

SCOTTISH BORDERS CORPORATE



PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020





CONTENTS

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	3
CORPORATE PARENTING IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS	5
GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PARENTING DEVELOPMENTS APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020	9
ACTION PLAN AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS	11
CORE COMMITMENT 1	15
CORE COMMITMENT 2	19
CORE COMMITMENT 3	23
CORE COMMITMENT 4	25
CORE COMMITMENT 5	27
CORE COMMITMENT 6	31
INDEPENDENT CARE REVIEW	33
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS	35
APPENDIX 1	37
APPENDIX 2	40

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This is the fifth Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Annual Report. The first report covered the period 2015-2016.

The term Corporate Parent was described in the Scottish Government document “Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better” and then reiterated in “These Are Our Bairns (Scottish Government 2008)” as:

“The formal and local partnerships needed between all local authority departments and services, and associated agencies, who are responsible for working together to meet the needs of Looked After Children and Young People.” (Scottish Executive, January 2007).

Responsible parents fulfil all those activities associated with bringing up children. These include providing for their basic needs, planning for the future, being a resource to turn to, providing positive experiences, hopes and dreams and acting as advocate and mentor. Their legal responsibilities include taking decisions on where children live, what education they receive and when medical treatment is required. As a corporate parent we need to know that we are making the same decisions for looked after children as we would make for our own children. A corporate parent needs to do at least what it would expect a good parent to do.

In April 2015, corporate parenting was placed on a statutory footing in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Part 9 of the Act places explicit statutory duties and responsibilities on corporate parents (Section 58). These include:

- to be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people (and those in Continuing Care and Aftercare)
- to assess the needs of those looked after children and young people for services and support it provides
- to promote the interests of looked after children and young people
- to seek to provide looked after children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also requires corporate parents to work collaboratively: corporate parents must, in so far as reasonably practicable, collaborate with each other when exercising their corporate parenting responsibilities where they consider



that doing so would safeguard or promote the wellbeing of children or young people to whom this Part applies (Section 60). Other key aspects include the duty to plan and report to the Scottish Government on how corporate parents exercise their responsibilities.

The list of who is a corporate parent was also expanded under the Act. The list includes 24 separate groups and organisations:

1. The Scottish Ministers
2. A local authority
3. The National Convener of Children’s Hearings Scotland
4. Children’s Hearings Scotland
5. The Principal Reporter
6. The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration
7. A health board
8. A board constituted under section 2(1)(b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978
9. Healthcare Improvement Scotland
10. The Scottish Qualifications Authority
11. Skills Development Scotland Co. Ltd (registered number SC 202659)
12. Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland
13. The Scottish Social Services Council
14. The Scottish Sports Council
15. The chief constable of the Police Service of Scotland
16. The Scottish Police Authority
17. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
18. The Scottish Legal Aid Board
19. The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
20. The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
21. The Scottish Housing Regulator
22. Bòrd na Gàidhlig
23. Creative Scotland
24. A body which is a “post-16 education body” for the purposes of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005

The expanded list of who is a corporate parent creates greater opportunity to work holistically with looked after children and young people and ensure, through collaborative practice, agencies are best placed to meet their needs.

Statutory Guidance on Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 further defines Corporate Parenting as:

‘An organisation’s performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and secure the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted’.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORPORATE PARENTING IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

In response to “Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better” the first Corporate Parenting Strategy was agreed in 2007. This was underpinned by the Corporate Parenting Policy (February 2006), the Health Needs of Looked After Children Policy in partnership with Scottish Borders Health Board in January 2007 and a Joint Policy for the Education of Looked After Children in autumn 2007. The current version of the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-2021 is the fourth iteration of the multi-agency Strategy.

Corporate parenting is now firmly established across the Scottish Borders as the multi-agency approach to improving services and outcomes for looked after children and young people, young people in Continuing Care and care experienced young people. This was recognised in the most recent Care Inspectorate joint inspection of Services for Children and Young People in the Scottish Borders: “Leaders across services, including elected members, were clearly committed to their corporate parenting responsibilities” (June 2016).

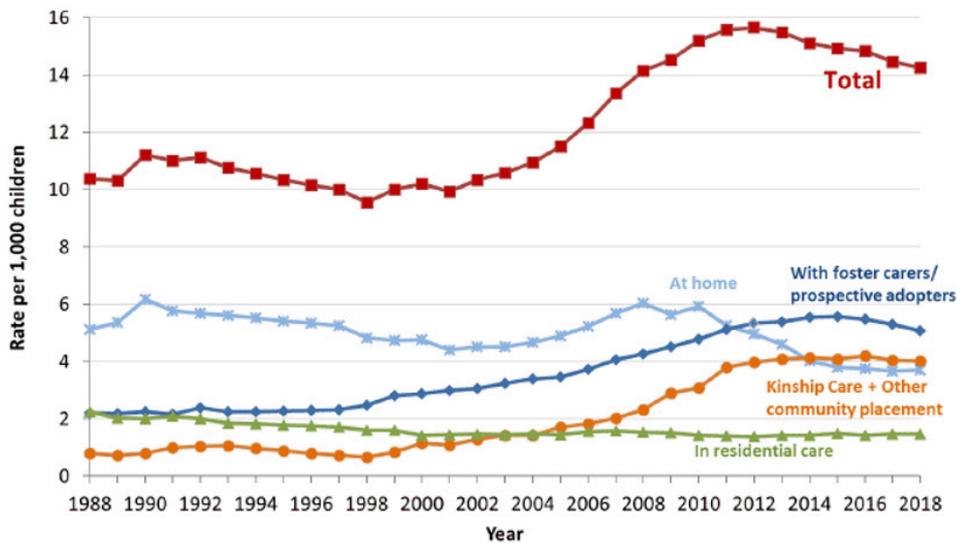
Scottish Borders produced their first Corporate Parenting Annual Report in April 2016.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN NATIONAL STATISTICS AND TRENDS

The Scottish Government collate statistics and data on looked after children on an annual basis.

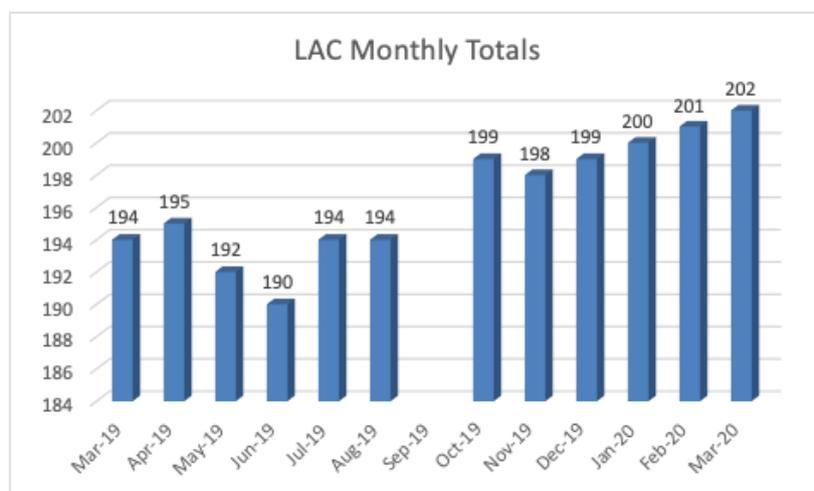
In July 2019 (the latest figures available), there were an estimated 14,015 looked after children – a decrease of 723 (5%) from 2018. This is the seventh consecutive year the number of looked after children has decreased.

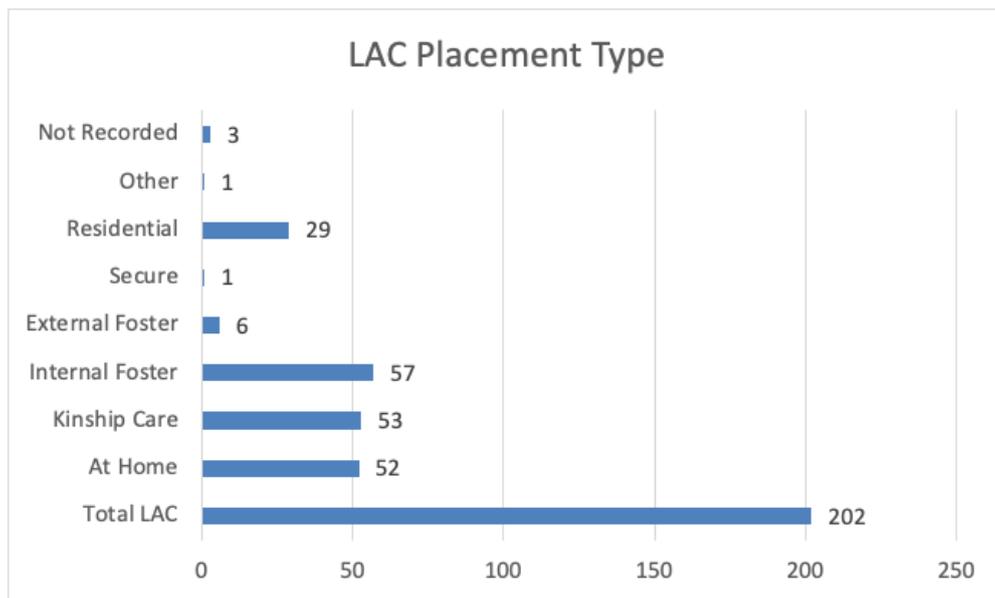
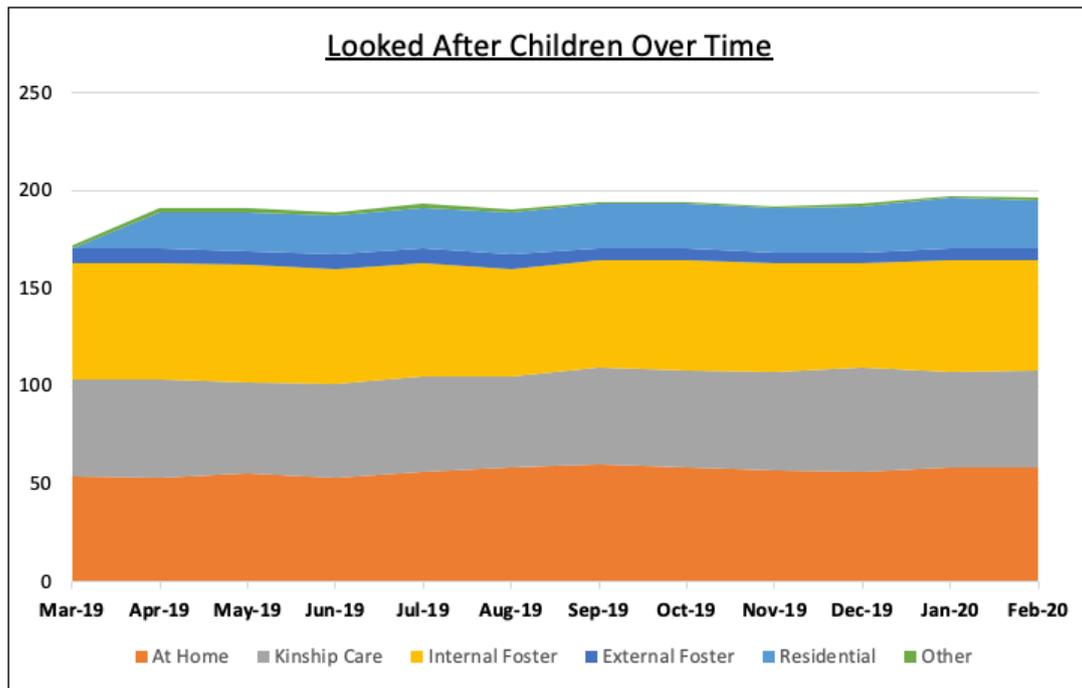
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PER 1,000 CHILDREN UNDER 18 BY TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION IN SCOTLAND, 1988-2019



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICS AND TRENDS, SCOTTISH BORDERS MARCH 2019 – MARCH 2020

The following comparative data details the number of looked after children and placement types.

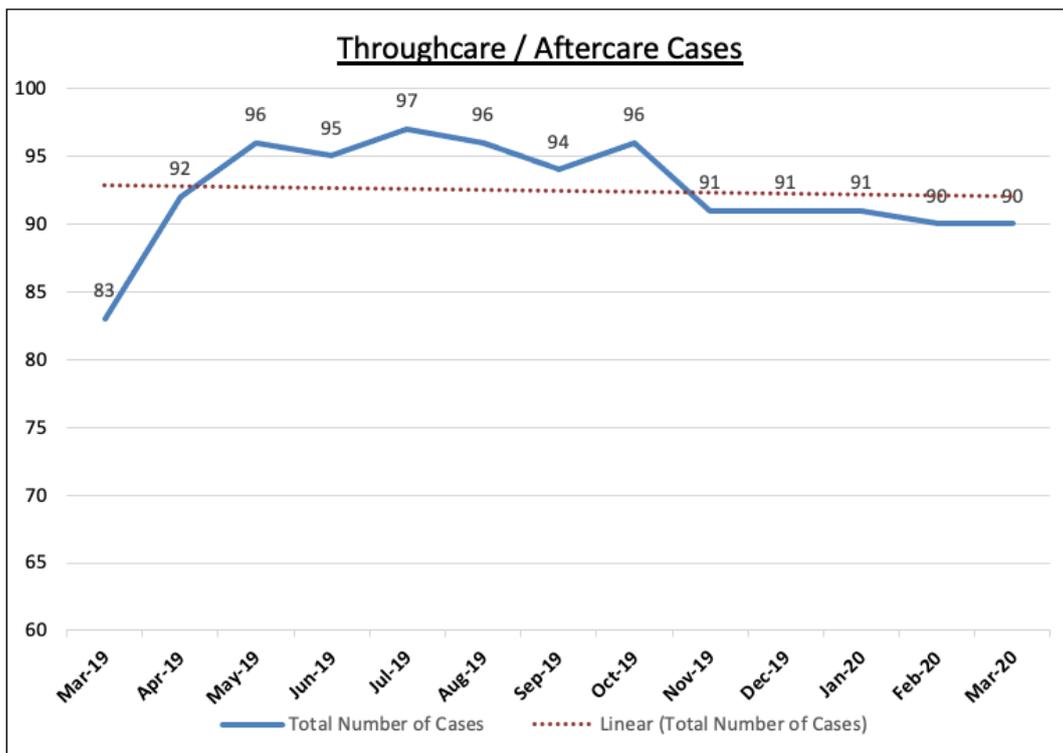




MEASURE	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
TOTAL NO. LAC (No. at month end)	194	195	192	190	194	194	198	199	198	199	200	201	202
At Home	54	53	55	53	56	58	60	58	57	56	58	58	52
Kinship Care	49	50	47	48	49	47	49	50	50	53	49	50	53
Internal Foster	60	60	60	59	58	55	55	56	56	54	57	56	57
External Foster	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	5	5	6	6	6
Secure	3	3	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Residential	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	23	24	26	25	26	29
Other	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
NO PLACEMENT RECORDED	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	3

There has been a slight increase in the overall LAC numbers in the Scottish Borders. They have increased by 8 children from 194 to 202. This is a percentage increase of 4%. There has been little change in placement type of looked after children over 2019-20 other than residential placements. These have increased from 22 to 30 placements.

It is of note that there are 33 young people in Continuing Care placements in the Scottish Borders. These are previously looked after children who have chosen to remain in their care placement (usually a foster placement) but who are no longer legally classed as 'looked after'. This adds a significant number of children and young people looked after in foster placements within the Scottish Borders. In Addition to young people in Continuing Care, 50 young people are also supported on an Aftercare basis (see chart below).



CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PARENTING DEVELOPMENTS APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Governance of Corporate Parenting in the Scottish Borders is managed through the multi-agency Children and Young People's Leadership Group (chaired and co-ordinated by Scottish Borders Council) which in turn reports to the Community Planning Partnership. The Leadership Group is attended by a range of senior managers from both the statutory and third sector and includes a significant representation from corporate parents.

The membership of the Children and Young People's Leadership Group between April 2019 and March 2020 was:

- Gina Dickson – Local Authority Liaison Officer, Police Scotland
- Nicky Berry - Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Acute Services, NHS Borders
- Susan Hunter – Chief Officer, Youth Borders
- Dawn Moss - Nurse Consultant Vulnerable Children, NHS Borders (until December 2019)
- Fiona Doig – Strategic Lead in ADP and Health Improvement
- Graham Jones - Safer Communities & Community Justice Manager, Scottish Borders Council
- Anne Marriott – LGBT Youth Scotland
- Lesley Siewert – Locality Reporter Manager, SCRA
- Stuart Easingwood – Interim Service Director Children & Young People, Scottish Borders Council
- Allyson McCollam - Associate Joint Director of Public Health (until December 2019)
- Gillian Nicol - Child Protection Co-ordinator, Scottish Borders Child Protection Committee
- Janice Robertson - Programme Co-ordinator (C&YP), Scottish Borders Council
- Gareth Stott - Resources Group Manager, Children and Families Social Work, Scottish Borders Council
- Kevin McCall – Quality Improvement Officer, Education
- Michelle Strong – Chief Officer, Education

Allyson McCollam (Associate Joint Director of Public Health) and Dawn Moss (Nurse Consultant Vulnerable Children, NHS Borders) both retired from their posts in December 2019.

CORPORATE PARENTING OPERATIONS GROUP

Guided by the Leadership Group, the Corporate Parenting Operational Group has a key role within the Children's Services planning structure. It ensures that the particular needs of looked after children remain central to the work of other planning groups, including those developing services which work directly with looked after children, those which work with young people in Continuing Care or Aftercare, or those aiming to prevent children and young people becoming looked after. Membership of the group has been expanded since the list of Corporate Parents was extended in April 2015. The group now better reflects the range of organisations and groups designated as Corporate Parents. The current membership of the Operational Group is:

- Gareth Stott (Chair) - Group Manager, Resources, Children & Families Social Work, SBC
- Peter Macklin – Attainment Advisor, Education, SBC
- Gina Dickson – Local Authority Liaison Officer, Police Scotland
- Sharon Johnston - Resources Team Leader, Children & Families Social Work, SBC
- David Kemp – Homelessness Services Manager
- Norrie Tait – CLD Youth Work Team Leader
- Gillian Elliott - Child Protection/Looked After Children's Nurse, NHS Borders
- Lorraine Tait – Child Protection/Looked After Children's Nurse, NHS Borders
- Robert Jamieson - Throughcare Aftercare and Youth Justice Team Leader, Children & Families Social Work, SBC
- Rachel Pulman - Nurse Consultant Public Protection, NHS Borders
- Jen McKenzie - Care Aware Adviser, Borders College
- Tim Glockling - Educational Psychologist, Education, SBC
- Carole Anderson - Health Improvement Lead: Children & Young People, Joint Health Improvement Team
- Claire Nairn - Head of Student Services, Borders College
- Andrea Hall, Skills Development Scotland

The Corporate Parenting Operations group met 3 times over the reporting period. The Covid-19 pandemic affected the meeting of the group at the end of the year and the beginning of 2020-21 reporting period. Membership of the group has become increasingly representative of the full range of Corporate Parents and work is on-going in this area. Over 2019-20 the Operations Group have focused primarily on developing the updated Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-21 and driving the actions detailed in the draft Strategy (Appendix 1), ensuring that the plan is both aspirational but also deliverable in terms of improving services. Further detail of progress is detailed later in this report.

As well as local developments specified in the Action Plan, the Operations Group also looks at local and national themes and initiatives which impact on looked after children. In addition to the Action Plan, presentations and discussions have included youth work developments, the Independent Care Review, Care Experienced Student Bursaries and youth homelessness.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

ACTION PLAN AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS

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 parenting responsibilities and improve their practice accordingly. We need to work together to enable looked after children, young people and care leavers to be, and feel, nurtured, listened to and supported to achieve their individual potential.

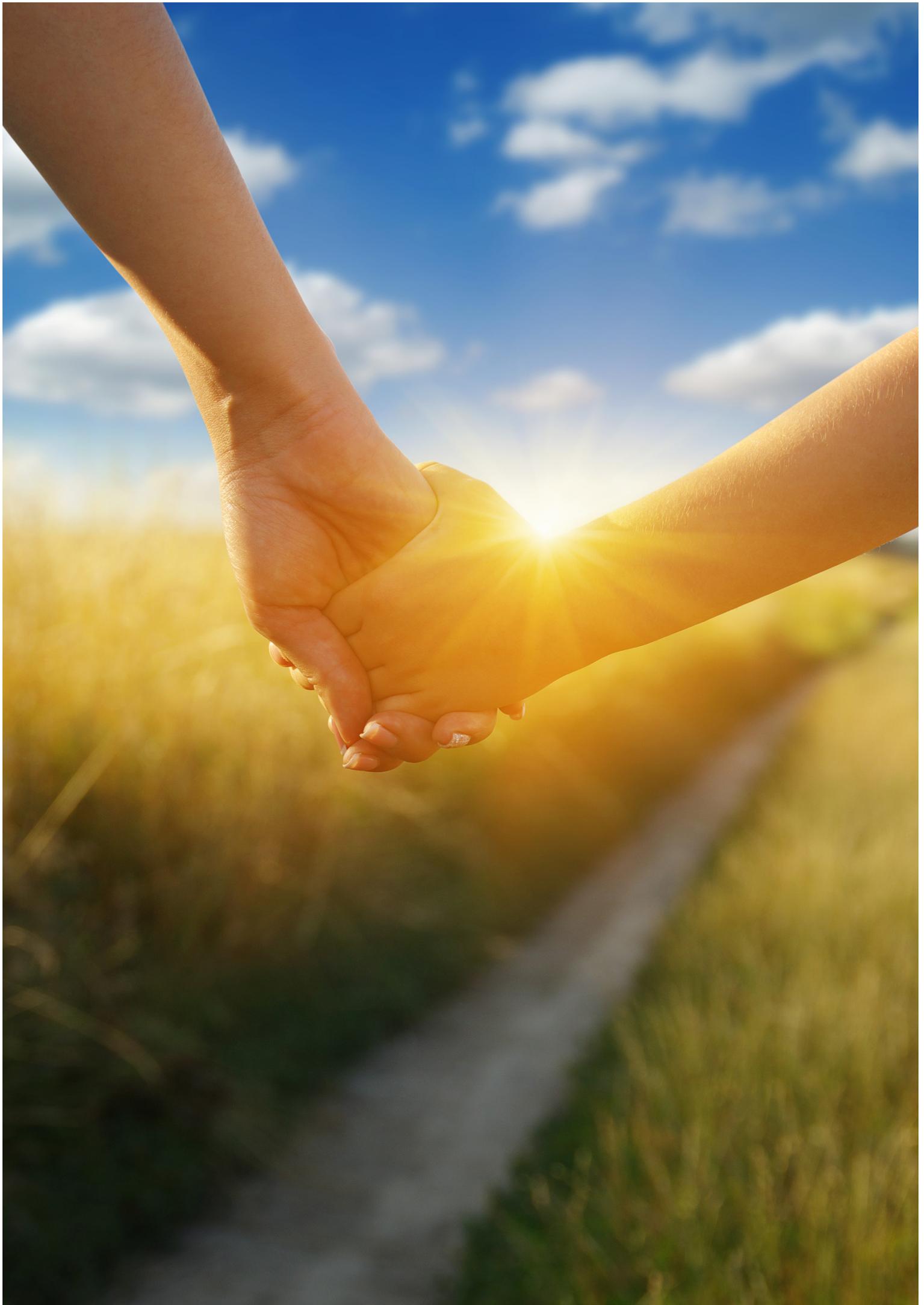
The draft Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-21 and Headline Action Plan provides a framework for the next phase of planning and service development which will help us to work more strategically and evidence how we plan to and improve the lifelong outcomes for looked after children and care experienced young people. In order to achieve this, partners have agreed the following six Core Commitments for the next three years to give clear strategic direction to all corporate parents and partners:

Core Commitments	
Core Commitment 1	<p>In order to meet their responsibilities, corporate parents will listen and respond to the voices of children and families/carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure our services are as effective as they can be they must be shaped by the voices and participation of the children, young people and care leavers • We will ensure that all corporate parents understand their responsibilities and action these through strategy, planning, practice and resource allocation
Core Commitment 2	<p>All looked after children and care experienced young people will be treated fairly, have equality of opportunity and have a sense of belonging in their communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to reducing inequality for all our children and young people • We are committed to improving educational outcomes and reducing the inequality gap • We will promote children and young people's rights and advocate on their behalf
Core Commitment 3	<p>Corporate parents will ensure children and young people who are looked after at home have the same opportunities and outcomes as other children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring that those who are looked after at home have the same social, emotional and educational and health support and outcomes as all other children and young people • We will reduce inequalities for this group of children and young people
Core Commitment 4	<p>Children and young people will be supported to improve their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to improving health outcomes and reducing and inequality gap • Emotional and mental health services will meet the needs of looked after and care experienced young people

<p>Core Commitment 5</p>	<p>Young people making the transition to adulthood will be supported to achieve their full potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring that young people are supported in terms of education, training, employment, health, housing and relationships • We are committed to providing care leavers with sustained positive destinations in all areas of their lives
<p>Core Commitment 6</p>	<p>Corporate parents will raise awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities across organisations and agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring that all corporate parents are fully aware of their responsibilities to facilitate change, reduce risk, reduce stigma, promote equality and improve outcomes for looked after children and care experienced young people

The Corporate Parenting Action Plan is the key driver for delivering developments in Corporate Parenting and improving support and services for looked after children and young people. Responsibility for the delivery of the Action Plan lies primarily with the members of the Corporate Parenting Operations Group who are representative of a number of key agencies: Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Police Scotland and Borders College. Aspects of the delivery of action contained within the plan can be delegated outwith the Corporate Parenting Operations Group. Over the reporting period there has been a real focus on driving the Action Plan and ensuring it is an active document which results in positive service development and change.

Some of the notable developments in the Corporate Parenting Core Commitments are listed below:



CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORE COMMITMENT 1 - IN ORDER TO MEET THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, CORPORATE PARENTS WILL LISTEN AND RESPOND TO THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES/CARERS.

Participation of children and young people in the services they receive as looked after children is an area of development across all corporate parent organisations.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD)

Within Community Learning and Development (CLD) the Youth Engagement Officer is currently leading on youth participation work. The role focuses on supporting the Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs); setting up the youth voice group for the Council Sustainable Development Committee; organising the annual Inspire awards programme/event; and updating the Young Scot Borders page and other social media pages relating to participation and the Scottish Borders Youth Voice project. CLD have also been leading on developing a Participation Strategy for Scottish Borders although this has been delayed due to a post vacancy and staff sickness. It is hoped that this will be progressed once the Covid-19 pandemic alleviates.

WHEATLANDS CHILDREN'S HOUSE

Wheatlands is Scottish Borders Council's only residential Children's House. It is regularly commended by the Care Inspectorate for its approach to participation, and how the staff team involve young people in commenting on and improving their own care and support. Wheatlands has a 'participation book' which staff use to record participation with young people, their parents and other professionals. This provides an audit trail of suggestions and how they are addressed. In addition the service has a 'Teen Talk' book where they record discussions with young people who need a response. Young people have access to the book and can check that their suggestions are being considered. Visitors to Wheatlands are welcome to review the young people's suggestions and actions that have been taken.

There are also fortnightly house meetings which all young people are encouraged to attend to share their views and ideas in relation to the day to day running of the house.

As well as the 'in-house' approaches to participation, residents are encouraged to use their experience of being looked after to enhance training of professional staff and others. Some of the young people staying at Wheatlands have been involved in delivering workshops at the Fostering Conference in the last two years, and one of the young people co-delivered a training session on Internet Safety with a community police officer to a group of 25 Council staff and foster carers.

In the last twelve months Nicola Sturgeon has visited Wheatlands as part of the 1000 voices project which helped inform the Independent Care Review (February 2020).

The development of participation continues within Wheatlands and it is hoped to further improve the involvement of young people in their care and in service developments.

RESOURCES TEAM (FAMILY PLACEMENT TEAM)

The Resources Team have sought to work with care experienced young people in foster care in different ways in recent years. Over the past four years, the Team has organised an annual fostering conference and at the last three events there have been conference workshops which have been planned and facilitated by young people, and creative contributions such as art work, poetry and an animation on continuing care produced for the events. The workshops have been very well received at the conference by attendees, and a lot of work was undertaken in the run up to the conference (by a range of staff and foster carers) to prepare and support the young people with their involvement at the event.

At the end of 2019 and early 2020, the Team tried to coordinate two participation events at SBC headquarters, but the events were not able to go ahead due to very low numbers of young people indicating they would be interested in attending. A consultation on a Welcome Pack was launched at the end of 2019, with all young people over the age of fourteen in foster care and residential care being sent a postcard seeking their views on what should be in packs for children when they arrive with new carers. Again responses were low. It has been recognised that the limited responses are more likely to do methods of engaging young people, rather than young people not wanting to come forward to get involved.

A clear strategic approach and plan for relaunching participation work with care experienced young people going forwards, which is monitored and reviewed regularly is currently being written and funding for the development of participation has been identified for 2020-21.

THROUGH-CARE/AFTERCARE (TCAC) TEAM

In response to feedback from young people, TCAC Participation Events were set up in 2018. The first Participation Event in May 2018 was set up as a scoping session to gather from attendees their thoughts on how future participation events should be run. In conjunction with an online survey it was decided that themed evenings would give attendees a safe space to discuss the issues that impact on them the most as Care Experienced young people.

The themed events allowed the young people the opportunity to learn and offer peer support, further themes linked to Outcome Statements in the TCAC Team Plan, and allow young people to shape how the TCAC team is developed. Perhaps of most importance is that these events

were fun and user led. Whilst social isolation is often an unspoken issue affecting young people involved with TCAC, it was felt that through these events, young people were getting an opportunity to share their life experience and form healthy relationships with peers.

Out with Participation Events, on two occasions in 2018 young people were approached and attended staff interviews contributing to the decision making process around the appointment of candidates to posts within the team. Views have also been sought on Team development through an online survey.

Since April 2019, the TCAC Team have run two participation events for young people involved with their service, in April 2019 and September 2019. The sessions were held in a venue in Central Borders and were attended by young people from across the region. The young people who attended all spoke about enjoying attending the participation groups highlighting the food, social contact and hearing from different people and organisations as reasons they attended. Issues raised in the first meeting included budgeting, the cost of public transport and living by themselves (loneliness and motivation to cook meals/ maintain their tenancy). In September, 12 young people attended the group and there was an input from the Wellbeing College. The next planned session then had to be put on hold due to Covid-19.

EDUCATION

In May 2019, following a discussion with care experienced young people Scottish Borders Council's Virtual Head teacher (who oversees the educational experience of all looked after children and young people attending education settings) organised a three day 'Looking at Careers' event in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce Borders. This event was created to bring together pupils who may have experienced the care system or were dis-engaging from education across the Scottish Borders. The aim was to identify and evidence the skills required in making a positive and sustainable transition into the world of work and further education. In order to start the process earlier S2 / S3 pupils were targeted. The event was held at Springwood Park in Kelso and saw over 60 pupils attend, as well as a range of different businesses and potential employers.

The event was due to be run again this Spring 2020, but due to the Coronavirus outbreak it had to be cancelled. Scottish Borders is the first local authority in Scotland to run a partnership event like this, and Scottish Government were due to attend this year following the success of last year's programme.

There are plans to develop a school-based mentoring programme in Scottish Borders, modelled on the MCR pathways project in Glasgow. The aim of such a programme would be to address the outcome gap between care-experienced young people and their peers and to support young people in, or on the edges of the care system to realise their full potential through education.

As part of Borders College Corporate Parenting Action Plan they aim to provide opportunities for the students' voice to be heard allowing them to provide feedback on their learning experience and to provide them the opportunity to become ambassadors, to inspire and advocate on behalf of others. The Students Association allows for the students' voice to be heard, through various forums. This Academic Session Borders College have had a number of care-experienced young people involved with the Students Association with one student working as an active member of their Corporate Parenting Working Group.

HEALTH

Participation and involvement of young people in service delivery and development in health services has been universal in approach rather than focusing specifically on looked after children and young people. Over the past two years Community Health and their partners have focused on making significant changes to support for children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. Young people have been consulted and involved in developing this work.

Guidance and training were introduced on self-harm prevention and clear pathways to access help when needed. Local multi agency guidance on working with young people at risk of self-harm was published in 2019, supported by a training programme for anyone living or working within the Scottish Borders throughout 2018/19. Young people and parents/carers were involved in the creation of the Self-harm multi-agency guidance, and associated information leaflets which were produced.

Scottish Mental Health First Aid, Young People Training has been delivered in Borders College – approximately 30 students attended sessions in 2018 and 2019. 529 senior pupils and 69 staff members participated in Scottish Mental Health First Aid, Young People Training in 2018 to develop mental health literacy and learn about tools and resources available in the school community. A further 100 S6 pupils participated in Scottish Mental Health First Aid, Young People Training in the summer of 2019. Following the training, 76 young people have become Emotional Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors within their schools.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The range of work highlighted above reflects the on-going interest and commitment of a range of teams and services to engaging care experienced young people in new and existing forums. This is not exhaustive, and other pockets of engagement and participation are being undertaken across the region. However, it is clear from the above that there are some ongoing challenges to sustainable participation in Scottish Borders which include:

- No consistent and sustainable participation model or approach for working with care experienced young people across agencies that puts them at the heart of decision-making processes;
- No current participation strategy for working with care experienced young people which can be used to coordinate, steer and monitor the different areas of work, and increase collaboration between the services and corporate parents that are already engaging with these groups of young people.

In response to these challenges a clear strategic approach and plan for relaunching participation work with care experienced young people going forwards, which is monitored and reviewed regularly is currently being written and funding for the development of participation has been identified for 2020-21. The aim is, amongst other initiatives, to develop a Champions Board (using the learning from existing models across Scotland). This will be reported on in next year's Corporate Parenting Annual Report. Participation of looked after and care experienced young people in the development of the services they receive remains a key commitment of the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy. The recent Independent Care Review (February 2020) underlined the importance of the participation defining in the need for children and young people's 'voices' to be heard at all stages throughout their care journeys. 'Voice' was designated as one of the five Foundations for Change in the review.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORE COMMITMENT 2 - ALL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE TREATED FAIRLY, HAVE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND HAVE A SENSE OF BELONGING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

THE 'VIRTUAL SCHOOL'

In terms of equity of opportunity, the development of a 'Virtual School' for looked after children was developed within the Scottish Borders over 2018-19.

The core purpose of the Virtual School is to be relentless in driving forward improvements in educational progress through attainment/achievement of all children looked after. Children who are looked after are being educated across a large number of schools, the Virtual School Leader has a powerful role in tracking their progress as if they were in a single school. This local authority remit requires close collaboration and joint planning with Head Teachers and others across the service who share responsibility for individual children and young people.

The Virtual School has continued to develop over 2019-20 ensuring there is a system to rigorously track and monitor the attainment of children who are looked after; ensuring all children who are looked after have a robust and effective plan that supports access to appropriate and timely support; championing the educational needs of looked after children across the authority; and, providing support and advice to schools and to the service and advocacy for children and young people who are looked after.

The latest national figures for the education of looked after children in Scotland - Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2018/19 showed positive trends in a number of areas:

- 35% of looked after school leavers left with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5. The figure was 23% in 2012/13, however it still falls well short of the average for all pupils for 2018-19 which was 85%.
- 71% of looked after school leavers left school with positive follow up destinations. The figure was 63% in 2012/13, however it again falls well short of the average for all pupils for 2018-19 which was 93%.

- School attendance rate fell for looked after pupils over the last six years. The attendance rate for pupils looked after in a foster care placement is however higher than the attendance rate for all pupils.
- National exclusion rates fell significantly between 2012-13 and 2018-18 from 280 looked after children and young people per 1000 to 22.

In the Scottish Borders outcome trends for looked after children and young people were similar or better than the national situation:

- 44.44% of looked after school leavers left with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or Higher at grade D or higher. In 2018 only 30.43% of looked after children attained at SCQF level 5 or above.
- 81% of looked after school leavers left school with positive follow up destinations. This was a slight decrease from 2018 when 86.96% left school for a positive destination.
- School attendance rates were 91.75 for Early Learning Centres, 95.37% for Primary and 81.59% for Secondary School – an average of 88.58%. This represents an improvement in attendance for children in primary school where attendance was at 93.7% in 2018 and a slight improvement for secondary school where attendance was at 87.1%.
- There was a total of 225 exclusions of looked after children. This is an improvement over 2018 when there was a total of 312 exclusions of looked after children.

The 'Virtual School' is already showing signs of both raising awareness of the needs of looked after children across Scottish Borders schools and in improving attainment across all areas.

PERMANENCE

Achieving permanent placements for looked after children is the best way to provide security and positive outcomes for those where rehabilitation to their birth parents is not possible or appropriate. Permanence is a statutory process resulting in adoption (primarily through a Permanence Order with authority to Adopt) or a Permanence Order. It is a complex, multi-agency process often subject to drift and delay. Historically permanence planning for children has been subject to drift and delay across Scotland resulting in significant delays in children's permanence plans and permanent care arrangements being finalised. Improving trends in timescales to achieve permanency planning in turn delivers improved outcomes for children given what we know from research findings about how much better children thrive when afforded the security provided by permanent substitute family care.

Over 2019 – 2020 there has been demonstrable improvements in timescales in all areas of permanence timescales. Despite incremental improvements in completion of permanence planning processes, there is still scope for improvement. In order to help Children and Families Social Work and partner agencies improve both practice in relation to permanence and permanence planning timescales, an independent consultation / review was commissioned from the Adoption and Fostering Alliance, Scotland (AFA). The consultation report was completed in February 2020. The review report concluded with a number of suggested areas to focus on to improve permanence planning for children. These included areas such as improving workers confidence in relation to parenting capacity assessments; critical thinking about assessment; use of chronologies; and, leadership and management. The report will form the basis of further improving timescales and good practice in relation to permanence planning for looked after children in 2020-2021.

FOSTERING

The majority of children and young people looked after away from home or in continuing care in the Scottish Borders live in Scottish Borders Council foster care placements. Recruitment and retention of carers remains a priority in order to increase the number of carer households and meet the needs of children and young people in the Scottish Borders. The Resources Team (supported by the Communications Team) were involved in a variety of recruitment approaches and initiatives on an on-going basis. Over 2019 6 new foster carers were recruited (3 households) and 3 foster carers were deregistered (2 households).

The Scottish Borders Council Learning Disability Team currently developed a Shared Lives Scheme for young care experienced adults in family based care placements. The new scheme is managed by the third sector agency Cornerstone and 6 young adults are in the process of transferring to this scheme from the Fostering Service.

Following the publishing of the Independent Care Review in February 2020, the fostering service is actively reviewing practice to ensure its service reflects the views and findings of the review.

ADVOCACY

Looked after children and young people can access formal independent advocacy support through Who Cares? Scotland. Links with Who Cares? Scotland have been on-going for a number of years, but due to the limited nature of the contract, routine advocacy support is only offered to those looked after outside of the Scottish Borders (though the advocacy service is available to all looked after children and young people if they approach Who Cares). This continues to be a gap in support provision. The Borders Independent Advocacy Service (BIAS) was awarded the contract to provide independent advocacy for children and young people attending Children Hearings. This is an increase in available advocacy but formal advocacy services for children and young people remains an area of development across agencies.

MULTI-AGENCY AUDITS

Multi-agency auditing has been an area for development for Corporate Parenting in Scottish Borders, the multi-agency GIRFEC Group and the Child Protection Committee. Multi-agency auditing began in July 2017, with the aim of completing 6 audits a year. Social Work, Health and Education staff review cases from their own professional perspective and a multi-agency perspective. The Care Inspectorate file reading audit tool is used and completed for the randomly selected audits.

However, due to staffing constraints and the unavailability of key staff, multi-agency auditing did not take place from mid-2019. This was a temporary situation and was rectified in February 2020, when systematic multi-agency auditing was re-established.



2 multi-agency audits took place in February 2020. As this was the first time some staff had undertaken multi-agency auditing, the session was used for both auditing and training purposes. The issues raised in the audits included:

- Sharing of formal reports between agencies
- Joint agency over optimism (relating to keeping children on the Child Protection register without referral to the Children's Reporter where no change was evident)
- Positive multi-agency work / intervention and use of the third sector

Unfortunately the outbreak of Coronavirus in March 2020 curtailed the monthly scheduled multi-agency auditing of cases. Multi-agency auditing did resume in June 2020.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORE COMMITMENT 3 - CORPORATE PARENTS WILL ENSURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AT HOME HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES AS OTHER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It has been acknowledged nationally that the social, emotional and educational outcomes for children and young people looked after at home are worse than those looked after away from home. This is why it has been included as a specific Core Commitment in the new Corporate Parenting Strategy.

In January 2020 case file audits were completed on 10 LAC at Home cases (using Social Work case files) in order to better identify the specific issues in relation to children and young people looked after at home. Although the audits were undertaken by staff from a single agency (Social Work) there was clear evidence across all cases audited of multi-agency work and support of children, young people and their families. In the majority of cases, all the relevant agencies were involved in meeting the assessed needs of the group. There was very limited evidence of appropriate professionals not being involved in supporting those looked after at home, and where there was such evidence it tended to be around procedure not being followed (reviews being late, LAC medical reviews not taking place, etc.) rather than a lack of support and intervention. Despite the evidenced involvement of targeted support outcomes for the LAC at Home group remain lower than those looked after away from home. National data from the Request for Analysis of Education Outcomes of Care Experienced Young People from Independent Care Review (Education Analytical Services Division, January 2020) confirmed that looked after children and young people have significantly lower attainment levels than the non-looked after cohort and, attainment levels for young people looked after at home are the lowest for all groups of looked after young people. This is also reflected in local data on educational attainment, employment and inclusion in aftercare services (see Appendix 2).



The frequency and quality of statutory reviews of children looked after at home has been closely monitored to ensure equity with those looked after away from home. Each child should be reviewed every 6 months as a minimum and the target set for completed reviews is 80%. The average number of completed S.31 LAC Reviews for children looked after at home over the past year has been 64%. A Scottish Borders Council Looked After Children Internal Audit Report (September 2019) recognised that the statutory timescales for the reviews of looked after children were not as consistent as they should be and recommended that 'Processes need to be reviewed to ensure that the statutory requirement is met that all placements are reviewed 6 months after they commence and every 6 months after that'. This will again be reported on in the next Corporate Parenting Annual Report.

Outcomes for children and young people who are looked after at home remains demonstrably lower than those looked after away from home. This remains a key area of improvement and development for corporate parents across the Scottish Borders.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORE COMMITMENT 4 - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE SUPPORTED TO IMPROVE THEIR PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

JOINT HEALTH IMPROVEMENT TEAM

The Joint Health Improvement Team have led on 2 initiatives for vulnerable young people over the past year. Although neither are specifically aimed at looked after children, they are clearly of relevance. These initiatives focused on self-harming behaviour and raising awareness of mental health issues in schools.

Work on self-harm included delivery of 'What's the Harm' training for partners across Borders. What's the Harm Training was delivered to 100 multi-agency staff

The Joint Health Improvement Team has also continued the partnership approach to 'See Me' schools programme (funded by Scottish Government & Comic Relief) which aims to help young people understand the importance of good mental health, recognise how it affects young people, and builds confidence to talk openly about mental health. This is achieved by implementing a two pronged approach:

1. Empowering young people to advocate for their own mental health and the mental health of their peers.
2. Provides support to the staff within schools and youth settings to develop mentally flourishing communities where individuals can learn and work within an environment free from mental health stigma and discrimination.

The See Me Schools Mental Health Initiative: Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training was completed by 90 S6 pupils across all nine high schools in Scottish Borders in 2019. In 2019 the development of an ambassador model, enable 80 YP to become MH ambassadors/peer supporters. An introduction to Mental Health Awareness Sessions were developed and delivered to all S6 pupils between June-September 2019. Scottish Borders are the first local authority in Scotland who has committed to taking a whole authority approach, and are working with partners across Scottish Borders to deliver the project. The See Me programme will continue to complement other initiatives being progressed that work to build resilience and confidence.



Led by Education, Joint Health Improvement Team and ADP Support Team a short life working group was established to develop a drug, alcohol and tobacco resource pack for children and young people aged 3-18. Along with the programme leads, partners in attendance are from Primary and Secondary Schools, Youth Borders and Police Scotland. These resources are age and stage appropriate and linked to Curriculum for Excellence, experiences and outcomes and benchmarks held on GLOW.

The package includes:

- Age 3-18 resources
- Parental information leaflet linked to age and stage
- Consideration of children affected by parental substance use
- Includes Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Information on where young people can access support
- Latest drug trends (Police Scotland/Crew)

The work is informed by evidence based guidelines. Parental information leaflets were developed. Since the launched in November 2019 there have been 14,700 visits to the site. The implementation and usage of resources will be evaluated in 2020.

LAC HEALTH PROVISION – NHS BORDERS

Initial Health Needs Assessments (IHNAs) and Review Health Needs Assessments (RHNA) for looked after children have been standard practice for some time. They are carried out by the designated LAC clinician, CP/LAC nurses and school nurses who, as designated LAC practitioners, have a responsibility for ensuring that the health needs of looked after children are being met and quality is assured. Over 2019-20 the priority was to ensure that initial health assessments were carried out. NHS Borders school nursing service are now completing all Initial and review health assessments for Looked After Children of school age; pre-school children continue to be seen by a clinician within the paediatric service. During the latter part of the reporting period, developmental work in relation to the health provision of looked after children was hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic, NHS Borders continued to offer health assessments for looked after children throughout this period to ensure health needs were identified and responded to appropriately.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORE COMMITMENT 5 - YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD WILL BE SUPPORTED TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

ALBERT PLACE

Albert Place Supported Accommodation Project for vulnerable young Care Leavers opened on the 10th March 2010. It is a joint Scottish Borders Council (Throughcare Aftercare and Homeless Teams) and Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) initiative which provides semi-supported accommodation for care experienced young people. The project consists of 4 self-contained semi-furnished transitional flats, 1 Training Flat and a Concierge Office. SBC Concierge staff provide tenants with on-site security & support from 6pm to 6am 365 days a year. Along with providing emotional & practical hands on support with a variety of day to day issues, SBHA Transitions staff also provide information, advice & guidance on all aspects of housing options, tenancy management, independent living skills, safe door control & neighbourly respect. Transitions staff also have the lead role in providing support with all the necessary preparations for moving on to more independent living in the wider community, access to other appropriate accommodation & the setting up of their new home.

Albert Place Supported Accommodation project is registered with the Care Inspectorate and is subject to National Health, Social Care & Housing Support Standards.

Albert Place has had significant success in providing support and accommodation for care experienced young people and enabled many of them to sustain permanent tenancies of their own following the period of transitional support.

Since the project opened there have been 39 young care leavers living in Albert Place (16 stayed for 12 months or more, 8 stayed for 6 months, 4 stayed for less than 6 months & the remainder stayed an average of 8/9 months.)

37 young Care Leavers have moved on to independent living.

- 1 went on to live with supported carers (accessed their own tenancy after 1 year and sustained their tenancy for 12 months or more)
- 4 went back to live with parents - 3 eventually accessed their own tenancies and sustained their tenancies for 12 months or more.
- 2 moved into temporary homeless accommodation straight from Albert Place. (Both have since accessed their own accommodation and sustained their tenancies for 12 months or more).
- 5 did not manage to maintain their tenancies for the first 12 months on leaving Albert Place. 3 have since managed tenancies for 12 months or more.
- 24 sustained their tenancy for the first 12 months or more straight after leaving Albert Place.
- 1 has not had the time to reach the 12 months mark yet.

Having had the opportunity to take their first steps towards independent living within Albert Place, 33 young care leavers out of 36 have been successful in maintaining a tenancy for 12 months or more. This equates to a success rate of 91.66%.

Albert Place also has a training flat which is used to help young people develop independent living skills. Since August 2017 35 young people have used the flat (524 overnight stays).

The statistics above show that for the vast majority of young care leavers, the opportunities, care and support they received whilst at Albert Place has had a direct and positive effect on their ability to manage their own tenancies out in the wider community and ultimately their long term outcomes.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

In addition to its involvement in Albert Place, Scottish Borders Council and its partners developed the Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20 - 2023/24 (RRTP) and submitted it to the Scottish Government in 2019. The RRTP Action Plan included Action 2.7 to review “the delivery of services aimed at preventing homelessness for Individuals up to the age of 26 who were previous looked after by the local authority” and, Action 2.8 to develop “pathways to prevent homelessness for the groups who are predictably at highest risk of rough sleeping and homelessness (including) Individuals up to the age of 26 who were previous looked after by the local authority”. November 2019 saw the publication of the national ‘Way Home Scotland’ guidance, which aims to improve care leavers housing pathways. Scottish Borders Council and its partners welcome the guidance and are committed to making use of it to help us improve care leavers housing pathways.

The Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers in the Scottish Borders, which was developed and implemented in partnership between the Council and the four locally based Registered Social Landlords in 2017/2018, seeks to ensure that the priority accommodation and support needs of care leavers are recognised in order that their needs for suitable housing are met in a planned and sustainable way and that they do not need to enter the homelessness system in order to access housing. This continues to be the primary multi-agency approach to ensure care leavers are not designated as homeless on leaving their care placement. Continuing application of the Protocol during 2019 / 2020 saw 21 young care leavers referred to the Housing Options Panel resulting in 7 care leavers achieving a permanent housing solution and 3 accessing supported transitional flats within TCAC Supported Accommodation Project at Albert Place.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In addition to the services and developments detailed in Commitment 4 relating to children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, the Children and Families Social Work Throughcare Aftercare Team undertook C Card training. The training focuses on enabling professionals to have conversations with young people who were sexually active, and provide advice and access to contraception. All staff in the Throughcare and Aftercare Team (9 staff members) were trained in providing the C Card service in the autumn of 2019, and the team is now a registered C Card access point for our young people. This has improved conversations about sexual health with young people, and there has been significant use of the contraception available in the team office by young people.

EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

Corporate parents are also actively involved in promoting and providing employment opportunities for care experienced young people. The Scottish Borders Council Employment Support Service engaged with 23 looked after and care experienced young people in 2019/20. 9 young people were supported to find and sustain paid employment - 4 of these were within SBC and 3 modern apprenticeships were within business administration and early years childcare. 1 young person gained a post in general assistant catering. The Borders Family Firm meets regularly throughout the year with all partners involved in supporting looked after and care experienced young people to find and sustain paid employment. NHS Borders and SBC continue to ring-fence work experience and job opportunities for this group. SBC offer priority interviews to looked after and care experienced young people who meet the job vacancy essential criteria as part of the councils Work Opportunities Scheme Policy.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) continue to provide a service to young people who are care experienced in both school and post school settings as outlined in the SDS Corporate Parenting Plan 2018-21. This Plan provides details of five commitments which ensures that SDS continues to support young people with lived experience of care to achieve their full potential. This includes all staff training, care leavers included in all SDS Equality Impact Assessments and work with partners to increase awareness of, and access to, SDS's and SDS-supported opportunities. Anyone who is flagged as being care experienced in the schools SEEMIS system automatically qualifies to receive the SDS targeted service offer. In the academic year 2019-20 School Careers Advisers worked with S4-6 young people from the Borders schools who, through the joint validation with schools, were identified as being at either medium or maximum risk of not progressing to a positive destination. Advisers worked with them on a 1:1 basis over the year to provide guidance and support them to develop their Career Management Skills.

SDS's post school service offer, Next Steps, is targeted at 15 – 18.5 year olds who have left school and not yet transitioned into further education, training or employment. Unemployed care experienced young people aged 20 – 25 inclusive, are entitled to the same level of CIAG support from SDS as all unemployed 15 – 19 year olds. Between April 2019 and March 2020 SDS have engaged with 27 care experienced young people through our Next Steps offer. 69% of those customers supported by SDS have progressed, 71% have progressed and sustained for 6 months - both are above the national average.

Liaison and joint work between SDS, SBC (Education, Social Work and CLD), Borders College and wider partners continues to develop in terms of communication and joint initiatives. The Borders Corporate Parent Operational Group (CPOG) planned to hold an event to bring together and raise awareness of the corporate parent partners in the Borders. Due to Covid-19 this had to be postponed. Funded by the Robertson Trust, SDS are a partner on the Borders Young Talent Programme, an initiative led by Borders College to give mentoring support to secondary pupils who are care experienced.



CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CORE COMMITMENT 6 - CORPORATE PARENTS WILL RAISE AWARENESS OF CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES

Development of corporate parenting across Scottish Borders has continued over 2019-20. Through both the Strategic Leadership and Operational Groups a number of agencies have been actively involved who are both statutory corporate parents and organisations with an active involvement with looked after children and young people. This ensures that the corporate parenting agenda and the key issues relating to looked after children are heard by a comprehensive range of service. The strategic management of corporate parenting is currently under review however, to further improve service developments and the raising of awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities across organisations and agencies. A Corporate Parenting agency engagement / networking event had been planned for April 2020, but due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this was postponed. It is hoped that this event will take place in the near future.

INDEPENDENT CARE REVIEW

The Independent Care Review was commissioned by the Scottish Government in February 2017, started in May 2018 and published in February 2020. Its remit was to take a broad ranging, holistic view of the care system and the care experience of children and young people. This included individual care experiences; a holistic review of multi-agency practice; the care 'process'; legislation and legal context; etc. As part of the Review, over 5,500 individual responses were received, over half of which were from looked after or care experienced children and young people.

The Independent Care Review is made up of 6 reports / documents:

1. **The Promise** – the main findings
2. **The Plan** – lays out the sequencing of change in alignment with national and local priorities
3. **Follow the Money** – establishes the human and financial cost of the current care system
4. **The Money** – looks at future funding models
5. **The Rules** – reinforces the need to embed fundamental changes in legislation, children's rights, data sharing, etc. in the Plan
6. **Thank you**



CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

INDEPENDENT CARE REVIEW

The Independent Care Review was commissioned by the Scottish Government in February 2017, started in May 2018 and published in February 2020. Its remit was to take a broad ranging, holistic view of the care system and the care experience of children and young people. This included individual care experiences; a holistic review of multi-agency practice; the care 'process'; legislation and legal context; etc. As part of the Review, over 5,500 individual responses were received, over half of which were from looked after or care experienced children and young people.

The Independent Care Review is made up of 6 reports / documents:

1. **The Promise** – the main findings
2. **The Plan** – lays out the sequencing of change in alignment with national and local priorities
3. **Follow the Money** – establishes the human and financial cost of the current care system
4. **The Money** – looks at future funding models
5. **The Rules** – reinforces the need to embed fundamental changes in legislation, children's rights, data sharing, etc. in the Plan
6. **Thank you**

Driven by an unwavering focus on the voice of care experience, the Independent Care Review demands the following changes:

- The balance of power must be upended so that listening to children and young people is always the basis of all decisions made about their lives.
- There must be a focus on building and maintaining life-long relationships – that includes a broader understanding of the risk of not having long term, loving relationships.
- Scotland must parent, not process, children so there is no difference between the lives of children in care and their peers. Care experienced children must not miss out on the kind of childhood that many take for granted and the future that all our young people deserve.
- Families must be kept together wherever it is safe to do so. Families must get the support that is right for them at the earliest opportunity and it must be flexible, consistent, patient and free from stigma. This will mean that more children can live a safe, happy life at home with their families.

The report has identified five foundations for change, with over 80 specific changes that must be made to transform how Scotland cares for children and families as well as the unpaid and paid workforce.

The five foundations are:

- 1) **Voice** - voice of the children must be heard at all stages;
- 2) **Family** - what all families need to thrive;
- 3) **Care** - care, that builds childhoods for children who Scotland has responsibility
- 4) **People** - people, with a relentless focus on the importance of relationships, and
- 5) **Scaffolding** - scaffolding, so that the structure is there to support children and families when needed.

The Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Operations Group and the Children and Young People's Leadership Group accept the findings of the report and the key messages of the Review. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, formal discussion at the Corporate Parenting Operations Group about the Independent Care Review did not take place until July 2020, however it was agreed that the next iteration of the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy (2021-2024) will be based on the key findings of the report and its five foundations: Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The key development for corporate parenting in the Scottish Borders in 2021-22 will be the review of the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy. The new strategy will cover the period 2021-24. Work will be carried out to ensure the review is comprehensive and informed by young people, corporate parents and other relevant stakeholders. As stated above, the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy (2021-2024) will be based on the key findings of the Independent Care Review and its five foundations: Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding.

Priority areas will include the following:

- Corporate Parenting initiatives should be underpinned by the participation and engagement of looked after children and young people. Development of a Champions' Board and systematic participation will be a key focus of development over the coming year.
- The governance of Corporate Parenting in the Scottish Borders will be reviewed to ensure strategic leadership best ensures Corporate Parents deliver their statutory responsibilities and best meet the needs of looked after children and young people.
- A focus on improving services and outcomes for children and young people looked after at home will continue.
- A greater focus on raising awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities across organisations and agencies.

Gareth Stott,
Chair, Corporate Parenting Operational Group.
22nd September 2020.



APPENDIX 1

Core Commitments – Headline Action Plan	
Core Commitment 1	<p>In order to meet their responsibilities, corporate parents will listen and respond to the voices of children and families/carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure our services are as effective as they can be they must be shaped by the voices and participation of the children, young people and care leavers • We will ensure that all corporate parents understand their responsibilities and action these through strategy, planning, practice and resource allocation
1.	Corporate Parents will be encouraged to include the participation of looked after children, care experienced young people and their families in their service delivery and developments and monitor developments in this area.
2.	Develop formal involvement of looked after and care experienced young people in the governance of Corporate Parenting in the Scottish Borders.
3.	Actively seek and promote the participation of children and young people who are looked after at home in service design and delivery.
Core Commitment 2	<p>All looked after children and care experienced young people will be treated fairly, have equity of opportunity and have a sense of belonging in their communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to reducing inequality for all our children and young people • We are committed to improving educational outcomes and reducing the inequality gap • We will promote children and young people’s rights and advocate on their behalf
4.	Scottish Borders Council will develop a ‘Virtual School’ to better track educational progress and improve achievement and attainment for all looked after children.

5.	Accessibility to health services for all looked after and care experienced young people will be improved, meet their individual need and not differ to accessibility for any other child or young person.
6.	Advocacy services will be developed for all looked after children and young people across the Scottish Borders.
Core Commitment 3	<p>Corporate parents will ensure children and young people who are looked after at home have the same opportunities and outcomes as other children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring that those who are looked after at home have the same social, emotional and educational and health support and outcomes as all other children and young people • We will reduce inequalities for this group of children and young people
7.	The educational achievements and attainment of children and young people who are looked after at home will be an area of focus.
8.	Young people who are looked after at home and those who were formerly looked after at home will have the same accessibility to throughcare, aftercare , employability and housing services as all looked after and care experienced young people.
9.	The particular needs and outcomes of children and young people who are looked after at home will be raised by Corporate Parents across organisations and agencies.
Core Commitment 4	<p>Children and young people will be supported to improve their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to improving health outcomes and reducing and inequality gap • Emotional and mental health services will meet the needs of looked after and care experienced young people
10.	Early intervention services for children experiencing emotional wellbeing and mental health issues will meet the needs of looked after children and young people.
11.	Health assessments for looked after children and young people will be delivered in line with national guidance and include 'harder to reach'

	groups – children and young people looked after at home and those in kinship care.
Core Commitment 5	<p>Young people making the transition to adulthood will be supported to achieve their full potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring that young people are supported in terms of education, training, employment, health, housing and relationships • We are committed to providing care leavers with sustained positive destinations in all areas of their lives
12.	Accommodation and housing options for looked after and previously looked after young people will be improved and expanded, and homelessness amongst looked after or previously looked after young people will be prevented.
13.	Employability services for care leavers will provide greater opportunities for all looked after young people and care leavers.
14.	Access and signposting to health services will improve for care experienced young people.
Core Commitment 6	<p>Corporate parents will raise awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities across organisations and agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring that all corporate parents are fully aware of their responsibilities to facilitate change, reduce risk, reduce stigma, promote equality and improve outcomes for looked after children and care experienced young people
15.	The full range of Corporate Parenting organisations will be actively involved in the Scottish Borders approach to Corporate Parenting.
16.	Awareness raising events and training regarding Corporate Parenting will be provided to improve outcomes for looked after children and care experienced young people.
17.	Social media and other forms of awareness raising relating to Corporate Parenting will be developed across organisations.

APPENDIX 2



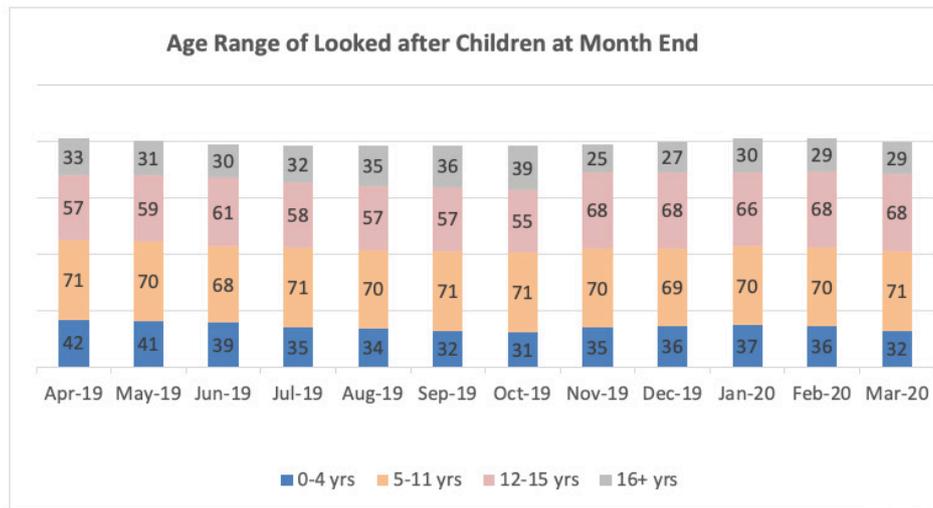
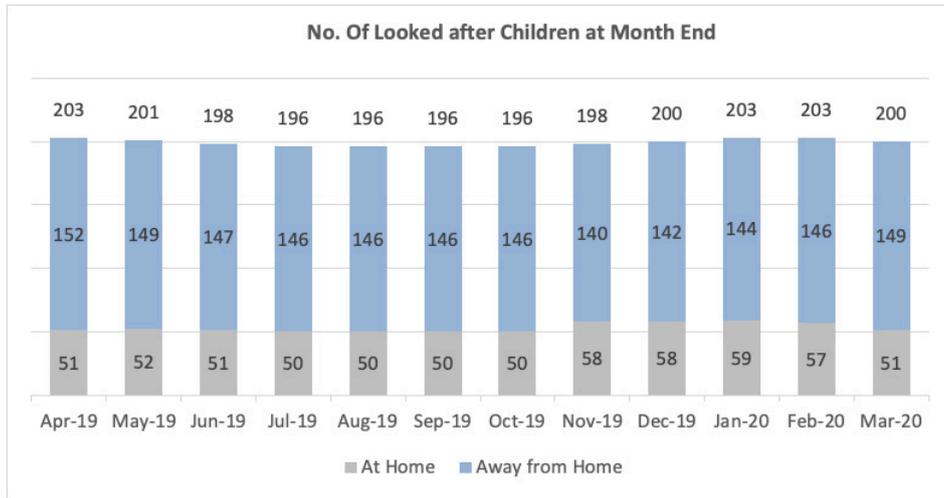
CORPORATE PARENTING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

(SW DATA COVERING 01/04/2019 – 31/03/2020
AND EDUCATION DATA – ACADEMIC YEAR
2018-2019)

The following data and management information is compliments data presented I the body of the report. The data included largely relates to Scottish Borders Council data on looked after and care experienced children and young people. There is a need to further develop the Corporate Parenting management Information to better represent all corporate parents.

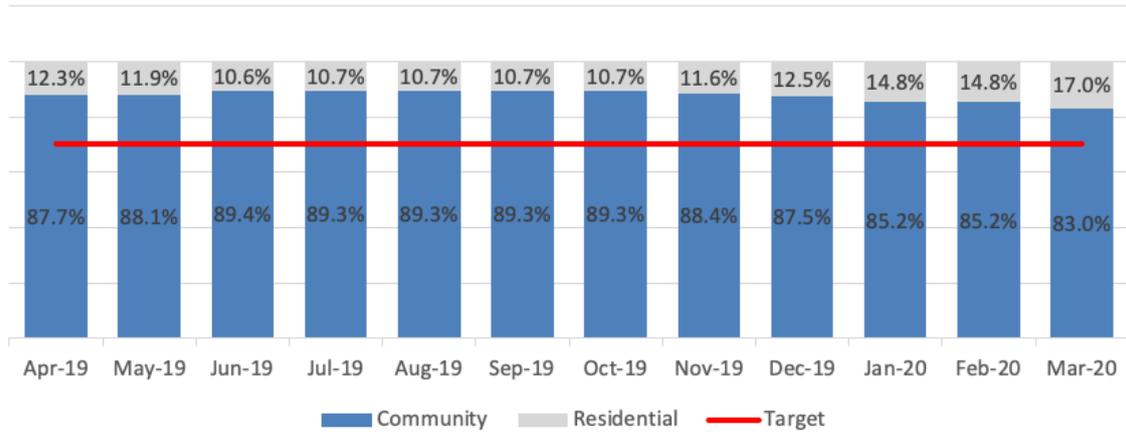
Section	Page
C&YP Look After Children Report Information	41
Number of S31 LAC Reviews	42
Education	45
Attainment and Positive Destinations	48
Employment, Training and Vocational Information	51

CY&P LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INFORMATION



LAC PLACEMENT INFORMATION

% Community/Residential Placements

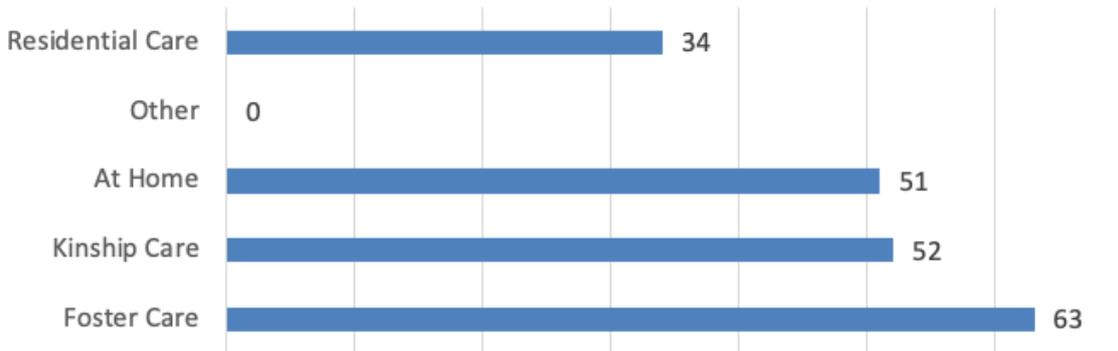


Proportion of Looked After & Accommodated children (12+) in family based placements compared to those in residential placements. The target is to have at least 70% of children in community based placements.

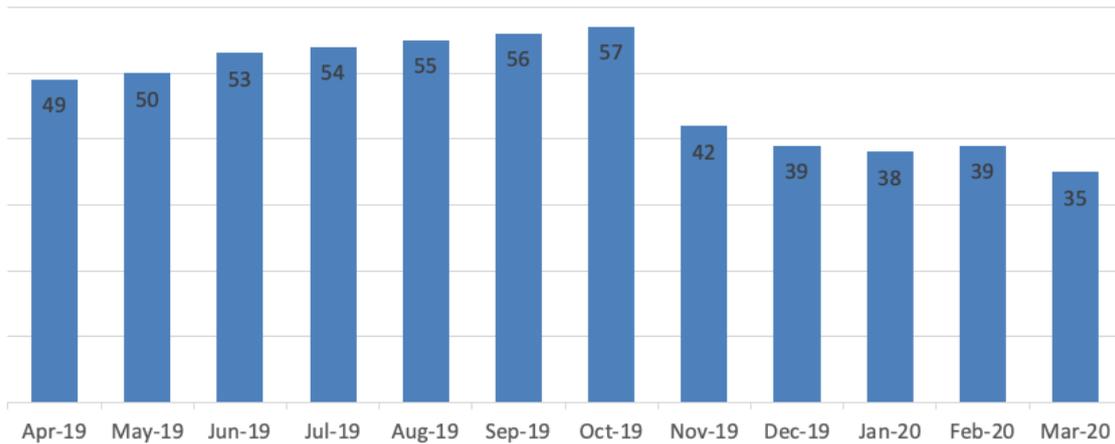
LAC Stability of Placement % of Children with 3 or more placements in current period of care



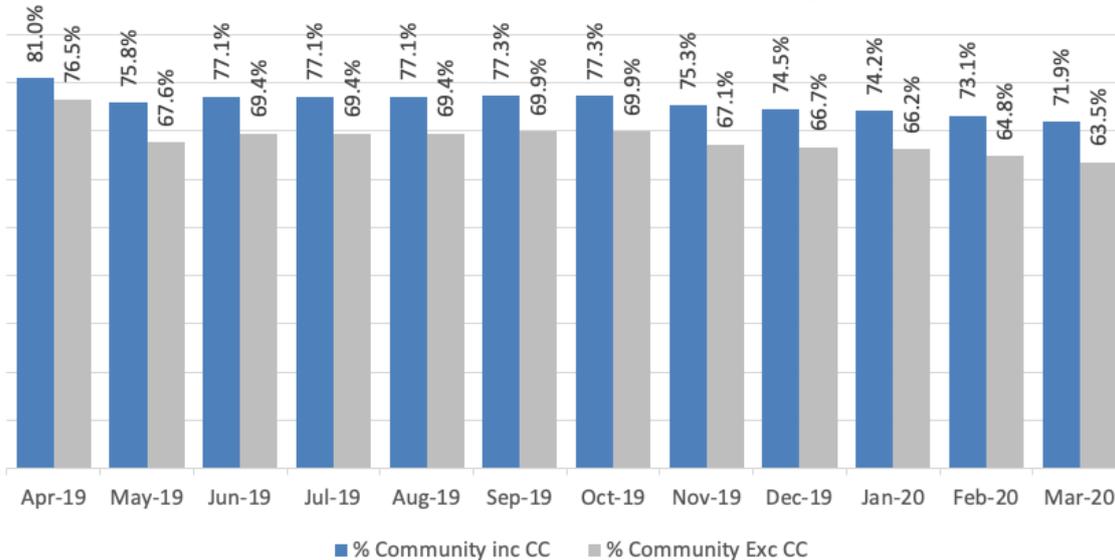
LAC Placement breakdown at Year End



Average Length of Time (In Months) in Residential School Placements



LAC 12+ % Community Placements with Continuing Care



MONITOR OF S31 REVIEWS

The following data shows the number of LAC reviews undertaken in each month along with the average number of months since the previous review.

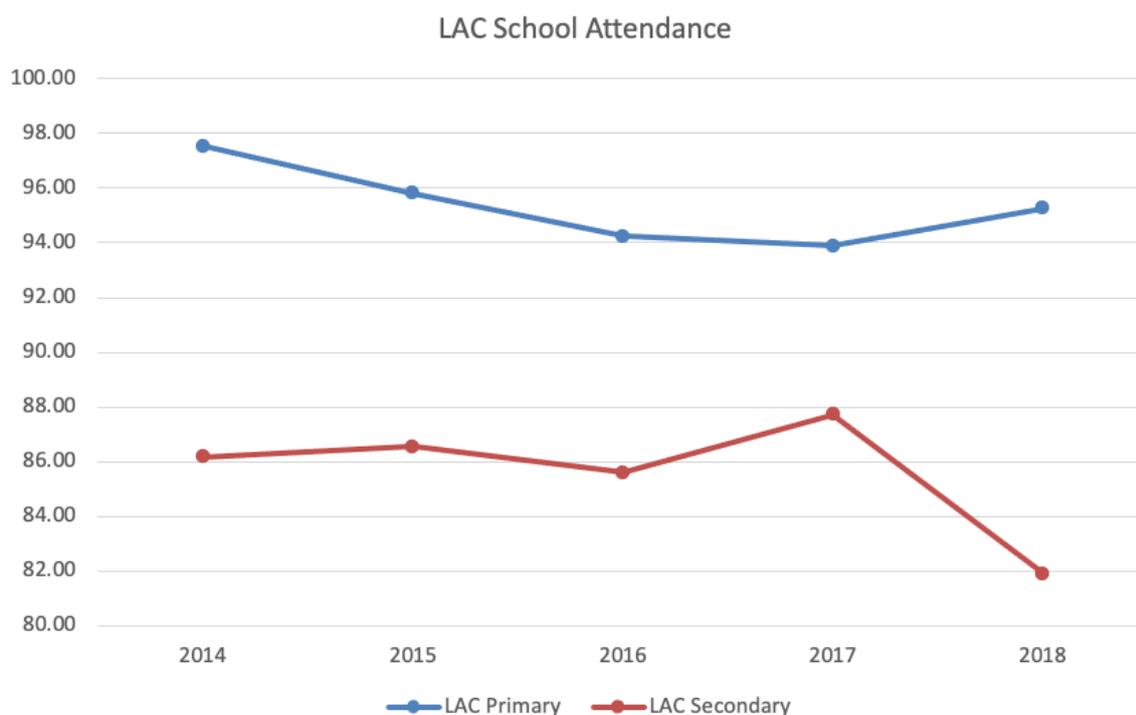
		NO. MONTHS BETWEEN REVIEWS (Average)							
		AT HOME		AWAY FROM HOME		OTHER		ALL	
		No. Reviews	Months Between	No. Reviews	Months Between	No. Reviews	Months Between	No. Reviews	Months Between
	Apr-19	19	4.24	22	3.54	2	21.29	43	4.68
	May-19	13	3.47	27	4.62	1	13.22	41	4.47
	Jun-19	5	0.76	15	3.16	2	5.63	22	2.84
	Jul-19	10	1.60	14	3.57			24	2.75
	Aug-19	10	2.89	11	4.34	1	2.32	22	3.59
	Sep-19	12	5.85	28	4.57	3	4.09	43	4.90
	Oct-19	15	6.07	23	3.83	1	5.83	39	4.74
	Nov-19	16	6.67	21	4.60	1	20.53	38	5.89
	Dec-19	4	3.04	17	3.51	1	5.60	22	3.52
	Jan-20	16	5.55	20	3.84			36	4.60
	Feb-20	12	5.78	23	3.97	2	4.08	37	4.57
	Mar-20	15	4.00	26	3.85	3	3.97	44	3.91
TOTAL		147	4.58	247	4.00	17	7.86	411	4.37

LAC at Home	LAC Away from Home	LAC Other
Home with Parents Kinship Care With friends/relatives	Local authority Home (Wheatlands) Other Residential Placement Residential School Secure Accommodation With foster carers provided by Local Authority With foster carers purchased by Local Authority With prospective adopters	Continuing Care Respite (Aberlour) Short Breaks Carers

EDUCATION

Academic Year 2018 (01.08.2018 – 31.07.2019)

ATTENDANCE

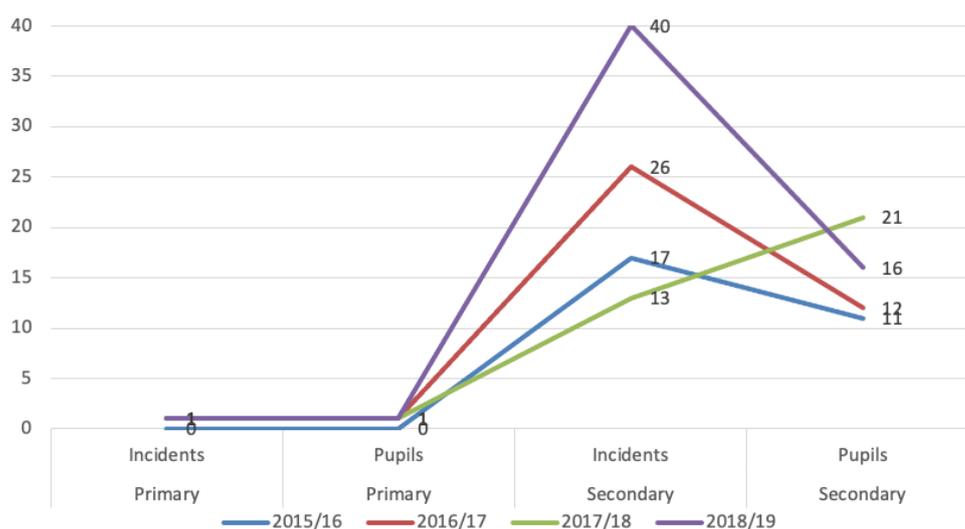


Type	Looked After Description	% Attendance	% Authorised Absence	% Unauthorised Absence	% Exclusions	% Absence
Nursery	Away	90.65%	8.69%	0.66%	0.00%	9.35%
	Home	89.63%	2.40%	8%	0.00%	10.37%
	Previously	89.62%	5.87%	5%	0.00%	10.38%
Nursery Total		90.29%	6.83%	2.88%	0.00%	9.71%
Primary	Away	96.75%	2.44%	0.80%	0.02%	3.26%
	Home	93.66%	3.62%	2.72%	0.00%	6.34%
	Previously	94.04%	3.41%	2.37%	0.19%	5.97%
Primary Total		95.27%	2.98%	1.68%	0.07%	4.73%
Secondary	Away	86.64%	5.94%	6.96%	0.46%	13.36%
	Home	66.16%	12.12%	21.38%	0.34%	33.84%
	Previously	84.96%	6.43%	8.35%	0.26%	15.04%
Secondary Total		81.88%	7.37%	10.39%	0.36%	18.12%
Grand Total		88.41%	5.32%	6.06%	0.21%	11.59%

EXCLUSIONS

Type	Looked After Description	Number of Individuals	Individuals Excluded	Exclusion Incidents
Primary	Away	71	1	1
	Home	25	0	0
	Previously	45	3	6
Primary Total		141	4	7
Secondary	Away	57	7	19
	Home	28	3	9
	Previously	55	6	12
Secondary Total		140	16	40
Grand Total		281	20	47

LAC Exclusion Incidents and Pupils

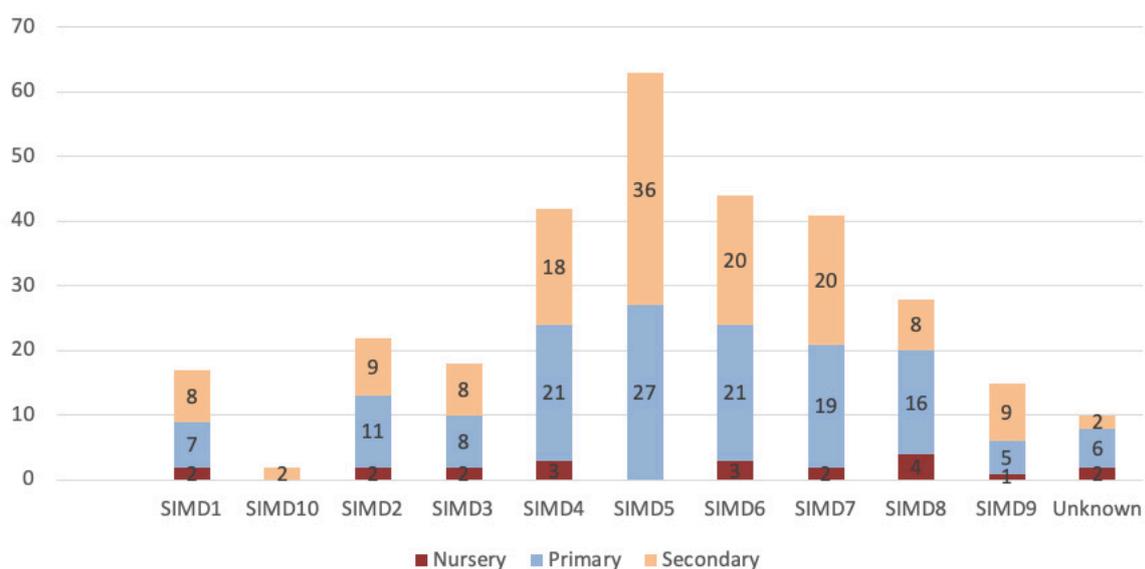


Year	Primary	Primary	Secondary	Secondary
	Incidents	Pupils	Incidents	Pupils
2015/16	0	0	17	11
2016/17	1	1	26	12
2017/18	1	1	13	21
2018/19	1	1	40	16

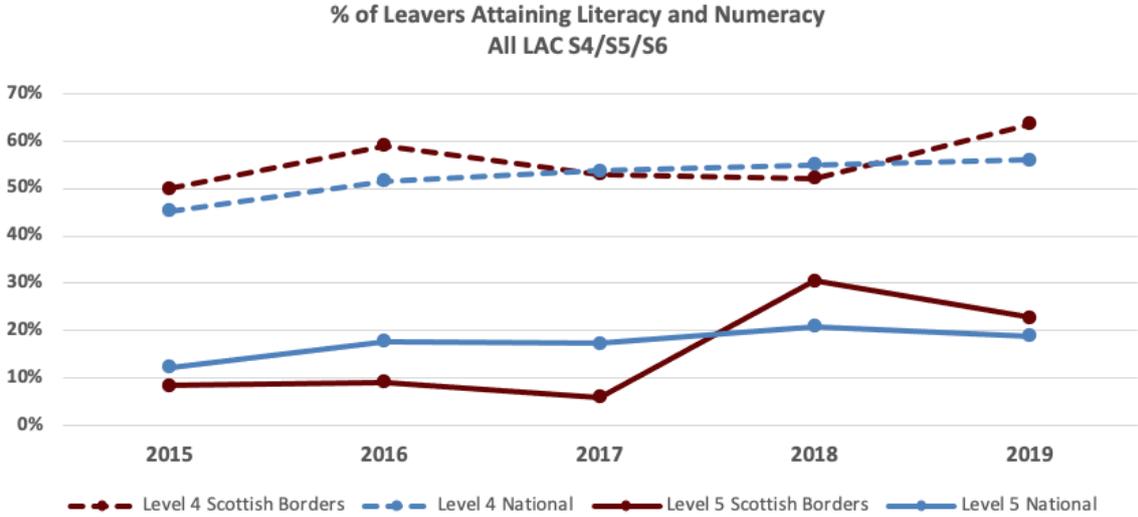
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS 2018/19

Type	Looked After Description	No. Individuals receiving Free School Meal	No. Individuals receiving Clothing Grant	No. Individuals with ASN
Nursery	Away	0	0	3
	Home	0	0	0
	Previously	0	0	0
Nursery Total		0	0	3
Primary	Away	11	12	67
	Home	16	19	23
	Previously	23	26	30
Primary Total		50	57	120
Secondary	Away	8	11	51
	Home	8	10	22
	Previously	29	29	48
Secondary Total		45	50	121
Grand Total		95	107	244

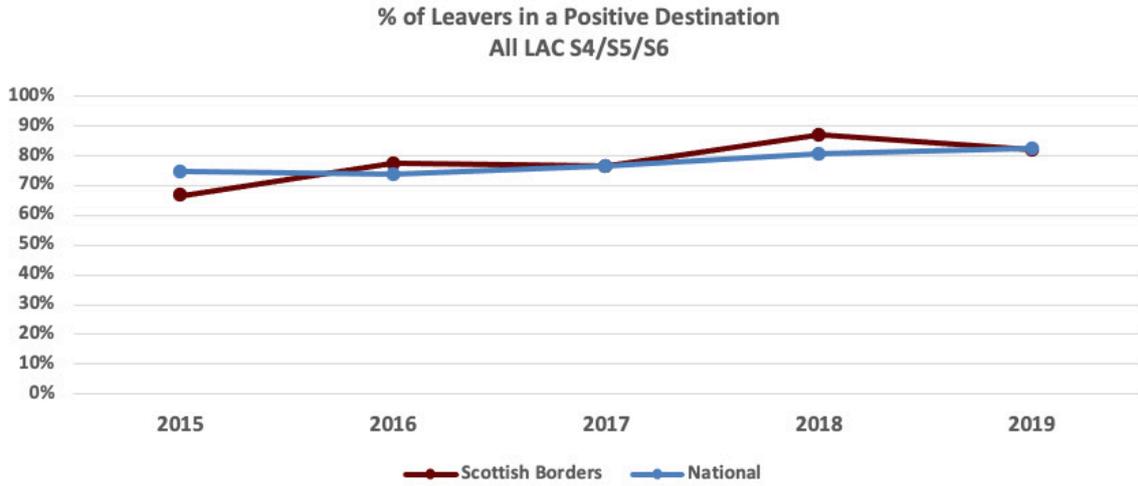
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS 2018/19



ATTAINMENT AND POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

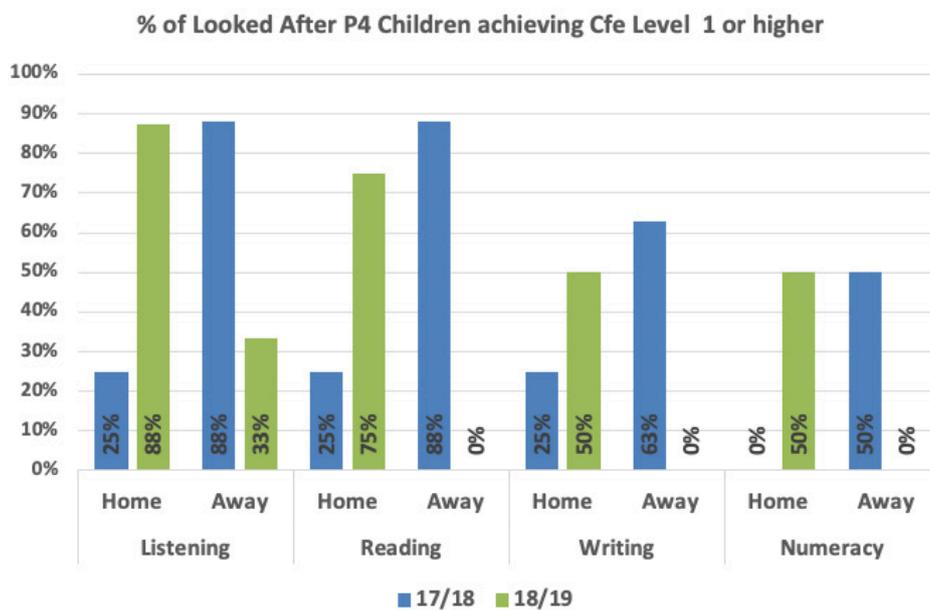
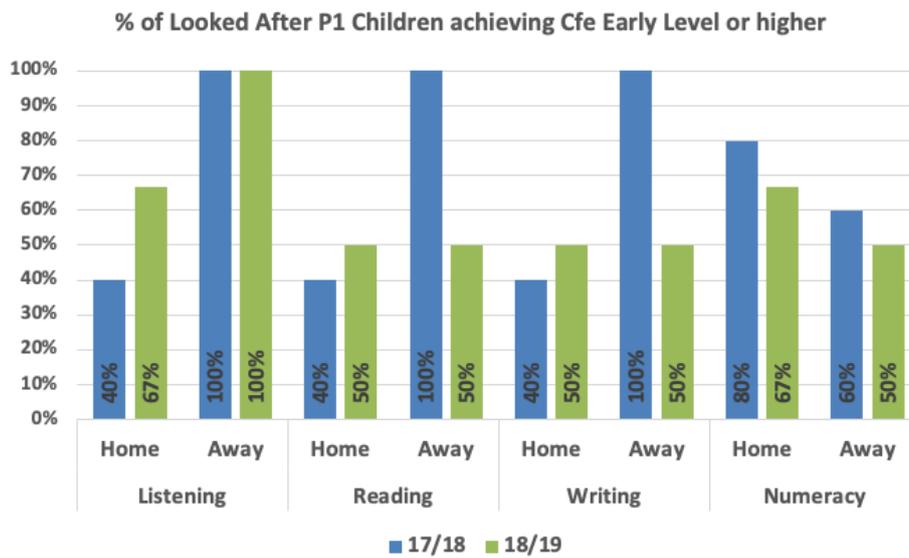


Year	Level 4		Level 5	
	Scottish Borders	National	Scottish Borders	National
2015	50.00%	45.19%	8.33%	12.25%
2016	59.09%	51.50%	9.09%	17.78%
2017	52.94%	53.70%	5.88%	17.32%
2018	52.17%	55.04%	30.43%	20.85%
2019	63.64%	56.06%	22.73%	18.91%

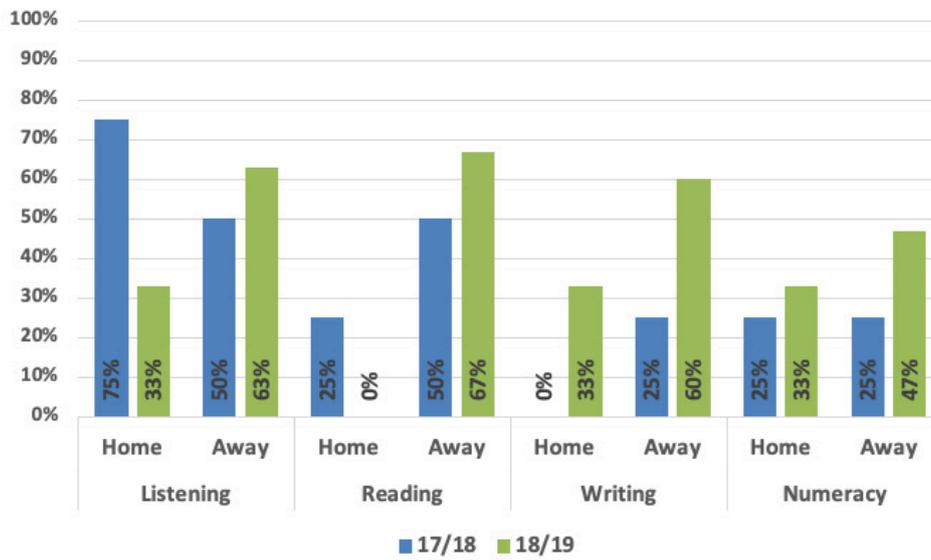


Year	% Leavers in a Positive Destination	
	Scottish Borders	National
2015	66.67%	74.62%
2016	77.27%	73.62%
2017	76.47%	76.36%
2018	86.96%	80.43%
2019	81.82%	82.43%

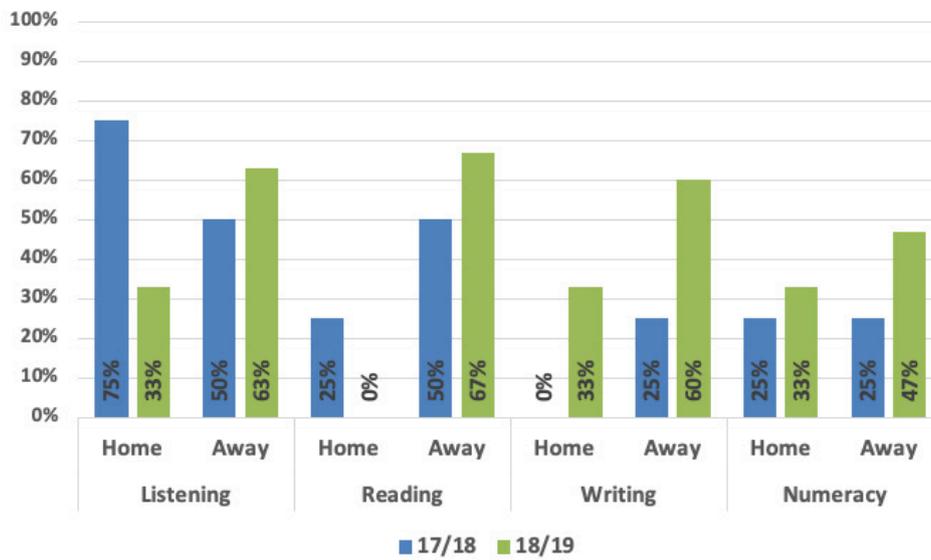
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ACHIEVING TARGET CFE LEVEL



% of Looked After P7 Children achieving Cfe Level 2 or higher



% of Looked After P7 Children achieving Cfe Level 2 or higher



INCREASED ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN)

AFTERCARE COMPARISON WITH COMPARATOR AUTHORITIES

Young people eligible for aftercare services, percentage receiving aftercare and percentage in employment, education or training, by local authority, 31 July 2019

Local authority area	Young people eligible for aftercare services	Percent receiving aftercare services	Percentage of those receiving aftercare services with an unknown economic activity	In employment, education or training	
				As percentage of those receiving aftercare with known economic activity	As percentage of all eligible for aftercare services
Angus	74	89	5	65	58
East Lothian	88	84	7	53	44
Highland	86	37	0	100	37
Moray	129	51	5	30	16
Scottish Borders	85	69	15	44	31
Stirling	81	93	0	52	48
Scotland	6,650	58	19	44	25

Taken from Children's Social Work Statistics 2015-16 - Additional Tables, Table 3.5 Young people eligible for aftercare services, percentage receiving aftercare and percentage in employment, education or training, by local authority, 31 July 2019

You can get this document on audio CD, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address below. In addition, contact the address below for information on language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

CORPORATE PARENTING

Scottish Borders Council | Headquarters | Newtown St Boswells

MELROSE | TD6 0SA

email: gstott@scotborders.gov.uk

