

SURREY'S CHILDREN

Our care. Your future

Confident in care. Confident in your future.

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015 - 2018

Purpose

We are the corporate parents to our children and young people in care. We seek to ensure that the young people we look after grow up with the same opportunities as other young people and go on to live successful and fulfilling lives.

Vision

As corporate parents we want every child to feel safe and confident about their future.

Values

We are committed to:

- **Listening** to our young people and involving them fully in plans about their lives.
- Being **responsible** for looking after our young people and doing what we promise in our pledge.
- Building **trust** in our young people and our staff.
- **Respecting** the needs and wishes of our young people.

Context

In Surrey, there are around 750-780 children and young people who are living in our care at any one time, and 420 careleavers who are moving to become more independent. There are also around 140 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in care who have often had a traumatic journey into care.

The majority of our young people are placed in foster care and the remaining children are in residential homes, or placed for adoption or in independent living.

Where we live, who we live with and how safe and happy we feel are important factors which contribute to everyone's wellbeing. So we agree with young people who tell us that if you can't live in the home you'd choose, it is especially important to get the next best option right.

We know we don't have enough placement choice, not enough foster carers who live in Surrey and that too many children have to live elsewhere.

For more information go to:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/children-in-care>



SURREY

Our goal is that Surrey's children and young people...

are happy where they live

Young people know who they will live with and experience stable placements. They have good relationships with those involved in their care.

↓ Fewer children have to move places three or more times a year.

We know that:

We have made good improvements in placement stability but a small number of young people have to move places three or more times a year. Too many changes make it hard for young people to feel they belong. We don't have enough foster carers who live in Surrey and too many young people have to live elsewhere.

In 2017/18 we will:

- Reduce the impact of change between placements by ensuring children are informed and involved in any changes to their placement
- Train carers and staff in social pedagogy to offer children emotional support
- Recruit more foster carers, particularly for teenagers and for children with disabilities.

are healthy and aware of their choices

Young people are supported to have improved health and wellbeing.

↑ More children in care will have up to date health checks that include a wellbeing health check.

We know that:

Young people would like more choice about where and when to have their health assessments. Some young people would like more support with their healthcare if English is not their first language. Others have said they would like more advice and guidance about healthy eating and keeping

In 2017/18 we will:

- Ensure that we deliver an effective and timely health check service that includes health promotion and emotional wellbeing
- Help young people understand events and feelings through life story work
- Ensure all care leavers have access to their health histories.

are safe and feel safe

Young people are safe and feel safe. If they go missing they are listened to, trusted and given a say when they return.

↓ Fewer children in care go missing.

We know that:

Sometimes children go missing from their placement because they're not happy with their plans or because they're missing friends and family. Being missing means that they're at risk and not safe.

In 2017/18 we will:

- Actively work with young people to understand why they go missing, including having return interviews, and to support them in their future
- Offer a restorative approach to children in care who need our help and support
- Ensure children feel safe from bullying.

are making progress

Young people have the confidence and skills to live successful and fulfilling lives.

↑ Children in care achieve more, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2.

We know that:

Young people feel supported in education by those around them such as their carers, social workers and school staff. It is important that young people have the right support, including financial support, to do the best they can. We need to make sure young people and their carers are aware of opportunities available to them.

In 2017/18 we will:

- Manage change between school settings and make timely decisions on personal education plans
- Provide extra support for children in Key Stage 2
- Ensure that our youngest children have access to early years opportunities
- Increase the number of apprenticeships available for young people who are not in education, training and employment.



feel confident about becoming an adult

Young people are equipped for a successful and fulfilling future.

↓ Fewer care leavers are living in unsuitable accommodation.

We know that:

Some young people require more support to live independently. Having a job, somewhere suitable to live and strong relationships are key to confidence. There are only a small number of young people who live in unsuitable accommodation.

In 2017/18 we will:

- Strengthen the choices of accommodation we have for young people as they move into independence at 18
- Offer every young person aged 14-21 a 'Finding your Feet' mentor to help them get ready for work
- Work to improve young people's experiences when moving into independent living, including providing good information about the choices available and their support network.