

CARE STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

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| Committee name | Children, Families & Education Select Committee |
| Officer reporting | Tehseen Kauser, Director of Children's Social Care Poppy Reddy, Assistant Director of Care, Support and Transition |
| Papers with report | Care Strategy for Children and Care Experienced Young People |
| Ward | All |

HEADLINES

This report outlines the strategic framework for improving outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people in Hillingdon. It sets out our statutory responsibilities, local priorities, and proposed actions to strengthen support, stability, and transition pathways. This document represents our commitment to providing the highest level of care, support, and opportunities for young individuals who have experienced the care system. We recognise the unique challenges faced by Cared for Children and Care Experienced young people and firmly believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential, regardless of their past circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the strategic direction and priorities outlined in the draft strategy and provides any comments to be included in the report to the Cabinet Member to consider this, in due course.

The strategy will be considered by the Cabinet Member in due course.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Our strategy supports cared for children and care experienced young people in Hillingdon by focusing on key priorities that address their challenges and promote their success. Developed with input from young people, practitioners, and partners, the strategy follows national guidelines and considers local needs and statutory duties.

Key themes include:

1. Embedding Participation of Young People

We are committed to actively involving young people in shaping the services that affect their lives. By embedding their participation at every level, we ensure that practice and service delivery are responsive to their needs and experiences. Regular consultation, feedback mechanisms, and participation forums provide avenues for young people to share their views and influence decisions, making their voices central to our continuous improvement process.

2. Improving Placement Stability and Permanence

Securing stable and permanent placements for young people in our care remains a top priority.

We are dedicated to providing homes that offer a sense of security and belonging, recognising the importance of stability for the wellbeing and development of our young people. Our efforts are focused on reducing placement disruptions and ensuring that every child and young person has access to a supportive and consistent living environment.

3. Strengthening Pathways to Achievement and Independence

We are focused on creating robust pathways that support young people's educational and employment ambitions. By strengthening opportunities for achievement and independence, we aim to equip care experienced young people with the skills, qualifications, and confidence needed to succeed in further education, training, and the workplace.

4. Promoting Health and Wellbeing

The promotion of both emotional and physical health is a cornerstone of our strategy. We are committed to enhancing access to health services, ensuring that young people receive the support they need to maintain their wellbeing. This includes targeted interventions and timely access to mental health resources, as well as initiatives that encourage healthy lifestyles and positive relationships.

5. Supported Transition to Adulthood

A timely and well-supported transition to adulthood is vital for care experienced young people as they move towards independence. We provide focused support and tailored services to help young people navigate this critical period, ensuring they are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of adult life. This includes practical assistance, ongoing guidance, and continued emotional support as they establish themselves beyond the care system.

Feedback from young people on the strategy and our offer to cared for children has been positive with one young person stating, ***"I couldn't remember anything else to be written because every time I thought of something to write or something you offer I found it in the pages after."***

PERFORMANCE DATA

To ensure the effectiveness of the Care Strategy for Children and Care Experienced Young People, a range of performance measures and feedback mechanisms will be utilised. These will enable the Council and its partners to monitor progress and continuously improve service delivery for the benefit of cared for children and care experienced young people in Hillingdon.

Placement Stability and Transitions

We will monitor the stability of placements for our children in care, aiming to ensure that they are settled in secure and supportive environments. A key objective is to facilitate their successful transition into independence, providing the necessary support to equip them for adult life.

Education, Employment and Training

The number of young people and care experienced young people engaged in education, employment or training will be closely tracked. Efforts will be focused on reducing the proportion of those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), supporting their aspirations and long-term achievements.

Participation and Feedback

Feedback from participation surveys, providers, and young people themselves will play a central role in shaping our services. Regular input will be gathered through reviews and participation forums, ensuring that the voices of young people inform practice and development.

Placement Instability

Progress will be measured by the reduction in placement instability and the number of placement moves experienced by children and young people in our care, reflecting our commitment to providing them with security and permanence.

Partner Engagement

Ongoing feedback from partners will support collaborative working and contribute to the continuous improvement of services across the local care system.

Reporting and Accountability

Annual performance data will be reported to relevant committees and the Department for Education (DfE), ensuring transparency and accountability in the delivery of the Care Strategy.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

This strategy will ensure that our children and young people in care receive consistent, high-quality support and care that promotes their wellbeing both physical and emotional), aspirations and long-term achievements as residents of Hillingdon.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This strategy will be delivered within the existing financial envelope with targeted investment in priority areas such as placement sufficiency and participation. This strategy has been completed together with our finance partners.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The strategy reflects our duties under the Children act 1989, and associated statutory guidance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

APPENDICES

Hillingdon's Care Strategy November 2025-2030