

A photograph of three children of diverse backgrounds. On the left, a young boy with light skin and short brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt and dark suspenders, is smiling. In the center, a young girl with dark skin and a pink and white patterned hijab is looking towards the right. On the right, a young girl with dark skin and short hair, wearing a blue polka-dot shirt, is also smiling and looking towards the right. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a school or community center setting with blue chairs.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 to 2023

Thank you to the children, young people,
carers and staff who have helped us put
this strategy together.

Foreword

Pinaki Ghoshal
Executive Director
Families, Children
& Learning



I and other senior officers across the council act as corporate parents to around 385 children and young people at any one time.

It's a responsibility that we take very seriously.

I'm proud to have the chance to have a positive impact on the lives of so many young people who may have previously experienced loss and trauma.

We must all make sure that the children we are caring for now – and who we have previously cared for – get the best experiences in life.

This means doing everything we can to help our children in care and care leavers have high aspirations and achieve their potential.

We are committed to:

- Delivering excellent parenting and stable placements
- Providing access to educational achievement
- Offering a wide range of opportunities to develop talents and skills
- Supporting your health and emotional wellbeing.

We want to 'reach for the stars' for our children and young people. We will listen to their wishes and feelings and work with them to achieve their goals and hopes.

Councillor John Allcock
Chair of the Children,
Young People
& Skills Committee



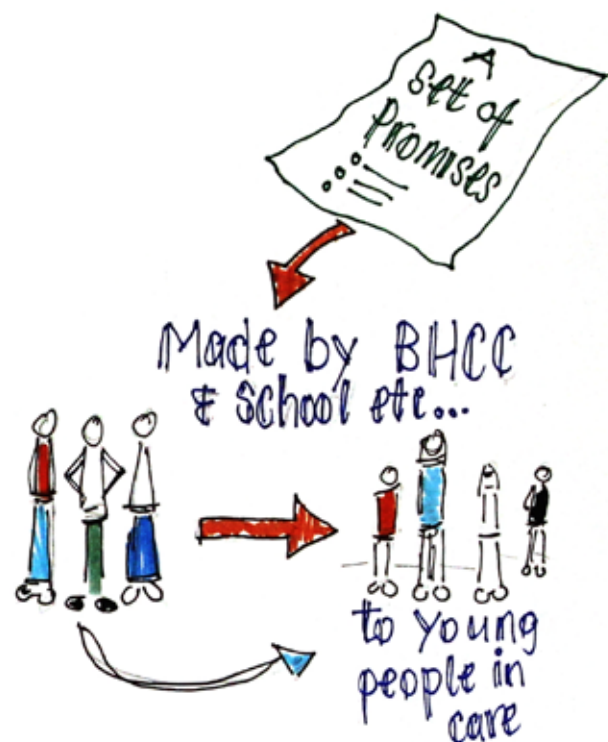
As corporate parents, we want to deliver the best possible outcomes for the children in our care.

We will work with partners such our housing services, our schools and the local NHS to deliver the best possible services for our children in care.

I believe we have a solemn duty to be the best corporate parents we can be to everyone in our care, and we promise to act as responsible parents.

When providing a service for you we will always ask ourselves the following question: "Would this be good enough for my own child?"

This strategy outlines our vision, principles, achievements and key priorities for supporting the children and young people who are looked after by the council.



Foreword

A message from our Children in Care Council (CiCC)

Dear councillors and Corporate Parenting Board members,

These are some of the most important things we think a parent should be:

- responsible
- protective
- loving and kind
- honest
- patient

These are qualities we expect from you:

- We would like you to stay connected to us – to take an interest in us and to get to know us.
- We would like the opportunity to share our successes with you and be supported when times are tough.



The following are messages from members of the CiCC to their corporate parents:

We would like the chance to shadow some of you in your every day jobs. So could you give us a short profile of yourself and what you do, so that we can see if we might be interested in coming to work with you for a day please?

We would like the opportunity to share our successes with you and to be supported when times are tough.

Love us like your own.

We would like you to stay connected to us.

Keep asking yourself, "Is this good enough for your own child?"

Our vision

Our vision is to be the very best corporate parents we can be for our children and young people in our care.



Our vision is to be loving, accepting, caring, honest, reliable, consistent and concerned on a human level with the children and young people we look after.

We will show these qualities in our day to day relationship-based practice, and always work within safe professional boundaries.

We will work tirelessly to ensure that our children and young people feel safe and secure, and have stability in their lives.

We will help them achieve their full potential by supporting them in fulfilling their ambitions and aspirations.

As of January 2020 we are corporate parents to:

- 343 children in care
- 42 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- 163 care leavers

The key message we hear from our children in care is: "Love us like your family. Love us like your own."

As professionals we may sometimes feel uncomfortable responding to this wish. But we are committed to honouring it.



Highlights of what we have done in the last three years.

1 Your Choice Your Voice: Young Ambassadors



Young Ambassadors are young people who have had experience of having social work support. They are trained and supported to work with council teams to help them recruit and train staff.

Young Ambassador training is available to all young people aged 13-25 who have experience of being in care. The young people are paid for their time and can gain qualifications through an accreditation scheme.

2 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Awards



This is an annual celebration recognising the personal achievements of children and young people who are in care or have been in care in Brighton & Hove.

It is designed to recognise how award winners have made a difference to their own or someone else's life.

The theme for the 2019 event was 'Reach for the Stars'. This was to show that there is no limit to how high people can aim or how far their success can soar.

3 'Me, Myself & Us'

This project used creative writing and hip-hop to engage children and young people in poetry, graphic stories, storytelling and song writing.

It enabled them to feel the power of creativity and develop their literacy and enthusiasm for writing and performing.

The children and young people investigated their identities both as individuals and as a group – hence the title '**Me, Myself & Us**'.



4 Higher Education Student Mentors

These are care leavers who have graduated from university or who are still at university.

They can offer advice and information about:

- the process of applying for university
- the different educational paths young people can take to get to university, and
- the financial support available to care leavers when they go to university.



6 Providing a home where you feel safe and secure



Watch our film here
www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.org.uk

- We will provide a home where you feel safe and secure.
- We will make sure that your carer is trained and supported to care for you.

5 The Brighton & Hove Contact Service



This provides a safe supervised setting for children to spend time with the parent they do not live with.

Our focus is on safeguarding and supporting children and their parents to spend quality time together in a way that promotes positive experiences of the parent-child relationship.

Our vision is to:

- keep families connected
- help them to enjoy spending time together, and
- build better relationships for the future.

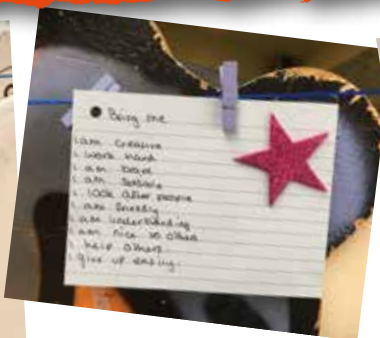
7 Beyond, the Care Leavers' Trust



We have supported local councillors to develop Beyond, the Care Leavers' Trust. This was launched in April 2019 to support young people when they leave care and increase the opportunities available to them.

It brings together charitable donations from a range of individuals and businesses. All young people leaving care will be able to apply to the fund. Any money awarded will be in addition to the money and grants that already exist for care leavers.

Reach for the Stars: Our ten promises for children in care



This document was created by the Children in Care Council and by children and young people attending the 'Reach for the Stars' consultation event in October 2019.

They worked with staff from our families, children and learning team to agree ten promises saying how our staff will work with our children in care.

The promises are that we will:

1 Always involve you in decisions made about you.

6 Support and engage you to take up and develop your own interests, hobbies and activities.

2 Provide a home where you feel safe and secure and support you if you return to your family or move to another home.

7 Help you to achieve your aspirations and dreams.

3 Help you to keep in regular contact with family and friends if it is in your best interest and is what you want to do.

8 Respect you and help you develop a strong sense of personal identity and maintain your cultural and religious beliefs.

4 Make sure that your carers are trained and supported to care for you.

9 Help you to have the same social worker for a long time.

5 Support you to get the most from your education and to help you to achieve the best you can.

10 Support you to be as physically and emotionally healthy as you can be.

Reach for the Stars: Our Local Offer for care leavers

We have taken advice from some of our care leavers in order to develop a package of support and services for young people leaving care in Brighton & Hove. This is called our Local Offer.

Through our Local Offer we are committed to working with young people to help them:

- develop healthy and safe relationships
- promote physical and emotional health and well-being
- access education, training and employment opportunities
- have financial support and security
- have access to high quality supported accommodation
- prepare for independent living and supported into their own tenancy.

We will continue to consult with young people in care and care leavers so that we can provide the service you need and will need in future.



encourage you to take a look at...
 If you are working while living in supported accommodation we will provide additional money up to £30 a week to offset some of the rental costs.
 We'll pay for interview clothes or special clothes you need for work. We will pay your transport costs to attend interviews for employment.
 As a Brighton & Hove care leaver you are guaranteed a job interview for any apprenticeships within the council. We will also discuss with you any relevant work experience you may be able to undertake within the council. We will work with colleagues in other teams to arrange this.
 We will have a 'Bring a Care leaver to work' day twice a year. These will give you a chance to see and experience what working at Brighton & Hove City Council is like.



Our Plan for the next three years

We have made considerable progress in the last three years. But we are committed to building on this and continuing to ask the question: "Is this good enough for my child?"

We have listened to children and young people and have produced four key strategic objectives that will improve the support we provide to them in the future. These are:

1

To ensure that children and young people are consulted and actively participate in the decisions we make about how we deliver our services.

2

To ensure children and young people receive a good education and achieve the best educational outcomes.

3

To provide good opportunities for children in care and care leavers to maintain and improve emotional health and wellbeing.

4

To ensure that the role of the corporate parent is promoted across the council and among partners.



Our Plan for the next three years

How will we make this happen?

The Corporate Parenting Board

The Board consists of a cross-party group of councillors supported by the executive director for families, children and learning, other FCL staff and representatives of our partner agencies.

It is responsible for ensuring that the council acts as good corporate parents and fulfils its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.

We expect all corporate parents to know and understand the diverse needs of our children in care and care leavers.

The Children in Care Council (CiCC)

This is a group of young people aged 13-25 who have all experienced being in care.

It meets one Saturday per month. It's a great opportunity for children and young people to be part of a group, share their experiences, and influence decisions that are being made about children's social work.

Current members enjoy shared activities including table tennis, pool, cooking, arts and crafts and hanging out together. Sometimes they invite professionals who are corporate parents to come and meet them and hear their views.

Representatives from the CiCC attend and feed back into the Corporate Parenting Board.



Useful info and contacts:

Brighton and Hove Fostering Service:
www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.org.uk

Virtual school for children in care and previously in care:
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/VirtualSchoolCICsupport

Sussex CAMHS:
sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/help-support/children-young-people

Youth Advocacy Project help@bhyap.org.uk
Call free from a landline on **0800 0524 280** or text or call on **07812 356 994**

Brighton and Hove Children in Care Council
For more information please email youth@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The Brighton and Hove Children in Care Health Team please email
SC-TR.BandHLAC@nhs.net Tel **01273 696011 x1039**

Illustrations by Matt Worden