cohort.

Participation and direct work with children in care and care leavers

- Children in care and care leavers are visited regularly by their social workers, with over 90% of high-risk vulnerable children visited in the last four weeks. (Evidence Source: Vulnerable Children Survey Wave 25)
- There are 20% of children attending review meetings, but a much larger percentage (over 80%) are having their views heard through written submissions or via advocates. (Evidence Source: TOP Monthly Report August 2021)

- We have recently renewed our contract with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to ensure every child has access to advocacy services
- Awards / celebration - although our awards ceremonies and celebrations have not been held during the pandemic, we did ensure that 'celebrations' continued virtually by sending out letters of congratulations and medals to all children in our care. We are in the process of preparing to again celebrate our children and young people's achievements, the work of our foster carers, supported lodging providers and the work of our residential children's homes staff
- Let's Take Action (LTA) – over the last 12 months the LTA group has been affected by COVID-19, with limited numbers and minimal access to face-to-face working. However, adaptations have been positively implemented with weekly meetings being held outdoors or virtually

Projects have included:

- Continued support of the creation of the young person friendly version of the Valuing Care Assessment
- Continued support of the children in our care (CIOC) review tender with the NHS. Evaluations of the applications is planned for September 2021
- Planning future campaigns with the Regional Children in Care Council
- Delivering leaving care surveys
- Supporting a focus group discussion with Children NE
- Looked into foster carer training ideas
- Discussed with a Personal Advisor (PA) from our leaving care team about setting up home bags to support care leavers
- Attended a smoking cessation session
- Enjoyed several activities
- Researched and selected the items for the teenager room in the Edmund Harvey Centre (our commissioned contact building)
- Created a list of top tips for social workers when working with children in our care

Future projects that are planned:

- Involvement in the local authority foster carer training
 - Training for the local authority Fostering Panel
 - CIOC Max card
 - CIOC and care leavers app/website
 - Local Councillor consultation event
 - Regional Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) consultation
 - Training for the independent visitors programme
 - Support with the creation of the Young Inspectors branding
- More Stuff Like This Please (MSLTP) – our ongoing partnership with ARC has continued during the pandemic and resulted in a book of experiences in the pandemic being published
 - No Limits – part of this work is exploring how employees can support children and young people in our care or care leavers. Work also continues to raise the awareness of the role of the corporate parent within the Council and with partners. We are currently looking at how we can increase job opportunities for our children in our care and care leavers, with renewed focus on apprenticeship opportunities.

What are we going to do next?

Throughout 2021 - 2022 we are continuing to deliver on our pledge to children in our care and care leavers, maintain oversight of our corporate parenting services while also focussing on a number of key themes.

We will refresh our strategy for the period 2023-25, building on the action plan for this year.

The five key priorities for the action plan for 2021 - 22 are:

We will always be informed by the views, voices and opinions of care experienced children and young people by

- Develop a participation strategy to clarify the purpose, role, need and importance of the voice of the child to ensure that this is embedded in all we do and hope to achieve – ‘You spoke, we listened’
- Involve children in our care in reviewing all current tools to capture the child’s voice and agree what we need moving forward
- Extend our current Mind of my Own (MOMO) contract for a further year
- Develop a viewpoint app/module
- Identify what services can be developed and what practice can be changed/influenced by the child’s voice
- Introduce development sessions across all partners to embed the child’s voice within all of our planning
- Improve life story work

Improve outcomes and life chances, with a focus on:

- Education, employment and training (EET):
 - Implement the agreed scrutiny action plan via a task and finish group, which includes children in our care and partners
 - Review the current EET clinic and process to ensure that funding and incentives will help young people to access and sustain EET opportunities
 - Explore national and local initiatives available for employee and employer when employment is gained
 - Redefine the current approach and commitment to getting children in our care and care leavers into EET
 - Develop a task and finish group to improve focus on retraining partners and the workforce to improve further opportunities
 - Close the gap between children in our care and those who are not by Reviewing the role of the Virtual School (VS) and being more specific around priorities

- Improve our understanding of what trauma informed practice is based on by clearer analysis of demand and need, data and intelligence
 - Increase and improve the delivery of trauma informed practice within schools
 - Improve children in our care exclusion rates by improving support and challenge to relevant schools
 - Improve data to inform a better understanding of which schools require the greatest support (and challenge)
- Healthy lives
 - Reviewing our current contracts and strategies to ensure the right support is being offered with the most appropriate partner engagement.
 - More focus on our agreed priorities of:
 - Speech and Language.
 - COVID recovery.
 - Building healthy relationships.
 - Mental health and wellbeing.
 - Trauma informed practice.
 - Improving our health and dental performance by working closely with the NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to recommission a new health assessment model and with NHS England to offer dental appointments at any dentist for children in our care
 - Cultural experiences
 - We will further develop our More Stuff Like This model with our lead cultural partner ARC

Seek to keep families together, and close to their communities

- Focus on babies born into care:
 - We are going to develop a 'babies at risk of being born into care' practice guidance. We want to ensure our workforce are confident in permanence planning at the earliest opportunity
 - We are going to develop a 'babies at risk of being born into care' support package. We want to offer our parents robust packages of support when there is a risk the baby maybe born into care
 - We are in the process of developing a Legal Pathway reporting system which will provide more robust management reports and higher level of scrutiny
 - We will continue to review our Public Law self-assessment and ensure our workforce are confident in pre-proceedings and early permanence planning, working with Adoption Tees Valley on permanence planning

- We will continue to work with regional local authorities as part of a task group for 'babies at risk of being born into care' and develop a regional approach
- Continue to implement our PAUSE project and potentially commence the Barnardo's led StartWell project in 2022, dependent on external funding
- Design/redesign/commission and procure new therapeutic provision for children in our care, edge of care and their families based on need and informed by data and intelligence
- Design a refreshed sufficiency and commissioning strategy with specific deliverable objectives
- Develop a short-term sufficiency plan based on need and demand data to inform what we need in the next 12-24 months
- Review and refine 'Our Place' exploring possible extension to No Wrong Door
- Expand our 'Turnaround' home provision
- Explore the possible adoption of the House project
- Expand in-house fostering capacity by launching a new and refreshed foster carer offer, increasing capacity within our fostering team and developing the 'Mockingbird' model
- Implement the 'Mockingbird' model to support foster carers in caring for the children and young people in their care
- Our contextual safeguarding approach will be further embedded and will offer increased support and intervention to those children at risk of exploitation or who go missing

Develop and communicate our vision, embed our approach and intent:

- Placement management and modelling (Sufficiency Strategy):
 - Proactively manage placements to ensure we are consistently assessing how well the needs of children in our care are met by developing a rolling medium term financial plan for all external placements based on our Valuing Care tool i.e. focus on need
 - Revising the way we work with finance to monitor and model the cost of all placements
- Improved communication of progress on implementation and outcomes:
 - Develop a plan and raise awareness to communicate our vision/principles and pledge around children in our care and care leavers by developing a marketing strategy that is clear, concise and easily accessible
 - Raise the awareness of the role of the corporate parent with Council staff and partners by producing briefings outlining the role and expectations of both the Corporate Parenting Board and the role of a corporate parent
 - Improve partner engagement by including multi agency membership in all task and finish groups lead by the new CIOC core group.
- Identifying clear corporate parenting roles and opportunities including our No Limits programme:
 - Establish a 'Just Giving page'
 - Establish charitable status

- Develop a payroll deduction scheme

Improve outcomes for care experienced young people (care leavers) by focusing on:

- Refreshing our current care leavers offer and involve care experienced young people in developing the offer further
- Review the marketing of this offer/use of an app and website to ensure accessibility for all
- Participation in the regional care leavers approach with other local authorities
- Re-define the current approach to increase opportunities for getting care leavers into education, employment, training
- Ensure appropriate accommodation is available i.e. supported accommodation, staying close, semi/independent living opportunities
- Further develop our procedure to prevent and reduce homelessness for 16-17 year olds, care leavers and those 18-25 years old who are vulnerable young people
- Ensure we continue to 'keep in touch' and engage with care leavers
- Ensure care leavers have appropriate access to health services and therapies by reviewing our existing contracts and strategies
- Support the role of the Virtual School in closing the educational gap between those children in our care and those who are not
- Support opportunities for care leavers to access further/higher education
- We plan to develop a task and finish group to establish a multi-agency approach to post 18 plans
- Our Pathway Plan Reviewing Officer will undertake pre meet reports in a timely manner. Quarterly monitoring reports are to be developed alongside an audit tool to monitor the quality of pathway plans. Awareness raising workshops/training is planned for staff alongside increased networking with other Local Authorities to identify best practice/share ideas.