



# Brighton & Hove's Corporate Parenting Strategy: 2016-19

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the children and young people who participated in the 'Your Choice' 3 day group work programme 23-25<sup>th</sup> Aug 2016. Without your involvement it would have been difficult to write the corporate parenting strategy as your wishes and feelings are central to its development. Thank you also for the excellent artwork which you produced and which has been used throughout the strategy document.

Thank you also to Tina James, Quality Assurance Programme Manager, for her invaluable support in writing this strategy.



# Preface

**Dear Corporate Parent,**

**You are responsible for looking after us. Yes – YOU. You might not feel like you are; you are definitely not our Mum or Dad. But, you are our ‘Corporate Parent’, and we are your Corporate Children.**

**A few of us got together over the summer to have a bit of a think about how you’re doing. You’re doing all right but we noticed that there were some common things that you, and people that work for you get wrong.**

**We’re not going to go through and list them, but we had some ideas about things you could do to make sure you are being better Corporate Parents, for us, your corporate children.**

**But before you do that, we want to offer to you a challenge. We are often being asked our opinions about how things work and what could be better yet we see very little change. Some of us don’t even believe you will read this letter, let alone do anything about it. Some of us don’t think you will act at all on the advice we give in this letter in a meaningful way.**

**Prove us wrong.**

**From,**

**Children and young people who attended the ‘Our Choice’ activity days in August 2016.**



Dear Children in Care and Care Leavers,

The first thing I want to say is that I did read your letter - every word of it. And it touched me deeply. I am one of 54 councillors and 'corporate parents' elected to Brighton and Hove City Council. But more importantly, I was a looked after child from the age of 6. After years of foster care and social workers, I left school with few qualifications. Life was tough for a while, until I got the chance to volunteer on an overseas community project that would change the rest of my life.

As lead councillor for children and a former foster child, I bring to my role a steely determination to be both resilient and ambitious. Ambitious for you and all our looked after children. I've said to social workers that I want our city to be the best place to grow up in care. Whatever your specific background or challenges, 'being in care' is not something you should ever feel ashamed of.

Today, I run a successful small business and I have three children of my own. I love them dearly. I take an interest in who they are as individual characters and what they want to do in life. Like all families, we can fall out. But it is that strong bond of love and shared trust that always brings us back together.

You've given me a renewed resolve to ensure our children never again think 'you won't read this'. I want children who are looked after by us to never doubt that 'we love them as our own'. My children never doubt that I will not listen, not fight for them, not ensure their own individual needs are met and support them to dream and to achieve their dreams. All our children have an amazing capacity; they do not want to be seen as different but they are special. You are our children, and we love you as we would love our own. Our children demand special treatment, they need excellent focused services, there should be no gap to impair any recovery or development need. This strategy demonstrates this commitment across Agencies and the Local Authority and will be a living document. We will ensure that we work with every child and young person to ensure their demands are met.

You have my word.

**Cllr Tom Bewick, Chair of the Children, Young People and Skills Committee**

17<sup>th</sup> October 2016

# Brighton & Hove's Corporate Parenting Strategy

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## Dear Corporate Parent.....

To embed the voice of our looked after young people throughout the Corporate Parenting Strategy the BHCC Youth Service Advocacy & Participation team delivered a three-day group work programme 'Your Choice' with children and young people in August 2016. The aim of the programme was to find out from children and young people how we were doing as their corporate parents. Over three days children and young people designed the art work for the Corporate Parenting Strategy and provided feedback about the CiC Pledge and Care Leaver's Pledge.

The priority throughout was to listen to young people and act on what they tell us, ensuring that their voices were heard throughout the strategy. At the end of the 3 days, children & young people compiled a letter to their Corporate Parents;

Dear Corporate Parent,

You are responsible for looking after us. Yes – YOU. You might not feel like you are; you are definitely not our Mum or Dad. But, you are our 'Corporate Parent', and we are your Corporate Children.

A few of us got together over the summer to have a bit of a think about how you're doing. You're doing all right but we noticed that there were some common things that you, and people that work for you get wrong.

We're not going to go through and list them, but we had some ideas about things you could do to make sure you are being better Corporate Parents, for us, your corporate children.

But before you do that, we want to offer to you a challenge. We are often being asked our opinions about how things work and what could be better yet we see very little change. Some of us don't even believe you will read this letter, let alone do anything about it. Some of us don't think you will act at all on the advice we give in this letter in a meaningful way.

Prove us wrong.

We understand that we can't always get what we want, and that sometimes you and those that work with you will make decisions

which we don't like, but please make sure you are gentle with us. Like most young people, we often don't get what we want, but just because this is common with 'most teenagers' doesn't mean it is always okay. We still need help dealing with this and we need you to be understanding about the situation. Have time for us and understand that if we have been told that we will get a certain outcome and then that doesn't come about, it hurts. Please be able to comfort us.

A lot of us felt that at times whilst we have been in your care, we have been told things just to make us comply or to keep our hopes up. This is not okay; it's the main reason we have when we are struggling to trust you, just tell us the truth and give us the facts – always. We want you to be more 'trustable'. We are your corporate children and you should always be comfortable talking about issues with us. They will come up at some point so you might as well be straight with us. We do appreciate that it can definitely be hard, but if you love us like your family, love us like we are your own you'd just go ahead and tell it to us.

When we have different ideas about decisions that need to be made, you should still trust and respect what we say. We think those things for a reason and they should be respected even if you disagree. It feels like you guys already have complete power over us and our lives, this makes it very easy for us to be intimidated by you or angry at you with little in between. Because of this it feels bad when our decisions are dismissed. It feels like 'you come in, overrule us, then disappear' and forget about us until next time. At least listen to us, respect our decisions and opinions, and try to understand why we have the opinions we do because then we will probably be more open to understanding yours. We have needs and rights and this will be a great way of having a mutual understanding of both.

We need to be sure that we can tell you things, so make us feel like you have time for us even when you don't, and make us feel like it's not just your job, even though it is. You will never know how important what we want to say is until we have said it. This also counts for when we visit you, if we're in your hub or your offices or something, please make us feel welcome – even if our visit is a bit inconvenient. Smile at us in the corridor, say hello. Let us have a voice about our care as individuals and the care you give as a corporate parent. And listen to all of what we say. All of it. It's the bits you don't want to hear that you need to hear the most.



Good parenting 101: We need you to not just care for us, but be caring towards us. Make us feel like you are loving towards us. Don't shout at us (remember, there are reasons we do what we do), make sure we are living in a safe environment with healthy food options that we like, help us to maintain friendships with support and advice and guidance, like all good parents would. Make sure we attend our check-ups and don't just forget about us as soon as you are allowed to – you are our corporate parent not a forest animal, make sure we have support once we have left your care.

As well as being cared for, we want to be happy. We want our placements to be fun filled. We want help to play and socialise with friends. We want to be able to go to fun places and do fun activities. Sometimes there are barriers to our happiness. Please support our carers in this, and allow us to have priority referrals for CAMHS - lots of us are bored whilst ill or waiting for help we know we need. Sometimes we just need some TLC from you all.

We think there needs to be a bit more education. Let's help each other to educate our peers and potential friends about what being looked after by not-a-birth-parent is. As well as this, we're kind of on our own once you stop caring for us. Most kids can pop back to their parents if things aren't working out. We can't. So, our life skills education needs to be a bit better. This will also help us now, as it will help us to be less anxious about when the time comes to leave care.

# Messages from children & young people to their Corporate Parents

## Listen

Be understanding

- Have time for us

Teach us life skills

Be comfortable to talk about issues

- Respect our decisions

Don't treat us like a job

Give us time and happiness

- Be able to comfort us
- Support after care
- Trust

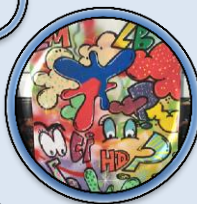
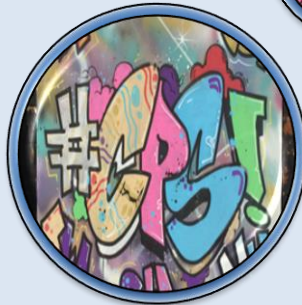
Respect our needs and rights

Allow us to live in a safe environment

Be caring towards us

- Allow us to have a voice

Don't say something you don't know



# Introduction

## Corporate Parenting

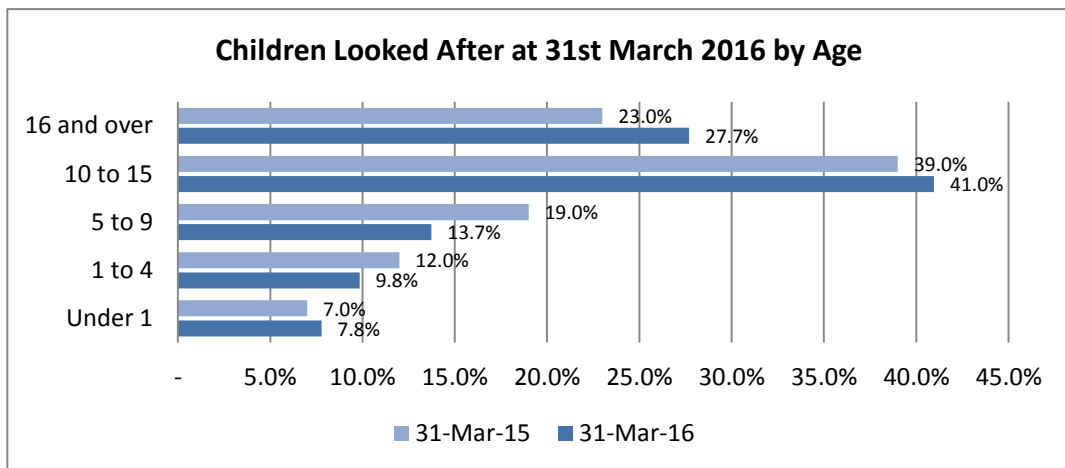
Corporate Parenting describes the collective responsibilities that members and officers of Brighton & Hove City Council and its partner organisations have towards children and young people in the care of the Local Authority.

### Our children and young people

The term Child Looked After (CLA) refers to any child or young person for whom the authority has, or shares, parental responsibility, or for whom the authority provides care and accommodation to the child or young person on behalf of their parent. The local authority also has a duty and responsibility to those young people who leave their long term care after the age of 16 years until they reach the age of 21 years or up to the age of 25 if they are in higher education.

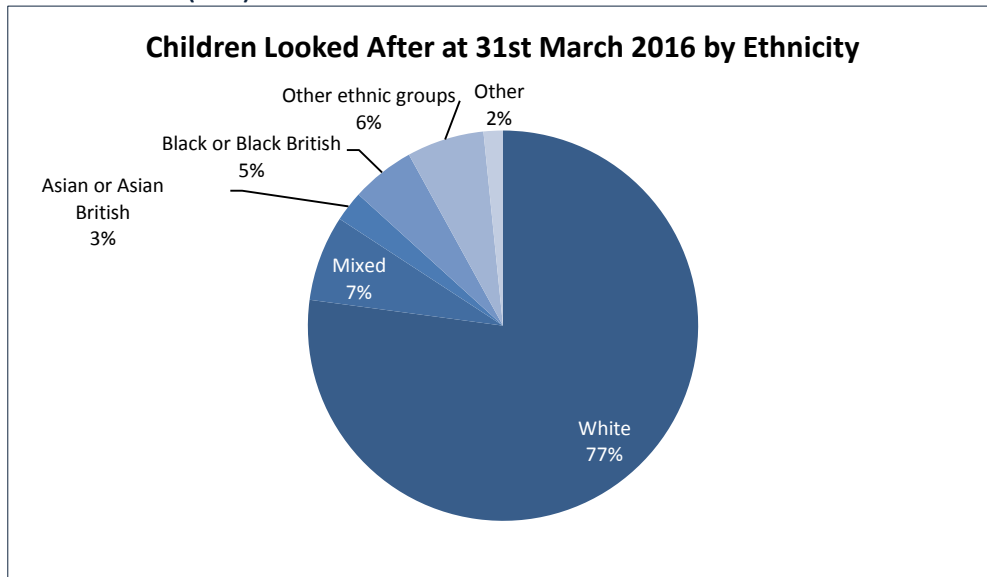
In Brighton & Hove we have 437 children and young people in our care including 34 unaccompanied children and young people. As at Sept 2016 there are 198 care leavers.

At 31st March 2016 the ratio of females to males in the children in care population was 49% to 51% which is similar to the ratio in previous years. This compares with the national average of 45% females and 55% males.



Sixty nine percent of children looked after were aged 10 years and over at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The percentage of children over 16 increased in 2015-16 compared to the previous year.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, children looked after are predominantly White (77%). Children of Mixed ethnicity are the next largest group (7%) followed by Other ethnic groups (6%), Black or Black British (5%), Asian or Asian British (3%).



Brighton and Hove's rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 children aged over 18 has fallen from 93 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 to 85 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. However, this remains above the national average and statistical neighbour average of 60 and is the highest among our statistical and geographical neighbours.

The children and young people for whom we are responsible as corporate parents are talented, resourceful, articulate, have huge potential and many will lead successful adult lives. However, as a result of their early life experiences, the outcomes for children in care and care leavers nationally are poor, with research indicating that they are over represented amongst the homeless and prison populations; those who are not, on leaving school engaged in employment, education or training. Evidence suggests that mental health problems are over four times more likely for children looked after compared to their peers.

With the help of carefully planned support, many children looked after achieve great success in their individual lives. Responsibility and accountability for the well-being and future prospects for children looked after and care leavers rests with corporate parents.

A good corporate parent must offer everything that a good parent would offer and improving the role of the corporate parent is key to improving their children's outcomes.

This improvement relies on addressing both the difficulties which children and young people in care experience and the challenges of parenting within a complex system of different services. Equally it is important that the children and young people themselves have the opportunity to shape and influence the parenting they receive.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Effective corporate parenting needs a commitment from all council employees and elected members, in a council-wide approach. It involves the whole council and its partners acting as a good parent, committing resources and working together to improve the lives of all children and young people in care and care leavers. It is about prioritising their needs, caring about what they want to and supporting them to make the most of their lives.

As corporate parents, members, officers and partners need to ask two questions:

*"If this was my child, would this be good enough for them?"*

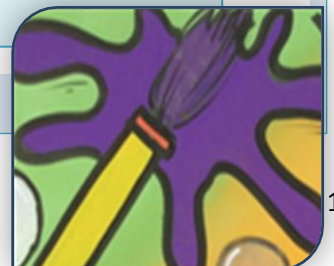
*"If I was that child or young person, would this have been good enough for me?"*

### **If this were my child.....**

When providing a service for our children looked after and care leavers we should challenge ourselves by asking, '**would this be good enough for my child?**' The government says that once a child is in the care of the local authority, all members and officers of the council, as their corporate parents, need to be concerned as if **they were their own**.

*"This concern should encompass their education, their health and welfare, what they do in their leisure time and holidays, how they celebrate their culture and how they receive praise and encouragement for their achievements."*

***If this were my child, DfES 2003.***



Brighton and Hove City council is committed to enabling looked after children and young people to be actively involved in services that directly affect them, including being honest about what can and cannot be changed. We want to promote the involvement of looked after children and young people in the planning and evaluation of services; the recruitment and selection of staff and carers; and in the decision making that affects their lives.

We will ensure looked after children and young people are aware of the complaints procedure if they are not happy with the way they are being treated. Their complaint will be listened to, treated seriously, investigated and acted upon, and they will have access to the Youth Advocacy Project (YAP).

The involvement and participation of young people is key to our success. We do this by;

- Our Children in Care Council which is made up of three groups (aged 8-12, 12-16 and 12-21) all of which feed into the Corporate Parenting Board and Youth Council. Meetings involving care leavers and younger members of the Children in Care Council take place regularly throughout the year, are represented at the Corporate Parenting Board, and are involved in member training.
- Ensuring all care leavers between 18-21 years are offered the opportunity of a 'Moving on from Care' interview to reflect upon their care experience. A target is set of 30% of completed interviews for the cohort of young people leaving care each year. A range of surveys and questionnaires on specific areas of service delivery are used to gain as many views as possible.
- The Young Assessors (16-21 year olds) inspect children's homes and foster care agencies by asking children in care what they think of where they are living, then write their own inspection reports based on the Ofsted standards.
- The Young Ambassadors are a group of care leavers play an increasingly important role in the recruitment and selection of social care staff.
- The Youth Advocacy Project (YAP) supports looked after children and care leavers, children with disabilities, children in Secure Accommodation, young people who attend Child Protection Conferences and Family Group Conferences. Advocates help young people make complaints or representations and provide a totally independent service for children and young people.



## Consultation with young people for the Corporate Parenting Strategy, Aug 2016

To embed the voice of our looked after young people throughout the Corporate Parenting Strategy the BHCC Youth Service Advocacy & Participation Team delivered a three-day group work programme 'Your Choice' in August 2016.



16 young people attended, one young person decided it wasn't for them early on day one and returned home, one decided it was for them and attended from day 2 and the rest came back every day.



all 16 achieved a silver Brighton & Hove Youth Award



All 16 have expressed an interest in continued involvement in the Children In Care Council



7 have put themselves forward to train to be Young Ambassadors (our project which trains and supports young care leavers to take part on interview panel's in recruitment of new BHCC staff)



6 have put themselves forward to train as ARC Young assessors (our project enabling young care leavers to visit & review residential establishments which we commission as an authority with the young people placed there)



4 young people have signed up for the Duke of Edinburgh Award

This is what children & young people told us about the event;

It's given me an interest of meeting new people

It was fun and I made a couple of friends

People are awesome and making friends was easy.

## Our Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to outline a vision of our role as corporate parents and to ensure that we are all working together to achieve common goals and ambitions for our children and young people in care and care leavers. As partner agencies, we recognise that the best outcomes for children looked after and care leavers can only be achieved through effective partnership working.

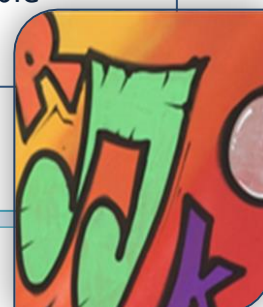
The strategy has been developed using information from a range of sources to ensure that it reflects what is most important to children looked after and care leavers in Brighton & Hove. This includes the following;

- Consultation with children looked after via 'Our Choice' – 3 days of activities
- Feedback questionnaires with children attending the Children in Care Council
- Exit Interviews with Care Leavers
- Workshops with corporate parents
- Ofsted Single Inspection Framework

This strategy sits alongside our Pledge to children looked after and care leavers which outlines to children and young people our commitments to them, and the support they can expect from us:

**The Brighton & Hove Pledge** is a set of promises that set out the support and care we will provide to children looked after and those preparing to leave care. It has been written with our Children in Care Council and the format of the two age-related pledges has been designed by a young person who has left care.

The Pledge sets out the commitment of councillors and staff to enable children in care to achieve to the best of their ability and comparable to their peer group. We want all of our children to live full, active lives and become confident individuals, responsible citizens and contributors.





## Our Vision

**“Brighton and Hove should be the best place in the country for children and young people to grow up. We want to ensure all children and young people have the best possible start in life, so that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, whatever that may be”**

**“Love us like your family, love us like we are your own”** is a key message from our children. As professionals we are sometimes uncomfortable responding to this message of the need to love our children in care – we are committed to honouring this wish by being loving, accepting, caring, and concerned on a human level, within safe professional boundaries and evidencing this in our day to day relationship based practice by being loving, honest, reliable and consistent.

Tom Stibbs, Principal Social Worker, Families, Children and Learning states:

*“We will make sure that all of our social workers know that this is what excellent social work looks like and that this is what children in care can expect from social workers. We will regularly check that our social workers are doing this and also ask children in care if this is the kind of support they are getting from their social workers.”*

Brighton & Hove is committed to being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent. We must care about our children in care, not just for them, and ensure the same standard of care as any good parent.

We will ensure that children and young people feel safe and secure, have stability in their lives and that we help them to achieve their full potential by supporting them in fulfilling their ambitions and aspirations.



## Our Pledge

### 1: We will involve you in making choices and decisions about you

We will.....

- ask you what you think and listen to you
- try to do something about what you say as best we can
- tell you what we have done and when we have done it
- make sure any additional needs or disabilities you have are considered

We will always try to....

- explain what is going on in words you understand
- listen to your wishes and feelings
- make sure you are really involved in meetings about you

### 2: We will keep you safe

We will make sure you.....

- live in a safe place where you are well looked after
- have space to do homework and relax
- keep in touch with your family, other important people and friends including sleepovers
- have your own Social Worker
- should not have to change your Social Worker unless there is a good reason

### 3: Your Health & Activities

We will make sure you....

- keep you fit and healthy
- have regular health checkups and treatment if needed
- have a safe place to play
- join clubs and do sports and leisure activities that interest you
- have your achievements celebrated

### 4: Your Education, Employment and Training

We will make sure you....

- attend a good school
- can access a computer and the internet safely
- have extra tuition if needed
- don't have to change schools unless necessary especially in Years 10 & 11

#### 4: Your Education, Employment and Training

- have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) so you get the best education
- are encouraged to join in-school and out-of-school activities
- know there is a teacher (called a Designated Teacher) at your school who is there to help you  
*If you are a care leaver we will...*
- tell you what financial support is available to help you with college, university or any other courses
- make an education plan (Personal Opportunities Plan (POP)) together that includes your wishes and hopes.
- encourage you with 'later in life' learning such as re-sits or late take up of GCSE's, GNVQ's and Online learning.
- Make sure you have personal and financial support to help you with work experience, work placements, apprenticeship and training, volunteering and employment
- Provide extra support from our Employment and Training Personal Adviser and the Youth Employment Service.

#### 5: Where you live

- We will only use Bed and Breakfast accommodation on those rare times when nowhere else is available and only those inspected and approved by us will be used.
- Over 18 we will encourage you to stay with your foster carers until you complete your studies, if you want to and with their agreement.
- When you are ready to be independent we will make sure that you have somewhere safe, secure and affordable to live.
- When you move to your own place we will give you a Setting Up Allowance to help you buy what you need to set up home.

#### 6: Preparation for the future

- Together we will develop your Pathway Plan
- At least every 6 months we will update the plan together and this will be reviewed by your Independent Reviewing Officer or later on by your Social Worker or Personal Advisor
- By the time you are 18 we will make sure you have your National Insurance Number, passport, birth certificate and full details of your health history.

## 1: We will involve you in making choices and decisions about you

### Our Aspirations

We will meet with children and young people to seek their views about finding the right family for them to grow up in, **Service Manager Permanence, Adoption, Family & Friends.**

Brighton and Hove City Council has a strong commitment to listening to and involving children and young people in our care in making choices and decisions about their lives.

### So far we have achieved.....


- We have trained and involved young people in the recruitment of new social work staff in 2015-16 . All interview panels for social workers and senior social workers included a representative from the Young Ambassadors.
- In 2015-16 Children Looked After and Care Leavers made up 25% of the total number of referrals made to the Youth Advocacy Project (YAP).
- All care leavers between 18-21 years are offered the opportunity of a 'Moving on from Care' interview to reflect upon their care experience.
- A total of 1,171 Reviews were chaired by IROs in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. On a month on month basis the majority of statutory reviews of children and young people's care plans are held within the timeframe.
- Children looked after are seen regularly by social workers who know them well and who see them alone where appropriate.
- 96% of children have participated in their LAC reviews
- The evaluation of our service and our service redesign includes the views of children in care, for example, all audits now include a focus on the views of young people and children in care have completed feedback on social workers for the evaluation of our new service.
- The Virtual School have consulted with young people in its development e.g development of the new PEPs and involved young people in the delivery of training to designated teachers, for example, at its annual conference.
- Training to support the PEP process and paperwork are designed in such a way as to give the child a voice. It is vital that their own aspirations and views are heard and listened to when writing a plan.
- We have listened to the views of care leavers and other young people in reviewing the city's housing Allocation Policy, *BHCC Housing*.
- We consult with all our tenants including young people living in our housing stock, *BHCC Housing*.
- All interviews for staff have young people involved in the appointments panel, *Specialist CAMHS*.
- Young people are involved in discussions at all times about their care and treatment outcomes, *Specialist CAMHS*.

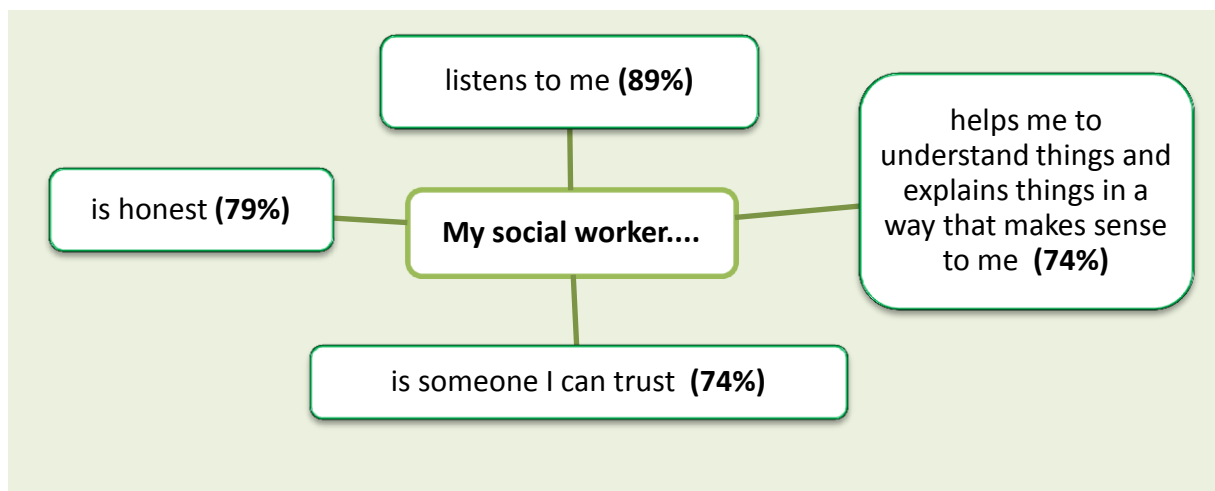
## **We plan to.....**

- Learning from "Taking it to the Next Level" NCB and A National Voice: review our CICC and aim to have a CIC Participation worker to build on the success of the 3 day 'Your Choice' programme, August 2016, to enhance the links to key corporate parents; focus on the continued recruitment; engagement and maintaining the interest of young people; and ensure feedback ( a "you said... we did" culture)
- Recruit a Looked after children Participation Worker in our Participation and Advocacy Service.
- We will meet with children and young people to seek their views about finding the right family for them to grow up in.
- The Safeguarding and Review Service plan to consult on a new, more engaging and child focused approach to Looked After Reviews. The new approach will be strengths based and will better capture the child's view and experiences to ensure that it is a process they enjoy, wish to take part in and are at the centre of.
- The Safeguarding and Review Service also plan to consult on the development of a new, more meaningful way of recording and sharing information which can contribute to children and young people's understanding of their life story.
- We respond to feedback from children and young people and display this in our waiting area on a ' You said we did' board, *Specialist CAMHS*.

## Views of children and young people

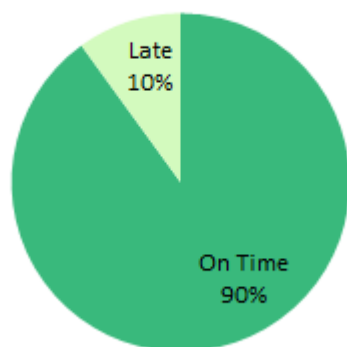
We will make sure you....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>try to do something about what you say as best we can</li> </ul>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		35%	24%	41%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tell you what we have done and when we have done it</li> </ul>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
	31%	38%	31%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make sure any additional needs or disabilities you have are considered</li> </ul>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	
		25%	75%	



### Key Measures:

**LAC Reviews On Time**



- 96% of children participate in their LAC reviews
- 46% of care leavers had a Pathway Plan on time.
- 70.9% of CLA have Special Educational Needs– 28.7% with a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement and 42.2% with SEN Support.

## 2: We will keep you safe

### Our Aspirations

We, Sussex Police, undertake to treat children and young people with dignity and respect in all encounters and with due regard to the needs and welfare of the individuals concerned. Officers and staff will apply the principles of Sussex Police – Justice, Public Service, Courage, Compassion, Personal responsibility and Innovation.

Brighton and Hove City Council has a strong commitment to making sure our children live in a safe place and are well looked after

In respect of those Children and Young People in the care of the local authority, in any form, additional consideration will be given to ensuring they are not disadvantaged by their circumstances. This will be achieved by ensuring that information is appropriately shared and that they are given full access to their legal rights, in liaison with their legal guardians, in letter and spirit. We will respond to your concerns, in respect of your safety and wellbeing, swiftly and effectively with your best interests at the forefront of our activity, **Sussex Police.**

We will continue to seek assurances from all our partners that children become looked after appropriately to meet their needs and keep them safe from harm. We will continue to hold our partners to account to ensure all our looked after children thrive in good-quality placements, are helped to keep in touch with the people who are important to them (where it is safe and within the child's best interests to do so), are supported to access a wide range of leisure and educational opportunities, have timely assessments of their health needs, are not unnecessary criminalised, and are included in, and informing, decisions made about them. **Brighton & Hove LSCB**

### So far we have achieved.....

- We have developed good working relationships with Sussex Police and other key professionals, for example, social workers in fostering and adoption, to ensure children in care feel safe and protected in their placements
- We have developed clear policies so that if a child/young person goes missing, it is taken seriously and dealt with promptly
- Parents and carers of children leaving care via adoption, special guardianship and residence order have access to the Adoption Support Helpline, and Special Guardianship Support Duty Service when they are experiencing parenting challenges.

## So far we have achieved....(contin)

- We have commissioned an independent provider, 'Missing People' to undertake Return Home Interviews with children and young people who have been missing from their placement. The aim to find out why young people went missing, what happened while they were away, and what support they need to be safe and prevent them suffering any harm. 1-1 support is offered to children identified as vulnerable due to their missing experiences and provides one to one tailored support to help reduce their risk of harm.
- Our House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) citywide national licensing scheme, and additional licensing scheme for smaller HMOs in 12 of the city's 21 wards ensures that private rented accommodation in those areas are safe and well managed, *BHCC Housing*.
- We have a robust management of anti-social behaviour and nuisance and provide tailored victim and witness support, *BHCC Housing*.
- We have produced a Z-card 'When to be concerned' which is available on the Sussex Partnership Trust website: <http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/getting-help-children-and-young-people-sussex-kent-and-hampshire>
- We saw 95% children & young people within 4 weeks for an initial assessment and 95% of children & young people within 18 weeks for treatment, *Specialist CAMHS*.
- We work with other agencies and offer consultation to the team that supports the young person to feel they have someone to talk to about any difficulties, *Specialist CAMHS*
- We offer consultation to foster carers about how to support the young person, *Specialist CAMHS*.

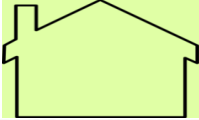



## We plan to....

- Ensure that all of our social workers know about the 'See Me Hear Me' model of working to try and keep young people at risk of harm safe.
- Provide advice and guidance on safely navigating relationships via social media for adopted and special guardianship young people.
- Use the 10 Point check list designed by the Crown Prosecution Service to minimise looked after children in residential care being criminalised, *Sussex Police*
- Continue to work with the Youth Offending Team to reduce the rate of convictions for looked after children.
- Ensure that you have a plan to keep you safe. We call this a 'Risk Management Plan' and always discuss this with you, *Specialist CAMHS*.
- Improve our scrutiny of arrangements for children looked after outside of the City to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by this, *Brighton & Hove LSCB*
- Improve our scrutiny of pathways for looked after children to access services to support their emotional wellbeing and mental health, *Brighton & Hove LSCB*.

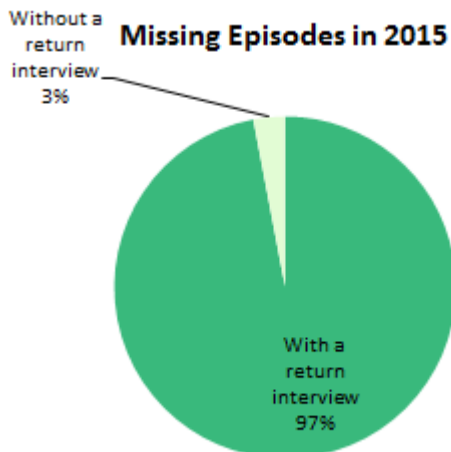


## Views of children and young people

We will make sure you....

	<i>....live in a safe place where you are well looked after</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		47%	13%	40%
	<i>....have your own social worker</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		19%	25%	56%
	<i>.... have space to do homework and relax</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		33%	47%	20%
	<i>....keep in touch with your family, important people, friends (including sleepovers)</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		38%	38%	25%

### Key Measures:



- 19 children looked after continuously for at least 12 months were convicted during 2015/16
- 13% of placements at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 were more than 20 miles from the child's home compared to 18% nationally.
- 28 Care Leavers were in 'Staying Put' arrangements

### 3: Your Health & Activities

#### Our Aspirations

Children and young people looked after share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. They often enter care with a worse level of health than their peers in part due to the impact of their early life experiences. We will contribute to meeting the health needs of children and young people looked after through commissioning effective services which provide co-ordinated care for each child and young person. Moving forward we will ensure that the mental health needs of our looked after children and young people are appropriately assessed, in a timely manner, and that as a result therapeutic interventions are provided to meet their individual needs, **Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group**.

Brighton and Hove City Council is committed to ensuring our children access a child friendly health service that is responsive and flexible to the needs of children in care, and to ensure they are supported to have an active and healthy lifestyle.

Specialist CAMHS is delighted to support the councils pledge to children and young people and will always involve you in choices and decisions regarding your mental health and wellbeing. We are keen to hear your views, thoughts and ideas and have a similar set of pledges to all the children & young people that we see. This is described in our '**Your guide to CAMHS**' booklet and in our waiting areas.

#### So far we have achieved.....

- Young people in care do not always have basic information about their medical history. We have developed the Brighton and Hove Health Passport for care leavers which is a document designed so young people can have a record of their health information. The Health Passport was identified by Ofsted in its April-May 2015 inspection as an area of good practice.
- Completed a Strengths and Difficulties Assessment (SDQ) with 80% of our looked after children cohort (children and young people who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months) so that we have a good understanding of their emotional and mental health wellbeing and needs.
- Looked after Children have access to a "Listen Up" card which gives free access to Freedom leisure facilities in the City .
- The Virtual school runs clubs for CiC including for athletics, dance, table tennis and music (in association with Rhythmix). This has meant more than 25 Children in Care have had the opportunity for positive social interaction with other Children in Care and to be part of a club.

### **So far we have achieved...(contin....)**


- We believe that young people have a right to confidential sexual health advice and are training the LAC Health Team so they are able to provide basic advice and intervention at all health assessments. We have provided a specialist outreach service for some young people.
- We believe it is important that children and young people are supported to be healthy and that those looking after them know what they need to do to meet their health needs. We ensure 100% of children and young people are offered a health assessment.
- Specialist CAMHS is part of the well being in schools project to assist education staff to support young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health and to ensure that those young people who are needing specialist support receive this in a timely manner.
- *Specialist CAMHS* offer a service to young people about substance misuse through our worker at the r-u-ok? service. We have other specialist teams across the city including the CAMHS Learning Disability Team and the TAPA Team (Teen to Adult Personal Advisors).

### **We plan to.....**

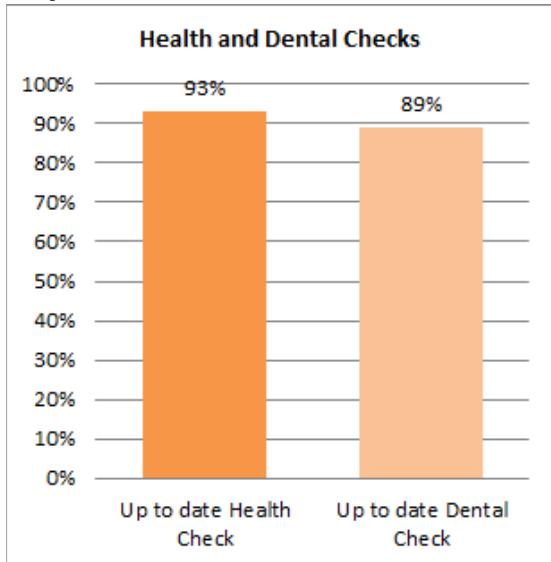
- We have identified the need for additional mental health support to children looked after as a key priority in the Brighton and Hove Children and Young People Transformation Plan. £50k of Transformation Funding has been identified in recognition of a need to improve the mental health pathway for this particularly vulnerable group across health and social care. This investment will provide an additional mental health resource within social work pods to support young people, carers and social workers and to link with mainstream mental health services.
- We will develop a briefing on SDQ's for social workers to ensure they are used to access appropriate support for children and young people experiencing emotional difficulties, Looked after children Health Nurse.
- We feel it is important that children young people are able to fully participate in their health assessments with this in mind we have developed child and young friendly health care plans which are being trialled.

## Views of children and young people

We will make sure you....

	....keep fit and healthy	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		37%	12%	50%
	....have regular check ups	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		20%		80%
	....have a safe place to play	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		27%	27%	47%
	....have your achievements celebrated	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		71%	14%	14%

### Key Measures:



Children looked after for at least 12 months at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

- 93% of children had all of their immunisations up to date at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016
- The average Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire score is 15.8, up from 15.3 last year and above the 2014/15 national average of 13.9.
- 41 (14.1%) CLA were identified as having a substance misuse problem – above the 2014/15 national average of 4%.

## Priority 4: Your Education, Employment and Training

### Our Aspirations

“ We aim to support every child in care to attend good early years provider, schools or colleges whether within or outside the City and have the opportunity to make good progress”, **Virtual School Headteacher**

We want to ensure all children in care and care leavers are able to progress successfully into adulthood and succeed in education, employment and training.

In particular we want children in care and care leavers themselves feel that throughout their education they:

1. Feel Safe
2. Receive teaching and interventions that support them to do better
3. They are not made to feel different
4. They are listened to at school and have any processes such as PEP and pupil premium properly explained to them
5. Are prioritised for our services so being in care does not disadvantage them in any way.
6. Have opportunities in education or employment that all children and young people would receive.
7. Are believed in and people have high educational expectations of them.

### So far we have achieved.....

- 20% of Children Looked After for the last 12 months at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 achieved 5 or more GCSEs A\*-C including English and Maths compared to 14% of Children Looked After nationally, *Source: CLA –NPD Match Data, DfE 2015.*
- In 2014/15 there were no permanent exclusions of Children in Care in Brighton & Hove and there have not been any for 6 years.
- 16 Care leavers currently supported in University and a further 16 are starting in Sept 2016
- Over 120 young people through all key stages have received tuition to boost their educational attainment through bespoke 1:1 intervention packages. This marks a further significant rise in uptake and has been a huge success.
- The Virtual School has commissioned reading recovery support for 13 children in KS1 through the Every Child a Reader scheme.
- Over the last year the percentage of 16-18 children in care and care leavers (combined) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) averaged at 21.6%, showing a general declining trend over the past two years.
- The Virtual School subscribed to The Letterbox Club programme. Last year 41 young people in school years 3 and 5 received the personalised parcels of books, games and stationery to help improve and promote their educational attainment.

## So far we have achieved.....(contin)





- We consistently continue to receive positive feedback from the young people and foster carers.
- The “Support for Care Leavers Project”, a partnership between Children’s Services Care Leavers Team and the Department of Work and Pensions, Brighton Job Centre Plus started in November 2014. It’s aim is to better support care leavers in their job seeking journey.
- We have successfully offered work placements to young people seeking work experience, along with a member of staff acting as a coach, and will increase this activity to make provision available throughout the year, *BHCC Housing*.

## We plan to ....

- Further develop our links with YES (Youth Employability Service) to access support and specialist advice and assistance (eg help with CV’s and job applications, interview preparation and practice, identifying future choices and building confidence and motivation) to our Care Leavers. They also provide targeted advice and guidance support to young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Continue to work with The City Council’s Apprenticeship Co-ordinator who identifies council and partner apprenticeships as well as acting as an advocate in the process for young people leaving care. Care leavers are guaranteed an interview where it’s been identified by the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator that they meet the required standards.
- The Virtual school will continue to monitor the progress of all children in care and make sure they can access the resources they need for them to succeed at school. This will include access to Pupil Premium.
- We will ensure that adopted and special guardianship young people have the advice they need to locate the various options for financial support for college and university courses.
- Specialist CAMHS will always work with you to enable you to continue your education.
- We have three apprenticeship posts within the Housing service, as well as the 200 provided by our Mears contract over the duration of the contract.
- Our Work and Learning Co-ordinator will continue to provide information, advice and guidance as well as employment support on a one to one basis, *BHCC Housing*.
- We are increasing the number of trainee and apprenticeship posts we have within Housing, and will ensure these are promoted/publicised to people who are leaving or have left care e.g. through the City Council’s Apprenticeship Co-ordinator.
- We will offer volunteer opportunities to children who are looked after or to those leaving care in order to provide taster experience, to help build or increase confidence, and to help build or increase skills, *BHCC Housing*.
- Through the contracts we procure (eg repairs and maintenance contracts), we are able to offer a range of apprenticeships or work experience, *BHCC Housing*.

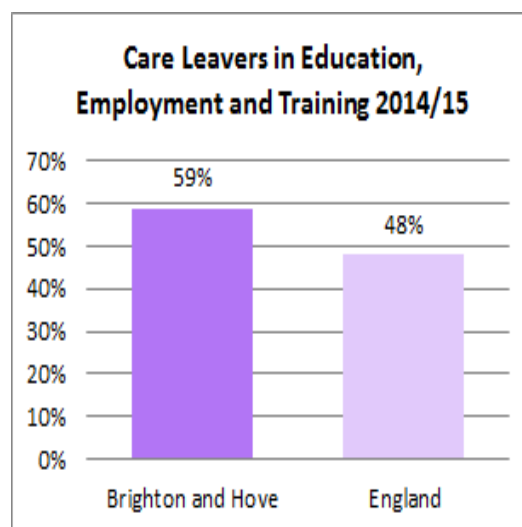
## Views of children and young people

We will make sure you....

	<i>....attend a good school</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		20%	27%	53%
	<i>....can access a computer and internet safely</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		28%	6%	67%
	<i>....know there is a teacher (called a Designated Teacher) at your school who is there to help you</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		38%		62%
	<i>....have extra tuition if needed</i>	Disagree	Unsure	Agree
		31%	12%	56%

### Key Measures:

- ◆ 20% of Children Looked After for the last 12 months at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 achieved 5 or more GCSEs A\*-C including English and Maths compared to 14% of Children Looked After nationally.
- ◆ 52.5% of school age children had a PEP completed and recorded on Care First since the beginning of the summer term
- ◆ 4.6% of sessions were missed through absence for CiC in Brighton and Hove (3.5% authorised and 1.1% unauthorised) compared with 4% for CiC nationally and 4.7% for all pupils in Brighton and Hove.



## Where You Live

### Our Aspirations

To work preventatively through early intervention to address negative factors that could result in homelessness and/or children becoming looked after.

To promote inclusion and help our tenants meet their aspirations and achieve improved outcomes for themselves, their families and their communities.

To see that our citywide Housing Strategy and the work of the Housing Department contributes to its fullest to enabling access to safe, decent, affordable and energy efficient housing for people leaving care, **BHCC Housing**.

Brighton and Hove City Council has a strong commitment to ensuring all our young people have a safe place to live. Good placements are those that are safe, homely environments that engender a sense of belonging. Carers are an important part of this, particularly in terms of “staying the course” with young people, and are supported to deal with challenges and not be quick to end placements when things get tough.

### So far we have achieved...

- Of the 134 children aged under 16 who had been looked after for at least two and a half years at 31st August 2016, 87 (65%) had been in the same placement for 2 years or placed for adoption.
- We have worked hard to reduce the numbers of placements more than 20 miles from Brighton & Hove and as at March 2015 this was 13% compared to 18% nationally
- 94% of Care Leavers in 2014/15 were in suitable Accommodation which is better than the national average of 81%.
- Supported accommodation is provided through the 16-25 yrs Accommodation and Support Pathway, a jointly commissioned arrangement between Housing, Children's Services and Downslink Group YMCA. This provides a range of options suited to the individual needs of care leavers and supported provision is allocated according to need by the Supported Accommodation Panel (SAP) This meets weekly with representatives attending from Housing, Children's Services and housing providers. In September 2015, 54 young people between 18-21 years were living in supported accommodation.
- The "Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers", reviewed and agreed in August 2015 ensures that care leavers can access affordable social housing when assessed as being ready for independent living. It enables Brighton & Hove City Council to meet its corporate parenting responsibilities by providing safe, secure and supportive accommodation for young people who have left care beyond the age of 18 years. It complements "Staying Put" by enabling young people to make an extended transition to adulthood and independent living.



## So far we have achieved.....(contin)

- Special guardians and residence order carers have been supported to move to more appropriate accommodation to ensure the young people in their care have the space they need to achieve their potential.
- Housing has recently carried out a review of the city's social housing Allocation Policy to ensure the best use is made of the limited provision of affordable housing in the city, and has retained priority A banding for care leavers who are ready to manage their own tenancy.
- Since 2012, 50 care leavers have been housed in social housing, which represents 4% of all households housed from Band A. 16 were housing association tenancies, and 34 were council housing tenancies.
- Of the 34 council tenancies offered to care leavers since 2012, the following are annual figures for tenancies that have been sustained:-
  - 2012/13 - 5 out of 5
  - 2013/14 - 9 out of 10
  - 2014/15 - 9 out of 9
  - 2015/16 - 10 out of 10

*Note: The reason for the single council tenancy coming to an end was because the tenant relinquished their tenancy to move in with another council tenant as an occupant.*

- Specialist CAMHS have continued to offer a service from the local team to those children and young people who are placed within 20 mile radius of the city.
- We offer a course on emotional regulation for young people to attend once a year. This can help young people be able to be alone and support themselves, *Specialist CAMHS*.

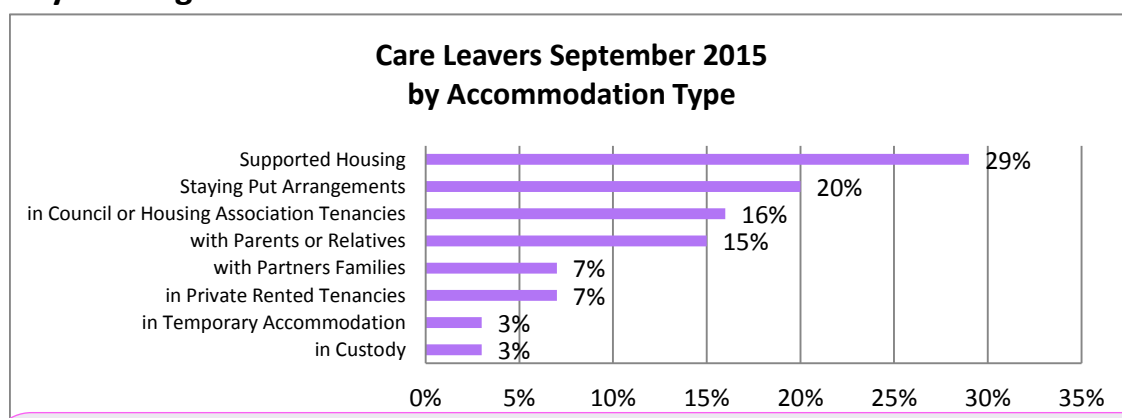
## We Plan to.....

- In 2016/17 we are jointly re-commissioning supported accommodation for young people based on the principles of the 'Positive accommodation and support pathways to adulthood' framework, a national good practice model which advocates an integrated approach in terms of: achieving in education, economic independence, health, positive relationships, and involvement in meaningful activities.
- The Fostering Service aims to increase the proportion of children placed with in-house foster carers to 65% by March 2018. We plan to involve the Children in Care Council in the recruitment and training of foster carers. Foster carers to develop profiles that young people can see before they move to the placement
- We will support adopters and special guardians to provide safe and attuned care for children and young people, helping them to understand their history and preparing them for successful independent living.
- We will continue to work with colleagues and partners to provide assistance in refurbishing or extending council homes to enable people providing foster care placements to continue to do this, or to prevent children becoming placed into the care of the council, *BHCC Housing*.

## We plan to....(BHCC Housing contin..)

- We will continue to work closely with social housing landlords and council colleagues to increase the supply of affordable housing in the city; being very much aware of the difficulties of housing and welfare benefit provision for young single people, *BHCC Housing*.
- Care leavers are acknowledged as a potentially vulnerable group of people and are therefore prioritised in the council's Allocation Policy where they are tenancy ready. Also, to increase their opportunities to secure social housing, they will have direct bids made for them in the choice based lettings scheme if they have not secured accommodation within 6 months of their priority banding.
- We have a range of officers (for example in housing needs, income management, tenancy sustainment, customer service and general housing management teams) who are trained and able to provide compassionate, understanding and supportive services to customers and council tenants who had formerly been children who were looked after. They understand some of the issues facing care leavers, for example how some people may have had insecure, troubled or disrupted lives or may feel isolated; and they are able to offer additional support or make appropriate referrals. Advice and guidance is offered on matters such as accessing services, money advice, budgeting, being a good neighbour etc.
- We will carry out full analysis of the reasons for tenancies failing among young people (and in particular people who have previously been children who were looked after), in order that we can increase our tailored support to prevent tenancy breakdown.
- We are developing pre-tenancy workshops which will include young people leaving care who are tenancy ready. They will include a range of matters that increase understanding of what it means to be a council or housing association tenant.

## Key Messages



- 38% of CLA are placed inside Brighton and Hove; 51% are placed in East or West Sussex; 7% are placed outside of Sussex and 4% are placed for adoption
- 15% of children looked after at 31st March 2015 had three or more placements during the year, above the national average of 10%.
- 94% of Care Leavers in 2014/15 were in suitable accommodation, better than the national average of 81%.

## Preparation for the Future

### Our Aspirations

Brighton and Hove City Council has a strong commitment to preparing our young people to live safe, successful lives where they are supported to achieve to the very best of their ability. We aim to do this by providing a stable home base, support from people who care, support to work and to access training and educational opportunities.

### So far we have achieved...

- The Ofsted inspection of services for children in help of need and protection, children looked after and care leavers took place from 14 April-8 May 2015. In its judgement on the "experiences and progress of care leavers", Ofsted found Brighton and Hove to be "Good". Ofsted found that;

*The authority has high aspirations for its care leavers and supports them well. This is reflected in the numbers of young people who are engaged in employment, education and training. Tenacious efforts are made to keep in touch with care leavers and young people value the support they receive. High numbers of care leavers remain with their foster carers after they are 18. The engagement of care leavers in service design and influencing future practice is good with clear impact.*

- The number of care leavers 'Staying Put' (remaining with foster carers beyond the age of 18) has increased from 24 at 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015 to 28 open at 31<sup>st</sup> Aug 2016
- The Leaving Care Pod runs a 2 day "Preparation for Independence" course in February, June and October every year. They are held during the half term in these months so students can attend and the average attendance is 8. Two Personal Advisors and a care leaver present this training as well as other specialist input.
- The high aspirations and support provided by Brighton and Hove can be evidenced by the number of care leavers attending University. We have 16 care leavers who have just started at University (that's 25% more than last year) – doubling the number at University making a total of 32. There is a great range of subjects being studied including Pharmacy, Civil Engineering, Performing Arts and Social Work.

## So far we have achieved....(contin)

- It continues to be our aim that as many as possible of our care leavers are engaged in employment, education and training. Although Brighton and Hove is one of the better authorities in the country at achieving this, there is still much that can be done to improve. To this end regular meetings are now being held with the Youth Employability Practice Manager, Leaving Care Team Personal Advisor and Team Manager. These meetings ensure that there is an action plan to help every Care Leaver into employment, education or training.

## We plan to...

- We will review our Pathway Plan assessments and reviews so that we support care leavers to prepare for the future as well as possible.
- In 2016-17 we intend to purchase an Independence Living course from ASDAN, who are an educational charity. The course will be made available for all children looked after from the age of 16 which will enable a consistent approach across the social work service. There are 60 hours of work involved in the course which can be completed at the young person's pace and can be overseen by foster carers, residential social workers, social workers and PAs. If the young person doing the course changes placement, then the course goes with them. When the young person transfers to the Leaving Care Team there will be clear information about what work has been undertaken. It covers a range of areas from career management to cooking on a budget.
- We will continue to work with our Youth Employability Service to ensure that there is an action plan to help every Care Leaver into employment, education or training
- The Virtual School will ensure all 16-18 year olds get access to careers advice
- We will ensure that adopted and special guardianship young people have the advice they need to locate the various options for financial support for college and university courses.
- We will support adopted and special guardianship young people to work through difficulties in their family relationships and maintain positive connections which will continue to support them in adult life.
- We will support you if you need to transition to adult services and we have our TAPA team who can bridge this as they work with young people aged 16-25 years, *Specialist CAMHS*.

## What we will do in 2016-19

We have listened to children and young people, and in order to meet their needs, and achieve our Pledge, we will....

### 2016-17

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**Care Leavers Trust:** A fund is being established to support young people when they leave care at the age of 18 to increase the opportunities available to them. This will bring together charitable donations from a range of individuals and businesses. All young people leaving care will be able to apply to the fund. Any money awarded will be in addition to the money and grants that already exists for care leavers.

**Social Work Profiles:** As part of the relationship based social work, all workers will exchange a 'profile' of themselves with children and families. The social work profile will include personal as well as professional information about the social worker. The young person will also complete their own profile which they can exchange with their social worker.

**Provide an additional mental health resource** within social work pods to support young people, carers and social workers and to link with mainstream mental health services.

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### 2017-18

**The Children in Care Council** will be actively involved in the recruitment and training of foster carers.

**Increase the visibility of children in care and care leavers** by putting anonymised case summaries and video clips of their achievements on the BHCC internal website, the Wave.

**Launch the Asdan Independent Living Skills Programme** with children looked after from the age of 16

**Corporate Parenting Mentors:** We will link senior officers with children looked after and care leavers to enable the development of their aspirations and interests in future employment options and developing a strategic partnership with Brighton and Hove Connected.

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### 2018-19

**Develop a Training Module for Managers** in BHCC to support care leavers employed in apprenticeships.

**Foster carers to develop profiles** that young people can see before they move to the placement.

**Develop a Care Leaver Mentoring Scheme** for younger children looked after.

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## Signatories

Councillor Warren Morgan, Leader of the Council

Geoff Raw, Chief Executive, Brighton & Hove City Council

Councillor Dan Chapman, Chair of the Children, Young People and Skills Committee

Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director, Families, Children & Learning

Graham Bartlett, Chair of the Brighton & Hove LSCB

Nev Kemp, Chair of Brighton and Hove Connected

19<sup>th</sup> January 2017





