

Draft East Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2023



East Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan 2021 – 2023

The East Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2023 plan was produced in partnership with the East Lothian Champions Board. The East Lothian Champions Board is a group of care experienced young people that come together to speak up about their experiences of care and what improvements need to be made to make the care system better for everyone. The Champions Board wanted a plan that is easy to understand and has clear improvement actions that will be implemented. Covid has resulted in a delay in producing this plan and that is reflected in the timescale. This plan covers a two-year period (2021 – 2023) to allow strategic planning in East Lothian to be co-ordinated – vitally important to working together for the same ambitions.

Everyone involved in this plan signed up to the Champion's Board Commitment pledge:

"We will unite together to look at the priorities for change. We will invest time and resources to produce results and deliver on promises. We will listen to each other when things go wrong and accept no excuses for lack of progression towards our goals."

What is Corporate Parenting?

A corporate parent is an organisation or individual who has special responsibilities for looked after children and care-experienced young people. Corporate parenting responsibilities' extend to all looked after children, aged from birth to when they cease to be looked after. This includes children and young people:

- in residential care
- in foster care
- in kinship care
- in secure care
- who are looked after at home with social work involvement
- care leavers who were looked after on their 16th birthday (or subsequently). The responsibilities continue to apply until the care leaver reaches their 26th birthday.

Corporate parents have many of the same roles as parents do. Corporate parents should do as much as they can to make sure children and young people feel in control of their lives and able to overcome the barriers they face. The Champions Board want all corporate parents to invest in relationships with care experienced young people and ensure that all care experienced children and young people have the same access and opportunities as other children and young people.

What are corporate parenting duties?

Corporate parents have a legal duty to promote the interests of children who are care experienced. They must seek to provide with opportunities to participate in activities which are designed to promote their wellbeing and take any action we consider appropriate to help them access these opportunities or makes use of services which we provide. We also need to be alert to matters which might adversely affect their wellbeing.

All corporate parents have a duty to prepare and publish a corporate parenting plan which outlines their approach to fulfilling their corporate parenting duties for every three year period. Corporate parenting plans must be regularly reviewed and progress reported to the Scottish Ministers. Every three years, Scottish Ministers report to parliament on how corporate parenting responsibilities have been exercised throughout Scotland, which includes the progress East Lothian made in fulfilling its Corporate Parenting duties and responsibilities 2017-2020.

How many children and young people are looked after in East Lothian during the period 2021- 2023

In December 2020, there were 244 looked after children in East Lothian compared with 222 looked after children in March 2017. This includes:

- 38 children and young people are in residential care
- 88 children and young people are in foster care
- 50 children and young people are in formal kinship care
- 68 children and young people who are looked after at home with social work involvement
- 47 young people are receiving aftercare support.

Why do we need a Corporate Parenting plan?

We know that some looked after young people do achieve positive outcomes. Unfortunately, for most care-experienced young people, the outcomes are much less positive, and can result in lower educational attainment, significant under achievement and life chances that are largely reduced. Children and young people who are care experienced or who are looked after have the poorest outcomes of all children and young people in Scotland.

- Almost half of 5-17 year olds in care were diagnosed with a mental health disorder (Office of National Statistics, 2004)
- 33% of young people in prison and 31% of adult prisoners self-reported as having previously been in care. (Scottish Prison Service, 2016)
- 73% of care experienced young people leave school aged 16 or under (Scottish Government, 2016)
- 35% of care experienced young people received 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 compared to 85% of the rest of the school population (Scottish Government, 2016)
- Care experienced young people are eight times more likely to be excluded from school (Scottish Government, 2016).

How was the Corporate Parenting plan been developed?

The Corporate Parenting Plan was informed by the East Lothian Champions Board. The Champions Board identified priorities for change. These priorities for change are informed by the champions own personal experience of the care system, evidence through viewpoint (our feedback tool) as well as local and national research findings and statistics.

The Corporate Parenting Board and Steering Group is made up of representatives from the East Lothian Champion's Board, Who Cares? Scotland, Housing, Health, Education, Police, Community Learning and Development, Social Work, East Lothian Works, Universities and Colleges. The Corporate Parenting Steering Group built on the corporate parenting for 2017-2020, identifying that many of the original priorities were still vitally important. Using those priorities, we have drawn together actions from all areas to try and address the inequality in this area. This plan reflects that.

As corporate parents we are committed to ensuring that all care experienced children, young people and their families within East Lothian are supported to reach their full potential. Over the last three years, it has become evident that a number of our children young people are educated and live out with East Lothian. The services and supports that they require to meet their needs are not in their home communities. We can and must do better and thus we have started an ambitious program of improvement in East Lothian. This has not been isolated to Children's Services (social work) but considers all our services

for children in the local authority area. We will work together to improve the lives of our children, young people and their families. This will be reflected within this Corporate Parenting Plan of 2021-2023. Covid has provided opportunities and we have embraced them with aspirational thinking for our most disadvantaged in our community.

This plan is ambitious, as we wish to #keepthepromise. We have committed to this and as corporate parents, we recognise the importance of this and embrace that challenge. We are unwavering in our desire to doing this hand in hand with our children, young people and families – their voice and participation is vital, and has shaped this plan and priorities. Their voice will continue to set that agenda going forward.

We are aware that stigma relating to children, young people and families who have been involved with the 'care system' is high. Over the next three years, we will undertake to try and change that perception within East Lothian. Through our communications both internally and externally we will celebrate the successes and achievements of our care experienced population, we will promote the knowledge, understanding and skills of our children and young people with these experiences and endeavour to change that perception. We aim to remove the stigma that is often a barrier to success. These children, young people and their families are important to East Lothian. They are full of potential and skills, and we want to unlock and build that to have confident, caring members of our communities.

How will our plan be implemented and reported on?

The Corporate Parenting Plan has an Action Plan which says what we will do to put our aspirations into practice. The Corporate Parenting Steering Group will meet six times a year to assess how we are doing and update the Action Plan. We will take this Corporate Parenting Plan to the Corporate Parenting Board who will be updated on progress in implementing the plan. We will engage with elected members and widen our Champions Board and engagement with the care experienced community to build support. The Corporate Parenting Board will send this Corporate Parenting Plan and Progress Reports to the Scottish Government. We will make this plan available to everyone in our organisations so that they are aware of their responsibilities.

Theme: Health and wellbeing

Aspiration – Care experienced children and young people to be able access wellbeing services when they need it, at the appropriate level. This should be a needs led, as opposed to an age led approach.

Care experienced children and young people should enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MEASURE
<p>Continue to develop our mental wellbeing services for children and young people. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a single point of contact for mental health services in school. • develop a focus on early intervention and preventative support and services to promote children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing, • Increasing awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing and led to an improvement of such. In particular the social functioning and relationships of children and young people will improve and their concentration, attendance and behaviour in class will rise. We would expect to see higher levels of resilience, confidence and coping with adversity. 	Lynne Binnie.	December 2022	<p>Baseline number of referrals to Single point of contact.</p> <p>Baseline number of young people offered a service via Single Point of Contact (this will show effectiveness of Single point of contact)</p> <p>Improvement in whole school outcomes of mental health and wellbeing as evidenced in SEE Survey.</p> <p>Increase in education staff confidence in supporting CYP mental health and wellbeing, as measured through the expanding mental wellbeing service.</p> <p>Further measures are in the process of being developed as the service grows.</p>
Develop a forum for 18 – 26 years old care experienced young people to access supports for their mental wellbeing.	Lisa Shine	December 2021	<p>Aim to support 30 young people with their mental wellbeing per year.</p> <p>Numbers supported through the wellbeing panel- target of 30</p>

We will reduce the impact of further trauma as we support young people recovering from adverse events.	Emma Clater	December 2022	Triad of measures <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of placement moves• Number of social workers• Number of education moves

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Theme: Keeping Loved Ones Together

Aspiration – Children and young people will remain in regular contact with their family they consider important, in particular their brothers and sisters and parents, where this is safe. All decisions should be fully explained to children and young people so that they know if they cannot see people regularly, why not.

Family time should be flexible and individualised. Focus should be on shared experiences.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MEASURE
<p>Redesign family support within East Lothian, helping families earlier and when needed to keep families together, wherever possible. This involves a more family-based approach – working with families to identifying what support would look like for them.</p>	<p>Lindsey Byrne</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>Numbers of families being assisted by a redesigned family support service in year one (Jan 2022)</p> <p>Numbers of young people accommodated through statutory measures</p> <p>Numbers of families having a FGDM and remaining together a year later</p>
<p>Continue to grow both the numbers of kinship carers and the support offered to this group.</p>	<p>Emma Clater</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Increase numbers of kinship carers – baseline of numbers of children/ young people in formal kincare</p> <p>Numbers of kincarers engaging in support offered</p> <p>Number of kincare breakdown</p> <p>Increase in support to children and young people in kinship placements (number of kinship carer children attending the Mini and Midi Champs).</p> <p>Number of children and young attending mini champs and champs</p>

<p>Continue to increase the number of foster carers, with a focus on carers who can care for brothers and sisters together and understand the importance of these relationships, including the focus on the importance of family time. Embed the principles of the Promise within the workforce.</p>	<p>Emma Clater</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Increase numbers of foster carers</p> <p>Increase the numbers of foster families that can take sibling placements</p> <p>Increase the numbers of children and young people living in foster care feeling safe in their home (Viewpoint)</p>
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Theme: Housing and Accommodation

Aspiration – All care experienced young people to have appropriate accommodation – no young person will be placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. All care experienced children and young people feel safe where they live, and have a sense of home and belonging.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MEASURE
Develop homelessness prevention and homelessness response pathways / protocols aligned with the new Prevention Duty, providing clarity on homelessness prevention / housing options; statutory homeless assessments and access to appropriate accommodation.	Wendy McGuire/ Judith Tait	December 2021	<p>Production of a working policy document with appropriate measures</p> <p>Reduce numbers of young people in Bed and Breakfast accommodation</p> <p>Ensure that the recommendations of the Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian are implemented.</p>
Develop a comprehensive web presence with information for aftercare and young people's options, giving information that can help inform young people of their rights and choices within this area. This will include videos to inform care experienced young people about the maintenance tasks in your house, e.g. changing a lightbulb, caring for your boiler.	James Coutts.	December 2022	<p>% of young people completing lifeskills viewpoint</p> <p>Feeling supported in where they live (Life skills Viewpoint)</p>
All care leavers will be offered the Tenancy Award to help young people feel ready and equipped for their own home.	Emma Clater.	December 2022	<p>% of care leavers offered the tenancy award</p> <p>% of care leavers completing the tenancy award</p> <p>Numbers of young people supported by the Rock Trust with tenancy transition work</p>

Theme: Education and Training

Aspiration – All care experienced children will achieve their potential in school. All care experienced young people will leave school and have a positive destination. All care experienced children and young people have skills and talents and as corporate parents we will assist young people to use these. As a Local Authority we will strive for all children to live and learn in East Lothian.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MEASURE
<p>Undertake a review and redesign of services for children in East Lothian. This will ensure that children are supported at an early stage to remain in their families. Children and young people will live and learn in East Lothian and families supported to meet the needs of their children (Transforming Services for Children/ Redesign of Children’s Services).</p>	<p>Judith Tait/ Monica Patterson</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Numbers of children and young people at external residential</p> <p>Numbers of children and young people in external foster care will reduce</p> <p>Number of referrals to social work will reduce</p>
<p>We will create a multi-disciplinary GIRFEC Hub in the interface between Children’s Services and Education. This will be early intervention focused and offer support within schools, keeping with the findings of the Promise.</p>	<p>Lindsey Byrne</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>All children and young people will report feeling safe at school (Viewpoint, wellbeing questionnaire)</p> <p>All care experienced children and young people will achieve their levels at early, first, second and third.</p> <p>Levels of attendance of young people looked after</p> <p>Number of care experienced young people leaving school with 3 or more Nat 4’s.</p> <p>Number of care experienced young people leaving school with 3 or more Nat 5’s.</p> <p>Number of care experienced young people achieving level 4/5 literacy and numeracy.</p>

			<p>Number of care experienced young people achieving vocational qualifications, one or more.</p> <p>Number of care experienced young people progressing to Further and Higher Education.</p>
We will explore and develop alternative achievements and recognitions for our care experienced children and young people.	Virtual headteacher	December 2022	Numbers of care experienced young people accessing Youth achievement award.
We will explore and develop a range of vocational progression pathways for care experienced young people.		December 2022	Numbers of care experienced young people supported to move from pre-stage 1 (Personal Social Development) to stage 1 Employability (Steps to Employment).
All care experienced young people will have a positive destination.	Alison Hood	December 2022	Numbers of looked after young people in a positive destination at school leaving age
Increase engagement and uptake of Foundation Apprenticeships in East Lothian.	Alison Hood	December 2022	Number of care experienced young people commencing the programme and number of completers.
All care experienced young people will have a positive destination and be supported with their transition from school. Including all preparatory employability support including interview preparation.	Alison Hood	December 2022	Numbers of looked after young people up to the age of 19 in a positive destination.

Theme: Rights and Participation

Aspiration – All children, young people and their families are aware of their rights and are supported to have their rights upheld. Young people to feel listened to and their views heard.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MEASURE
Develop a multi-agency participation policy, valuing and using the voice of care experienced children, young people and their families to improve services, and ensure they get the support they need, when they need it.	Lisa Shine	January 2022	Data on engagement and consultation activities involving children, young people and their families.
Challenge the use of language. We will consider our use of certain terms, e.g. replacing contact with family time, replacing LAC with Looked After Child.	Promise Implementation Lead	December 2021	Young people's views on their plan gathered through viewpoint. Do you get to have a say in the things that are planned for you?
Young people will be offered a mentor/trusted adult/befriender.	Independent Reviewing Officers	June 2022	Numbers of children and young people with a trusted adult. Numbers of young people being offered a mentor and numbers of young people working with a mentor.
East Lothian will incorporate the principles of the UNCRC, into its work on Corporate Parenting and ensure Children's Rights are heart of all Corporate Parenting Activity.	Emma Clater	August 2022	Numbers of children and young people offered independent advocacy and numbers of young people working with an advocacy worker (including children and young people with a disability). Numbers of young people choosing to remain where they live under continuing care.

			Numbers of young people participating in champions board activity
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Theme: Finance

Aspiration – All children and young people will be raised in families not affected by poverty. All children and young people will learn appropriate financial management skills within a context of sufficient funds.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	MEASURE
Reduce personal debt	Emma Clater	December 2022	Numbers of care experienced young people working with welfare rights service.
Increase the use of personal budgets to empower families, children and young people to take control of their situation and make decisions re support.	Emma Clater/ Lisa Shine	December 2022	Number of children and young people benefiting from personal budgets to reach their goals.
Work in partnership with all agencies in East Lothian to reduce the impact of poverty, upon our families.	Paolo Vestri	December 2022	Number of families living in poverty in East Lothian.
Work with families to assist with income maximisation, ensuring entitlement to all benefits and allowances.	Emma Clater	December 2022	Numbers of families working with Income Maximisation work.

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