

Looked After Children Strategy 2013-14



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Bradford
BSCB
Safeguarding Children Board

City of Bradford MDC
www.bradford.gov.uk

Introduction

The services we provide to our looked after children are so important in shaping their future. This summary says what we've done and what we're going to do to support them.

We have strong arrangements with our partners in Bradford, and we've been praised for the good work we are doing to support our looked after children.

We want to show how we can continue to build on that good work and listen to young people's needs.



Cllr Ralph Berry,
Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

On the back page you can read the pledge our looked after children launched in January 2013. The pledge and our promises show our on-going commitment to listen to young people in care so we make sure that their needs are at the centre of what we do.

This document is a summary of a full strategy that you can find on the looked after children pages of the Council's website.



Kath Tunstall,
Strategic Director of Children's Services

What have we achieved?

Our plans for 2013-14 build on the work we did from 2010 to 2012, and the steps we have made so far. The things we've done are:

- The number of looked after children in the district is stable, and is lower than figures for the country and the region.
- Our looked after children's attendance at school has improved.
- Children are doing well at school, and their GCSE and Key Stage 2 results are getting much better.
- The Council tries where it can to make sure children are cared for in their home. We are seeing more children being adopted or cared for within their birth family with proper help.
- The numbers of young people who have left care and gone on to university or higher education has gone up.
- Our Children in Care Council is reaching out to younger looked after children.
- We have refreshed our Pledge to looked after children, with new promises that we will keep.
- We have made our Corporate Parenting Panel stronger.

Our partners

Services working together with young people's help

- Children in Care Council
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Health
- Education
- Youth offending
- Social care
- the Police
- Youth services
- Bradford schools and further education colleges
- VCS
- Voiceability – our independent advocacy service

“For every one of our children to
have the best possible start in life”

Our priorities for 2013-2014

Staying safe

- lower the numbers of children and young people who are missing from care.
- lower the number of looked after children who become involved in crime.

Enjoy and participate

- support and develop our Children in Care Council.
- make sure all looked after children are listened to, so their views help us plan what we do and make it better.

Improve educational achievement

- set better targets for each looked after child so we can support them in reaching their full potential.

Staying healthy

- improve dental and health assessments.
- improve access to emotional and behavioural support.

Improved employment, education and training for care leavers

- improve access to work, education and training.
- ensure young people who leave care have access to a safe place to live.

Our role as Corporate Parents

The Corporate Parenting Panel plays a vital role in making sure that looked after children and care leavers get the best care possible so they get a good start in life.

In July 2012, Bradford Council made changes to its corporate parenting panel to reflect national guidance and the make up of the Children's Trust.

The changes mean that there is wider representation on the panel with partner agencies, and it now includes membership from education, health, the police and young people.

Members of the Children in Care Council now attend the panel and contribute to the discussion and scrutiny of plans.

The Children in Care Council also meet with the Strategic Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services on a regular basis to ensure their voice is heard.

Elected members' visits to children's homes now take place three times a year in the company of the Quality Standards Manager, and training is given to those visiting on current regulations and standards. Most visits now take place in school holidays so that young people are present and can give their feedback.

The corporate parents have promised within the revised children's pledge to be responsible for monitoring and reviewing services provided for looked after children to make sure they are improving and building on successes achieved.

The Children in Care Council

The CICC is made up of young people in care and helps them develop skills, feel supported and find their voice, while helping others in care.

Over the last year we have:

- Supported foster carer training and produced a DVD to help people who want to foster.
- Held training events for young people, as well as cook and eat sessions before meetings.
- Provided advice for young people in care on benefits, avoiding debt, and how to contact your MP if you have a problem.
- Helped recruit staff to the Council for jobs that are related to care
- Helped advise the Council and Corporate Parents in policy development and plans for care.
- Held the National Takeover Day to share ideas and learn from each other. This included taking over the Safeguarding Board.
- Held cultural, fun and challenging events like trips to the play Refugee Boy and writing workshops; one person in care even did a 3 week trip across the Sinai Desert!
- Held under 11s play sessions to introduce the idea of managed risk to younger people in care and consult them on current issues.
- Supported the initiative to recruit more landlords so we get safer and better places to live.

Pledge for looked after children

Young people from our Children in Care Council have worked together to update the Council's pledge for looked after children in the district.

All councils must have a pledge for looked after children and we launched our first pledge over four years ago.

The new pledge says how the Council and our partners will work with young people who are in care.

The new pledge is:

- Support into adulthood and independence at a pace to suit us.
- Support in all education matters
- Being involved in decision making.
- Workers being open and honest with them about issues that affect us.
- Support to be kept safe.
- Support in reaching our dreams.
- Promise to make sure that we know why we are in care.
- Ensure we are listened to.
- Support us with issues around our family and contact, especially when things do not go to plan.

Our promises

Kath Tunstall,

Strategic Director of Children's Services

"I promise to meet regularly with the children, to listen carefully to what they have to say and their ideas to improve the service to them. I will make sure these are acted upon."

Julie Jenkins,

Assistant Director of Specialist Services

"I will support you to do your very best, getting more work experiences and apprenticeships and help if you decide to stay on at school, college or university."

**Bradford Safeguarding
Children Board promise**

"We will set up a young person's panel to scrutinise the work of the board and advise on issues."

**Corporate
parents promise**

"We will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the services provided for looked after children to make sure they are improving and building on the successes achieved."

Find out more

You can find out more about services for looked after children and other specialist children's services by visiting the Council's website pages, or by calling 01274 437500

For more information on fostering and adoption call 01274 437343

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