

# Midlothian Corporate Parent Strategy and Plan

2020-2023



*Dalkeith Hearing Centre mural completed by Midlothian's young champs*

getting  
it right  
for every child



# Strategic Context



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places corporate parenting as a statutory duty on local authorities and other key organisations. Midlothian Council established its Corporate Parenting Strategy in 2008 - prior to legislative changes. The strategy evolved from having senior officers and elected members as dedicated champions for young people to a more strategic, wide ranging group of representatives from key organisations across the Community Planning Partnership. This successful collaboration encouraged the input and participation of young people and this has formed the basis of the Midlothian Champions Board.

Successful corporate parenting requires passion; commitment; partnership-working and engagement across all agencies. It requires everyone, from the head of organisations to front line practitioners, to take a proactive approach to better understand their corporate parent responsibilities.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines corporate parenting as *“the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers”*.

Corporate parents have a responsibility to uphold the rights and secure the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers. A corporate parent should still be able to have the same aspirations for this group of children and young people as they would their own. The concept is intended to encourage organisations and individuals to do as much as they can to make sure children and young people are listened to and ensure their wellbeing is safeguarded.

# Midlothian Champions Board



Midlothian Champions Board is a group of care experienced young people who are supported to engage directly with those who make key decisions about children and young people who are “looked after”.

More than simply a chance to meet and consult, our vision is to create a cultural shift, with a focus on creating opportunities for young people and corporate parents to form genuine, purposeful, value-based relationships in settings where job titles and care identities are removed, thus creating an environment of equality and one of shared values.

In short, the overall aim of this approach is to improve outcomes for care experienced young people

# Young people were asked an “ideal corporate parent ” should be

Here's what they told us:

Lets me choose  
what I want to do

Is interested  
in my life

Funny

Is there when  
I need them

Encourages me

Kind

Believes in me

Happy

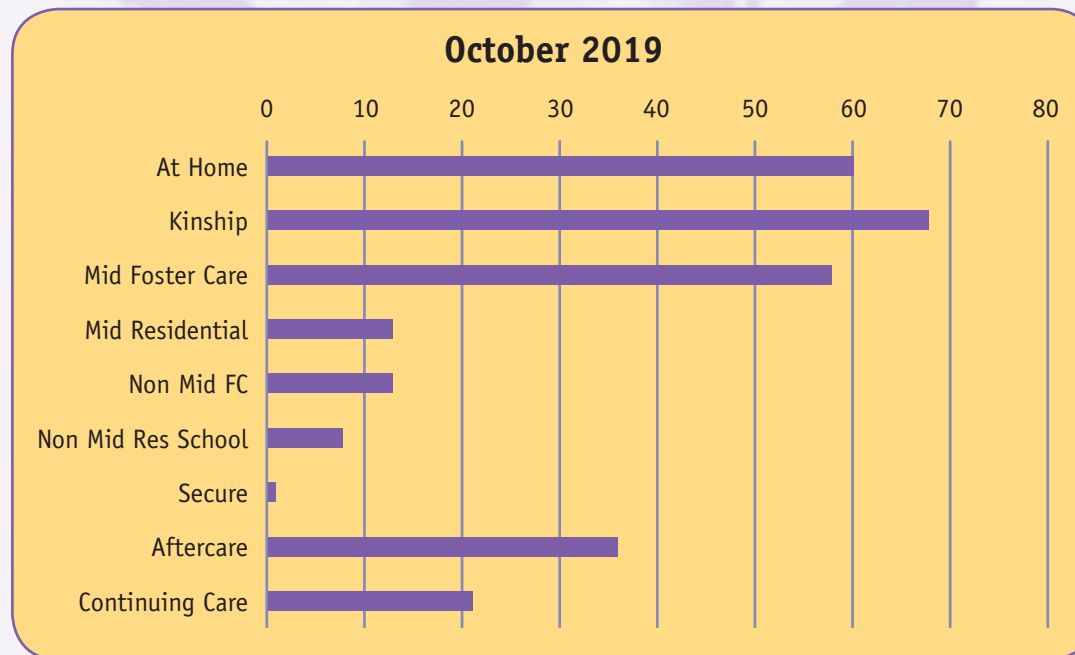
Talks to me about  
my future



# What do we know about our looked after children in Midlothian?

Midlothian Council is committed to ensuring that, where appropriate and taking into account their needs and wishes, children are looked after within their own home; with extended family (kinship) or a foster care setting. Some children with more complex needs may require to be looked after in a residential setting.

As at 1 November 2019, there are 284 looked after children and care leavers. Looked after children and young people make up less than 1% (0.82) of children and young people under 18 years in Midlothian.



# Corporate Parenting Plan 2020 – 2023

Theme	Action	Lead	Indicators/Measure
<b>Rights and Participation</b>	Provide care experienced young people (CEYP) with opportunities to participate and be involved in issues relevant to them.	Midlothian Champions Board; Senior Managers across all agencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor the numbers of CEYP engaging in Champions Board related activities.</li> <li>2. Increased participation options e.g satellite school groups, social media and technology.</li> </ol>
	Continue to offer the Mind of My Own communication application to all CEYP	Head of Children's Services; Midlothian Champions Board  Children and Families Team Leaders/Reviewing Officers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis of user statistics.</li> </ol>
	Ensure young people in care are provided with the necessary age appropriate documents (birth certificate; passport, provisional driving licence and bank account)	Service Managers; Team Leaders and Independent Reviewing Officers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase on current baseline.</li> </ol>
	Children and young people who have to be looked after away from home are nurtured in placements within their own community.	Service Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An increase in the number of young people (12+) in local foster placements.</li> </ol>

Theme	Action	Lead	Indicators/Measure
<b>Rights and Participation</b> continued	Looked after children and young people enjoy nurturing and enduring relationships with parents; siblings and others who are important to them.	Service Managers; Team Leaders and Independent Reviewing Officers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Important relationships are supported and plans are in place to ensure children and young people can keep in touch with those who are important to them. Considered within the young person's plan.</li> <li>2. Monitor the referrals to the Family Group Decision-Making Team. Analysis of outcomes.</li> </ol>
	Children in local authority care are encouraged to "stay put".	Service Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of young people subject to continuing care placements increases.</li> </ol>
	Removal of "institutional" terminology in discussions and plans	Heads of Service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phrases such as "respite" and "contact" will be replaced with alternatives such as "short break" or "family time".</li> </ol>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Improve the health (especially mental health) and wellbeing of CEYP.	Midlothian Early Action Partnership; Service Managers; and Children and Families Team Leaders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduced numbers of young people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• placed in secure care</li> <li>• reported missing</li> <li>• experiencing placement breakdown</li> </ul> all of which are associated with poor mental health.</li> <li>2. Increased numbers of children and young people living successfully in long-term permanent safe families.</li> <li>3. Increased appropriate referrals to organisations such as MYPAS and Move On Mentoring.</li> <li>4. Increased awareness of supports for healthy physical, mental and sexual health.</li> </ol>
	Raise the general awareness of specialist NHS and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations through staff development days.		

Theme	Action	Lead	Indicators/Measure
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> continued	Ensure children and young people are offered comprehensive health assessments within 4 weeks of becoming “looked after”	LAC Nursing Team and Service Managers	1. Increase from current baseline.
	Continue to raise awareness of (i) the challenges facing CEYP and (ii) our duties as corporate parents	Champions Board and Service Managers	1. Whole school training to be undertaken by all Midlothian High Schools. 2. Continue to offer training to GPs and practice managers. 3. Condensed training for all local Police Scotland officers. 4. Increased numbers of CEYP participating in community-based projects e.g. One Dalkeith and Gorebridge Community Cares.
	Increase the numbers of CEYP accessing discounted leisure activities	Healthy Living Manager and Service Managers	1. Reduction in the number of placement breakdowns.
	Establish a system to alert GP and Practice Managers to a young person’s care experience status.	Health and Social Care Partnership and Champions Board	1. CEYP will young people will receive improved health care support.



Theme	Action	Lead	Indicators/Measure
<b>Housing</b>	Develop a Leaving Care Housing Pathway	Service Managers; Housing Services Manager; Champions Board and Head of Children's Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No young person becomes homeless on leaving care.</li> <li>2. Accommodation and support is made available to young people leaving care.</li> <li>3. Every care leaver is aware that they can request and receive ongoing advice, guidance and assistance until their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.</li> <li>4. Reduction in tenancy breakdowns.</li> </ol>
	Existing support services and joint working arrangements are strengthened		
	Investigate alternative housing approaches such as the National House Project		
<b>Education and Training</b>	The Looked After Virtual Head Teacher will be responsible for all aspects of CEYP education.	Virtual Head Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educational outcomes for CEYP in Midlothian exceed the national average.</li> <li>2. The number of CEYP staying on at school increases.</li> <li>3. The number of care leavers going on from school to positive destinations is monitored and continues to improve.</li> </ol>
	Establish volunteering and paid employment opportunities for CEYP within the local authority.	Heads of Service; and Communities and Life Long Learning Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Midlothian Council will create a "Family Firm" model of employment.</li> <li>2. Increased numbers of CEYP will be offered training and employment within Midlothian Council.</li> </ol>
	CEYP will participate in activities where they are under-represented	Communities and Life Long Learning Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased numbers of CEYP participating in vocational activities such as Duke of Edinburgh.</li> </ol>

Theme	Action	Lead	Indicators/Measure
Youth and Criminal Justice	Establish a dedicated Senior Police Officer for CEYP.	Police Scotland	1. Improved relationships and practice. 2. Reduction in placement breakdowns.
	Implement the Missing Persons Protocol	Public Protection Office and Service Managers	1. Reduction in placement breakdowns.
	Identify and facilitate alternative community payback orders for those that are care experienced.	Service Managers and Champions Board	1. CEYP involved in the criminal justice system will develop parenting and life skills.





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