

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2023

Our vision

Our vision is for all children and young people in Barnet to live their lives successfully with the right support, as set out in our [Children and Young People Plan](#) 2019-2023. This Corporate Parenting Strategy supports this work, focusing on our responsibility for our children in care and care leavers. In Barnet we want the same things for the children and young people in our care as any good parent would want for their child. We want our children to be resilient; by that we mean for you to have a healthy and happy childhood, to feel valued and loved, and to have the chance to grow, develop and learn so that you can find your own way in the world as an adult.

For this strategy, we spoke to some of you, about what success looks like, and what we, as corporate parents, can do to help you get there. This is the foundation of this Corporate Parenting Strategy, which sets out our priorities over the next 3 years. Our strategy focuses on resilience, aspirations and independence as you move through from care into adulthood.

"The basics are the most important for example, somewhere to live, money, overcoming debts, friends and a positive network, being able to overcome what happened in early years for example, through their career." (Care leaver)

"Happy and content with life – realising a passion, find love, have forgiveness, have no issues, be relaxed, enjoy nature, have no big no worries or health issues" (Care leaver)

What you can expect from us

As 'corporate parents' we are responsible for the care and support of our children in care and care leavers. We will make sure that you are safeguarded and that you are provided with the opportunities you need; the same as any parent. Responsibility for corporate parenting sits with the whole council, Councillors, community services, education support, schools and health services; we all have a vital role to play in supporting you to do well. As with all parents we know we will not always get things right, but we pledge to do our best.

We, your Corporate Parents, will:

- Support you to fulfil your dreams
- Be there for you, when you need us
- Support your mental and physical health
- Listen, communicate and make decisions together with you
- Support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood
- Celebrate you, your achievements, identity and culture

Delivery

Our Corporate Parenting Officers Group (CPOG) will take lead responsibility for the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and will action plan each Pledge. We have consulted on this strategy with staff and partners and have a strong commitment to work together across services to improve the lives of all children and young people in our care and care leavers.

CPOG will report into the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel, which hold it to account. On an annual basis, the progress against each pledge will also be held to account by you, our children and young people, at different forums. Each area has measures of success against it, to help you hold us to account.

For more information about different opportunities for you to have a say on issues that are important to you, please see www.barnet.gov.uk/comingintocare

Our Strategy

We will support you to fulfil your dreams

"Successfully passing GCSE."
How can we make it happen? *"Providing support with education and tuition"* (Child in our care)

"I would like extra maths tuitions. I need extra lessons, so I don't fall behind. Sometimes the teacher does not explain so I think one-to-one tuition would help me." (Child in our care)

"Give me career advice"
(Child in our care)

What is a successful person? *"Somebody who achieves all their goals. A mechanic. Because they are hands on and useful for helping people and fixing cars."* How can we help this happen for you?
"Provide work experience at a mechanics" (Child in our care)

We will continue to deliver	We will focus on	Measures of Success
<p>A Virtual school that is dedicated to helping you get the best you can from your educational experience in order for you to have exciting choices later in life.</p> <p>A Transition Hub within the Virtual School that offers additional support as you move into your new home.</p> <p>Barnet Education, Employment and Training Support (BEETS) provides careers guidance, information and advice for young people in Barnet after leaving Year 11 until the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with statements/EHCP).</p> <p>There is also a specific Care Leavers Project, with multiple projects focusing on supporting you to move into further education, employment and training opportunities (EET). Projects include for example mentoring and job coaching, and construction traineeships.</p>	<p>Supporting your educational and career dreams through providing the best possible quality of education, and exploring options for additional educational support through the virtual school and other opportunities in the community.</p> <p>Developing the Hub further to enable the best possible support for those of you that are new to our care.</p> <p>Further developing our employment education and training (EET) offer post COVID to ensure all young people have the right skills to fulfil their dreams.</p> <p>Working across the council and with our partners to increase the number of work placements and apprenticeships available to you.</p> <p>Developing our mentoring support, to ensure that it meets your needs</p>	<p>Key indicators across projects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % in Education, Employment or Training (EET) • % of children in care and care leavers attending schools rated "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted • % of children in care who achieve 4 plus in English & Maths • % of children in care Year 11 completing qualifications • % of care leavers completing qualifications, including apprenticeships <p>Researchers are looking at our Transition Hub, at what works and what could be changed; this includes asking about feedback as well as analysing information on progress made at school.</p>

We will be there for you, when you need us

"The fact that my foster carer looks after me every day yet it's up to the social team on the activities I do" (Child in our care)

"Make sure I have people that support me and like me around" (Child in our care)

What do you need to feel safe?

"Having people to support me in whatever I want to do" (Child in our care)

"I think social workers should commit to the job and stay. I had a really high turnover of new SW's and even the team manager growing up in care. I felt like no-one got to know me - more consistency is needed – also losing my care home then being put in another care home that didn't fit my needs was bad for my mental health." (Care leaver)

We will continue to deliver	We will focus on	Measures of Success
<p>Team working that focuses on our relationships with each other as professionals, across different parts of the council and with partners, working together with your best interest in mind.</p> <p>A safe and secure home environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We plan for your alternative home (we call it placements) in a way that is centred on you, and takes your views into account. We think about how suitable the home is, and consider your needs and our safeguarding concerns. This also includes your cultural background, and your relationships and connections in your local area. When we plan for your new home, a family like environment in foster care is our main option. Where this your long-term home, we focus on supporting you to stay there through any "rocky" periods. <p>We support you to make changes to your life if you commit a crime. We have a dedicated Youth Offending Service, that will discuss your needs with you, and with other professionals, identifying what support you need from them and others, from police officers to family support workers or psychologist. We support you to return to the community and identify the best home for you to return to. More information can be found in our Youth Justice Plan.</p>	<p>We want you to be able to tell us something once, and to not need to repeat it to multiple people. We will strengthen this through developing a "Tell it once" strategy. We will ask all social workers and partner agencies to sign up and commit to supporting young people to not have to retell their care story.</p> <p>We are reforming our homes to better meet your need, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing on having the right information from the start, so that you are, as far as possible, placed in the right home, the first time Recruiting more Barnet based foster carers, so that you can stay close to your school and other relationships, where that is in your best interest A new children's home at Woodside Avenue. This home will focus on mental wellbeing and counselling We are making changes to our foster care service to ensure that all of our foster carers feel supported to support you. We are working together with foster carers as professionals. <p>We will pilot a pan-London alternative to custody scheme in Barnet, where young people live together in shared house together with staff that support you to make changes to your life.</p> <p>Work together with the Youth Justice Board to make plans to address disproportionality of different groups of young people in the justice system.</p>	<p>Plans for "Tell it once" are developed and implemented. Your feedback on it.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of children that have stable placements (e.g. where you haven't had to move frequently) % children in care that are living with Barnet foster carers % of foster carers that are satisfied with the support they receive <p>We will research the impact of the new children's home, including talking to staff as well as children that are supported, and analysing information such as is mental health improved?</p> <p>Continue to have low numbers of children in our care and care leavers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience exploitation Offend for the first time (first time entrants to Youth Justice System) Re-offend

We will support your mental and physical health

*"Eating vegetables and healthy stuff and to do exercise."
(Child in our care)*

"Keep up with my boxing and fitness. It's physical things to do as a distraction from drama and stress. And just praise when I've done good" (Child in our care)

"We should all be offered some level of therapy as routine – like we're offered other services – we've all had to manage without families. We should have an in-house Mental Health Team in Onwards & Upwards and the Personal Advisers' should all have mental health training" (Care leaver)

We will continue to deliver	We will focus on	Measures of Success
<p>Access to different activities, from gym membership and cooking classes, to volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Strong mental health support services for you, that can meet your needs. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online support, for everyone up to the age of 25. • In-person and more comprehensive support through Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) and through our key mental health partners <p>If you have additional needs we will support you through our Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy and our Autism Strategy</p> <p>You can find out more about it here: https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/</p>	<p>Advertising these opportunities more, ensuring that all of you are aware of them.</p> <p>How our mental health services can work the best for you, thinking about any gaps in the support available; the support you receive as a child in care, and what happens when you become older.</p> <p>The new intervention centre at Woodside Avenue, that will be a mental health hub that will offer therapy to our children in care. The hub will also be supporting some of our staff and foster carers to learn more about mental health, and how to support you in daily interactions.</p> <p>We will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together across different parts of Corporate parenting, at meetings and reviews, to ensure that your health needs are given the priority they need. • Continued development of expertise, within the newly formed Specialist Autism Team, to understand how best to support you • Supporting you to have a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood whilst ensuring your health and wellbeing are considered in your wishes on how and where you want to live. 	<p>More children and young people access the activities.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of young people accessing mental health services • % satisfied with mental health services • % reporting improved mental health after accessing support • % reporting good well-being as part of Bright Spots survey <p>Separately reported as parts of the strategies.</p>

We will listen, communicate and to make decisions together with you

"Not all care leavers know what is available to them – a flat, benefits, allowances, savings, driving" (Care leaver)

"More focus groups for care leavers. Onwards and Upwards get to know their young people well so will be able to identify young people to participate in these sorts of events." (Care leaver)

"Social workers should be explaining more about adulthood when doing the pathway plan and transitioning to becoming a care leaver I think from the age of 16 – I didn't know what it meant to move to care leaving service – why is it a separate service?" (Care leaver)

We will continue to deliver	We will focus on	Measures of Success
<p>A service where you are listened to, with your voice at the centre of any plans. This includes a strong focus on All About Me assessment and plan, as well as embedding and capturing the narrative of your life journey through Life Story work.</p> <p>A strong emphasis on the voice of the child, whereby you, our young people, are involved in consultations activities and other feedback opportunities, such as our annual feedback survey, demonstrating our commitment to providing an excellent service informed by your experiences.</p> <p>Our Local Offer with information for those of you that have left care, and our https://www.itsaboutme.org.uk/ website for all of you.</p> <p>During the pandemic we have together learned to work and communicate in different ways, including through social media</p> <p>An improved advocacy service, that you are aware of. Following Ofsted feedback, the service has been reviewed by staff and we have talked to some of you about the service. We are implementing the changes, and have seen an increase in usage.</p>	<p>Further embedding Life Story work into practice, including for those that among you that have been in our care for a longer time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding opportunities for you to feedback into everyday activities. • Together with you, we will focus on further developing our different forums, such as our Strength and resilience forum (one of our forums for those that have left care) and our Children in Care Council for children in care. • Our annual feedback survey will now be delivered by Bright Spots; it will help us to better understand what makes life and care good for you and what needs to be improved. • There will be greater emphasis on the feedback loop, e.g. "you said, we did" – such as this strategy, and how we are asking you to hold us to account on it. <p>Working with you to review our Local Offer and website, to ensure that it meets your needs and that it is used; and to communicate the information on it through different means.</p> <p>Learning from what worked well during the pandemic and review of we can develop it, continuing to use social media and technology when we communicate with you</p> <p>Strengthening relationships between Barnet staff and the Advocacy service, for example, through drop-in sessions at Woodhouse Road, and better recording, as well raising awareness among those among you that that are on child protection plans.</p>	<p>Evidence from audits - this is when we look at how we have supported you, and think about what worked well and what we could have done differently - and feedback from you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More diverse group of young people are involved in our participation activities. • % of children in care and care leavers filling in the new Bright Spot survey • % reporting good well-being as part of Bright Spots survey • Impact of different consultations and activities is seen, including through "you said, we did" activities. • Barnet recognised as a Unicef Child Friendly Community (CFC). • Increased usage of websites. • Your feedback on the reviewed Local Offer and website. • % of children in our care and care leavers accessing advocacy services. • Your feedback on the service.

We will support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood

“Teach me how to get a home” (Child in our care)

What does an achievement look like for you? *“To get far in life”*. How can this happen? *“Show me all my options”* (Child in our care)

“There could be more done to encourage/inspire us to do more with our life. The practical things like housing applications are done for us, which is good but personally, I would like to be taught how to be more financially independent and be able to budget and plan instead of receive a lot of support – although I appreciate some people need a lot of support – it should be a balance and a judgement made – not left to get in a mess either or told to just get on with it” (Care leaver)

We will continue to deliver	We will focus on	Measures of Success
<p>Independent living skills programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 15-17-year olds through our stepladder programme, that includes financial management. • And for all of you, supporting you to develop independent living skills as part of the support you receive in your alternative home. <p>A home with support that is based on what you need, not your age, and that prepares you for independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together with you, we plan for where you will live when you get older, preparing for independence (we call it pathways). • Where it is the right choice for you, you can remain with your foster family post 18 as part of a “staying put” arrangements. • We are currently piloting our in-house Moving Forward offer; this is where you live together with other young people in a home, were staff offer you support on developing your independent living skills. • Barnet Supported Living Service helps those of you with learning disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own home. 	<p>Co-designing “We Built this Home” independence workshops at Woodside Road together with a group of care leavers. The workshops will be focused on teaching you practical tips for the home (such as how to paint a wall, and cleaning routines), as well as health, personal care, nutrition, cooking, budgeting and finance sessions to complete a package of independent living skills.</p> <p>Introducing and further embedding a number of different living options, to ease your transition from care to living independently, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported lodgings – this where you live with a friendly host family in their spare room • Piloting our second Moving Forward home <p>Expanding our offer to those of you that are ready to live independently through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking with you about your dreams, supporting you to access different ways of living independently. This can be a home through Barnet Homes, but can also be to help you think about how you can start to plan for owning your own home in the future through for example shared ownership schemes • Developing Centrepont independent living homes (your own studio flat at a lower rent) • Offering additional support if you are experiencing difficult parts of early adulthood, such as sudden unemployment, or what to do when you have missed bills. 	<p>Workshop space created. Number of people attending it, and your feedback on it.</p> <p>Introduction of changes to our offer, including Moving Forward, Centrepont and Supported living options – and your feedback on the new homes.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of young people living with supported lodgings hosts • No. of young people living in Moving Forward properties • No. of young people living independently

Celebrate you, your achievements, identity and culture

"...make British culture more of a thing to help children of diverse backgrounds to be able fulfil opportunities alongside our peers born here – university, travel, museums, theatre, concerts, sports, gym and fitness, cooking – raising children's and young people's aspirations – this will prevent low self-esteem, poor mental health, addictions and associating in antisocial behaviour and gangs"
(Care leaver)

"It would be good to have a Cultural Awareness Celebration when everyone will bring cultural food to share, play games from a different culture and learn about each other customs, religion, music etc." (Child in our care)

"Keeping close to my religion and culture" (Child in our care)

"Managers concentrate too much on cultural matches – this is not always as beneficial as they believe e.g. Somali heritage but anglicised (although still of Muslim faith) preferred healthier food and not stodgy traditional Somalian food. Personal advisers and social workers should have a universal approach tailored to the specific child/young person and not just tailored to 'culture and heritage'" (Care leaver)

We will continue to deliver	We will focus on	Measures of Success
<p>Individual care plans that acknowledge your differences and reflect your nationality, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and disabilities and strive to ensure that you are able to remain in contact with your cultural background.</p> <p>Services and activities that support and celebrate you and your identity, including facilitated events such as care leavers week and Black History Month</p> <p>Support to those of you that came to us as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, including maintaining your cultural links as well as learning about British culture, assisting with your asylum claim, and accessing education and training opportunities.</p> <p>Supporting all our communities to thrive in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination is a core part of our priorities and fundamental to how we work. It is a key component in our Barnet Plan for 2020-24, and our Life chances Strategy focuses on equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>Continuing to discuss your needs celebrate your achievements and honour your individuality.</p> <p>Continue to recruit carers from diverse backgrounds, that can support you in your alternative homes. This includes supported lodgings for unaccompanied asylum seekers that come into care at 16 years old or older which offers a stable home until ready to live independently</p> <p>In consultation with you, developing activities and celebration events to reflect your diverse identities such as a cultural expo that focuses on food, culture and history from countries across the world.</p> <p>Developing a dedicated Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's team to support your needs from when you initially come into care and through your progression to the leaving care services at 18 years old.</p> <p>Ensuring that the right advice is available on all matters to do with immigration and obtaining settled status.</p> <p>Working with you to ensure you have the space to share your views on your experiences of racism and inequality.</p>	<p>Your all About me reflects that you feel heard, seen and kept in mind by those around you.</p> <p>Carers that come from different backgrounds.</p> <p>A calendar of events for young people and their carers that is well attended.</p> <p>Ensuring that all UASC children and young people who have journeyed to the UK feel settled in their new home in Barnet. We will seek feedback from you and evidence this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance in education • Community and sports activities • Immigration advice and processes <p>Evidence from audits - this is when we look at how we have supported you, and think about what worked well and what we could have done differently – there is a section on diversity and identity.</p> <p>Your views and experiences on racism inform Barnet's Anti-Racism strategy.</p> <p>Activities that promote different cultures and identifies.</p>