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Corporate Parenting Strategy

2022 - 2025



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Foreword

The Monmouthshire County Council Corporate Parenting Strategy is our collective commitment to safeguard and promote the life chances and deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people who are looked after by Monmouthshire County Council. It sets out the high standards we aim to achieve as Corporate Parents along with our key partners and the actions we will take to do this.

As elected members and officers we have a special responsibility as Corporate Parents to ensure that all our children and young people who are looked after and care experienced¹ within our County have the opportunity to live a safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling life. A good education and opportunities for social development are paramount for all children and young people and in this respect children who are looked after are absolutely no different and must be afforded the same choices.

The Strategy sets out clearly a reference guide for Corporate Parents to follow and emphasises the key aspects of the role which include how to listen, learn and question, and act as advocates on behalf of this special group.

This is the Council's third Corporate Parenting Strategy.

County Councillor Tudor Thomas

Cabinet Member and Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel

¹ The terms 'children and young people who are looked after' and 'young people who are care experienced' are used throughout this document. Children and young people who have grown up in care have told us that these terms better reflect their experiences and identities and are their preferred terminology. These replace the terms Looked After Child (LAC) and Care Leaver.

Corporate Parenting Priorities

Priority 1: All elected members and officers understand and act on their responsibilities as corporate parents

Priority 2: All children and young people who are looked after have a safe and stable home where they feel safe, valued and cared for by excellent foster carers

Priority 3: Children and young people who are looked after enjoy a range of educational and learning opportunities and are supported to achieve the best possible educational outcomes

Priority 4: Children and young people who are looked after enjoy the best possible health and have appropriate information, health care and advice to thrive

Priority 5: Children and young people who are looked after enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities to enable them to fulfil their potential

Priority 6: Children and young people who are looked after are treated as valued members of the community, whose voices are heard, respected and taken into account in all decisions that are taken

Priority 7: As they grow older, care experienced young people are given timely, good quality support to prepare them for the future and into independence and enable them to make positive choices for independent living to become successful, fulfilled members of society

Priority 8: Children who are looked by Monmouthshire County Council are cared for by Monmouthshire carers and remain close to their homes and communities

Priority 9: All care experienced young people are supported in education, training and employment

Our Vision

Within Monmouthshire our first pledge to children and young people is that whenever possible we will support them to remain within their families. We recognise that this is the best environment for the majority of children and young people to develop and achieve their outcomes.

There are however a small group of children and young people who will need to be looked after by the local authority. In some cases this will be because of the death of a parent but primarily will be as a result of parents being unable to provide a safe environment in which they can thrive. For some children they will have experienced significant abuse or neglect at home. We will strive to ensure that children and young people who are unable to live safely within their own families are looked after and provided with the best possible care and support, educational provision and health care in placements that meet all their needs.

Children who are looked after by the local authority will already have been placed at a disadvantage when they come into care. Monmouthshire County Council wants to ensure that the experience of children and young people does not add to this disadvantage but provides them with the stability and security they need to flourish. Children and young people will be healthy and happy and feel valued and loved. Children and young people will enjoy learning and grow into successful adults who can have positive relationships, positive futures, become responsible citizens and achieve their goals and ambitions. "Our aspirations for the children and young people that we look after are the same as any good parent would want for their children. Where they need it children and young people will receive the very best possible standards of care and support" (Where I am Safe Strategy 2016).

Entitlements of Children and Young People who are Looked After and Care Experienced

Children who are looked after have the same entitlements as all children and young people. Under the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 this is articulated through the concept of well-being. For children and young people this incorporates:

- Feeling good about your life, being safe and having somewhere suitable to live
- Being well looked after and able to grow up happily and successfully
- Being involved in decisions that impact your life

- Having friends and being part of good, strong communities
- Having every chance to do well in education, training, work-based learning and employment
- Have access to appropriate health care.

Roles and Responsibilities of Corporate Parents

All members of the Monmouthshire County Council have a shared responsibility for Corporate Parenting but some individuals have particular responsibilities.

Corporate parenting is the responsibility held by Elected Members and officers to be loving, caring and aspirational for all children in our care or who have recently left our care as adults. Councillors and Officers, as Corporate Parents, have an important role to play in ensuring that every child in their Council's care receives the best care possible. They should be striving to provide the level of care they would be happy for their own children to receive.

Welsh Government defined the concept of corporate parenting as: "The collective responsibility across services and across local authorities, to safeguard and promote the life chances of looked after children"

Councillors as Corporate Parents

Elected Members have a 'special responsibility'.

"When you became an elected member you took on one of your most important roles, as corporate parent to children your local authority looks after. The importance of your corporate parenting responsibilities cannot be overemphasised. Elected Members have a responsibility to ensure that children looked after by the Council are able to thrive, that they are nurtured, supported, educated, listened to and prepared for adult life in the way any good parent would want for their own children. These children will often have faced significant challenges and will need the help of adults who hold powerful and influential positions." Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Social Services

Key aspects of the role of a Corporate Parent include:

- To know what the key issues and concerns are of our children and young people who are looked after and to ensure that the Council is responding to these.
- Ensuring that parental responsibilities for children and young people who are looked after are being fulfilled;
- To identify where things need to improve and to make a difference for good
- To consider and question the impact of Council decisions on children and young people who are looked after care experienced young people.

Officers of the Council

Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of children and young people who are looked after and care experienced.

Key responsibilities of all Officers are:

- To promote the life chances of children and young people who are looked after and care experienced in their area of responsibility
- To consider the impact of decision making on children and young people who are looked after and care experienced.

Care Experienced Young People

The Corporate Parenting Strategy applies equally to care experienced young people leaving care as it does to children and young people who are looked after.

A Care Experienced Young Person (Care Leaver) is defined as a child who was previously a child who was Looked After Child and was in Care on their 16th birthday. Our duties to young people who are care experienced remain until they are 21 or 25. A young person can withdraw and re-connect to care and support at any time during this period.

The Local Authority as a 'good corporate parent' will assist the young person with financial support to achieve economic well-being and make a positive and successful transition to adulthood.

The Children's Commissioner's report 'Hidden Ambitions' published in 2017 emphasises that Care Leavers still face many barriers, and that more needs to be done to ensure that care

leavers have the support and resources they need to make successful transitions into adult life. The Annual Report 2021/22 advocates for all care experienced young people to have an allocated Personal Advisor (PA) to support them up to the age of 25. This call was accompanied by other calls to improve access to financial support for care experienced young people, ensure young people leaving residential care can access equivalent support to the 'When I'm Ready' scheme and to improve accommodation options for care experienced young people. All of these have been accepted by Welsh Government

At a regional level, the Institute of Public Care (IPC) undertook a review into the needs of care experienced young people with complex needs to explore how support and accommodation services for this group of young people could be improved and developed. The most recent Children's Commissioner's Annual Report 2021/22 notes that there is not sufficient provision for children with complex needs which by nature also has the potential to negatively impact the young people leaving the care system.

Foster Wales, Foster Monmouthshire

The challenge to recruit sufficient local authority foster carers to meet demand is one faced across the UK. The Welsh Government has a stated objective to eliminate profit from the care of children who are looked after within this Senedd term. Welsh Government has invested in a co-ordinated, pan-Wales branding exercise to create the Foster Wales brand. It was hoped that by creating a Wales-wide brand that looked highly professional and provided common information on all local authority fostering services, it could match the private providers and attract more potential carers to foster for their local authorities.

The National Picture

There are over 80,000 children currently being looked after by Local Authorities in England and over 7000 by Local Authorities in Wales, the majority of whom live in foster placements. Since 2003 there has been an 80% increase in the numbers of children looked after in Wales. Children who become Looked After are likely to have experienced trauma and exposure to multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Children who become Looked After who are disabled and / or come from ethnic minority backgrounds can experience further disadvantage.

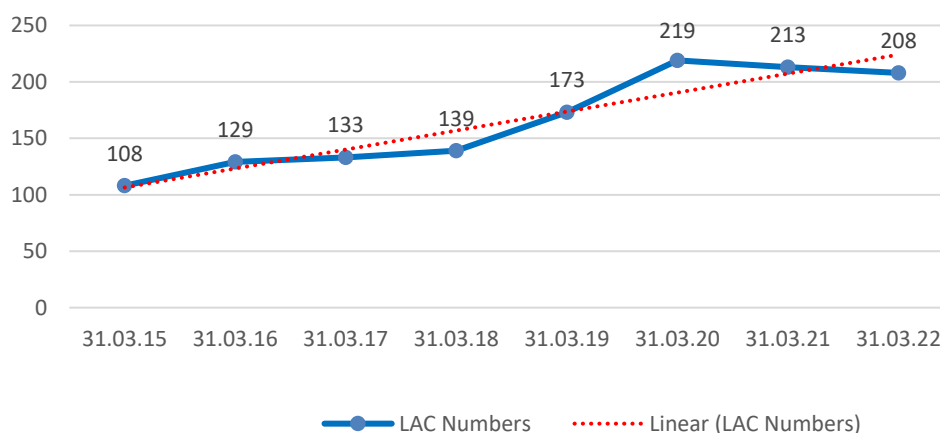
The outcomes for care experienced children and young people in care can be poor, with research indicating that this group are less likely to achieve good educational outcomes,

more likely to be involved in offending, be over represented amongst the homeless and prison populations more likely to experience drug and alcohol misuse, and to have poor mental health. However, despite the challenges many of these children and young people have faced and their resulting complex needs many make a great success of their lives, with the right support and care. For example, in Monmouthshire, of our current cohort of care leavers six are in university, ten are in full time education, 22 are in employment and 4 are in apprenticeships.

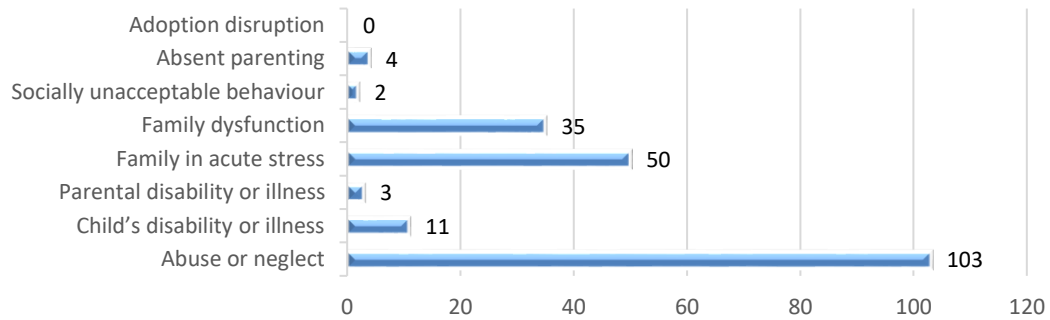
The Local Picture

1. The Number of Looked After Children by the Council

The number of CLA in Monmouthshire currently has fallen from a high point of 226 in September 2020 and currently stands at 207 (March 2023) which is slightly above the national average. The trajectory of increases year on year seen between 2018-2020 has stabilised and the trend remains downwards. The number of children who need to be Looked After remains a fluctuating number dependant on issues of size of families, and the number of cases referred into Children Services at any period of time. The figures also reflect the growing number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who are mandatorily placed via the Home Office National Transfer Scheme.



2. Why Children became Looked After 21-22



• **Source: Monmouthshire data**

The majority of children and young people are being looked after because they have experienced abuse or neglect or where families are in such acute stress or are unable to function sufficiently to provide safe, stable or sufficient care for their children

3. Status of Looked After Children as at 31/3/22

Legal Status	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Interim Care Order	14	30	40	22	21
Full Care Order	110	130	165	163	159
Placement Order Granted	4	3	6	19	12
Section 76	9	9	7	9	16
Wardship	2	1	1	0	0
Total	139	173	219	213	208

Source: Monmouthshire data

Most children who are looked after are subject to Care Orders made by the courts under the Children Act 1989. These orders confer Parental Responsibility on the council (shared with their parents).

4. Looked After Children by Placement Type as at 31/03/22

Placement Types	31.3.18	31.3.19	31.3.20	31.3.21	31.3.22
MCC Fostering	25	29	40	40	46
MCC Kinship Carers	30	36	41	48	38
Independent Fostering	44	49	59	52	55
Independent Living	1	0	0	0	0
Pre-adoption	1	2	1	5	7
Placed with Parent	24	40	55	49	40
Residential Educational	7	9	18	14	15
Parent and Child	1	3	0	1	1
Secure Unit	1	0	0	0	0
Child in Hospital	0	1	1	0	0
Supported Lodgings	5	4	4	4	4
Other Placement	0	0	0	0	2
Total	139	173	219	213	208

A priority for the last Corporate Parenting Strategy was to address the previous decline in MCC Carers with a robust strategy for the recruitment and retention of quality foster carers. Alongside this was increasing support to kinship carers to empower them to become Special Guardians of the children in their care and enable these children to grow up within their own family network and without the restrictions imposed on the household from being a fostering household. The impacts of the pandemic and changes to the profile of Local Authority fostering slowed this progress. Enabling children to be looked after by Monmouthshire carers and, whenever possible, to remain within the geographical boundaries of Monmouthshire, closer to their home and communities remains at the heart of this Corporate Parenting Strategy.

5. Breakdown by age and gender

Total					Total
Under 1 year	1 to 4 years	5 to 9 years	10 to 15 years	16 to 17 years	Total
8	30	56	87	27	208

The gender breakdown of our children who are looked after population is broadly evenly split between girls (50.5%) and boys (48.5%), 2 (1%) identify as transgender.

6. Length of time children remain looked after 2018 to 2022

Length of Time	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Under 6 months	13	37	44	19	25
6 to 12 Months	19	14	24	13	16
1 to 2 years	52	51	68	98	72
3 to 4 years	24	30	40	32	40
5 years +	31	41	43	51	55
Total	139	173	219	213	208

Most children who were looked after by Monmouthshire County Council on the 31.03.2022 had been looked after for 1 to 2 years (72, 35%). The number of children remaining in care less than 6 months has fallen from a high of 44 children and young people in 2019/20 to 25 children and young people looked after during 2021/22. The majority of children are aged between 10 and 17 (54%) with 76.3% of that group being aged between 10 and 15. This indicates there is likely to be an increase in care experienced young people leaving care over the next two to five years that will need planned for. Just over a quarter (26.9%) of children are aged 5 to 9 and 18.2% are aged under 5



Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Monmouthshire has a history of supporting young people who spontaneously arrive (S/A) fleeing oppression, exploitation, or war due to our border placement on the M4. During 2022 the Home Office have placed a requirement of all Local Authorities to accommodate and offer care and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People who are allocated to each authority via the National Transfer Scheme. Between Feb 21 and March 22:

- 10 Unaccompanied Young People seeking Asylum became Looked After in Monmouthshire;
- 7 of these young people were referred by the Home Office National Transfer Scheme;
- 3 young people “Spontaneously Arrived”
- All are currently aged between 16 -17 yrs and 9 are male;
- Only 3 young people reside in Monmouthshire the others are in out of county placements;

Monmouthshire does not have enough Supported Living arrangements nor culturally suitable accommodation to home all of the UASC and young people. Children Services are working closely with the Gwent based Strategic Groups, and Regional Leads to develop a Gwent response to need, as well as appointing a designated worker within the Long Term Support team to support access to appropriate services, and advocacy as needed.

Review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan 2018 – 2021

The current strategy and action plan is built on a review and appraisal of the previous 3 years and will be revised following consultation with key stakeholders including Corporate Parenting Panel Members, children who are looked after and care experienced young people, foster carers, social workers and the Senior Leadership Team. The review recognises that whilst there has been continued progress, there have been significant challenges over the past four years, not least the impact of the pandemic making some progress harder to implement or sustain. The context remains dynamic both in terms of the legislative framework and also the operational services that are tasked with delivering against many of the identified objectives.



Key Achievements:

- Members 'Introduction to Corporate Parents' has been updated and is being carried out as part of the induction programme for the new administration;
- Consideration of Corporate Parenting responsibilities is now required in all reports for Cabinet or Full Council;
- There is a good understanding and awareness of Corporate Parenting through SLT and across the Local Authority directorates;
- The Council has evaluated initial apprenticeship programmes and has strengthened the operational leadership of this. There is a post created in Enterprise to support 16 – 18 year old care leavers with education, training and employment;
- We have a team of dedicated and committed foster carers in Monmouthshire, who have a good network of support both through foster carer support groups set up and supported by the Placement and Support Team and through FC4FC (a foster carer led group of foster carers that Monmouthshire County Council provides some funding for);
- There has been an increase in Foster Carers converting to "When I am Ready Carers" which mean they are supporting their Looked After young person post 18 to support transition into adulthood (from 2-9 carers converting);
- The Learning and Development Framework for foster carers has been fully implemented, there is a training programme in place for foster carers and all potential foster carers, including connected person's carers access the Skills to Foster training as part of the assessment process. Training has been made accessible on-line which has enabled foster carers to access this in the evenings without needing childcare, this has significantly increased uptake;
- All members of the Placement and Support team receive regular and updated training in attachment based practice, including having received DDP level 1 training to help them better support foster carers;
- There is support in place for generic and kinship carers through the BASE psychology service which is well established and helps ensure that the emotional and psychological needs of children and young people who are looked after and care experienced young people are understood and met;
- The MyST (My Support Team) Services has been established in Monmouthshire and provides 24hr 7 day a week support to those caring for some of the children who are



looked after who have the highest level of need. This has enabled children to return/remain with family and/or foster placements from residential placements within Monmouthshire;

- The educational outcomes and achievements of children who are Looked After are reported on a cohort basis e.g. mainstream, Additional Learning Needs etc. The recently appointed Vulnerable Learners Lead Officer in Education will support this;
- The Families Together Team, in partnership with Barnardo's, has been established and is fully embedded, working with kinship carers to assess and support families to gain Special Guardianship Order's and promote their skills and confidence to reduce or eliminate the need for the local authority to share Parental Responsibility;
- Youth and Leisure services continue to provide extra curriculum activities to our Looked After Children and young people;
- Foster Wales Foster Monmouthshire has been launched as a Wales-wide and local brand, a Fostering Recruitment Officer has been employed and Fostering Recruitment and Retention task group is in place to support the recruitment and retention of Monmouthshire foster carers. The task group has been focussed on hyper-local campaigning which have so far increased initial expressions of interest with 6 moving to assessment;
- Regular consultation events are now being held to canvas the views of foster carers and respond to their ideas for how support and service delivery can be improved;
- Children Service Teams have developed Participation Action Plans for the involvement of children who are looked after and care experienced young people in decisions that affect them and in service delivery and improvement;
- A Placement Pressures group has been established, chaired by Children Service Senior Management, to review the support required for children who are at high risk of family or placement breakdown, avoid drift, ensure appropriate and robust care planning and promote placement stability;
- Investment in Life Journey Work means that children who are looked after and children who are being placed for adoption have access to high quality life journey work;
- Significant progress has been made in the provision and promotion of advocacy. Work has been done to ensure that the referral processes and pathways offer eligible children and young people easy access to this service and this has led to a significant increase in children and young people making use of advocacy service;
- UASC and young people have a dedicated support worker to assist in linking them into regional culturally appropriate services.



Barriers and Challenges:

- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has created numerous challenges for children and young people both in terms of their emotional wellbeing and their ability to access education;
- Recruitment and retention of social workers remains challenging and a high turnover of staff in the Long Term Support Teams means that some children have been without a dedicated social worker or have experienced multiple changes in social worker which makes it difficult for children to build trusting relationships;
- Communication between children's social workers and foster carers continues to require development and support. This has been amplified by the recruitment and retention issues which result in changes of social worker;
- The cost of living crisis is putting increased pressures on fostering families and their support networks;
- Whilst Foster Wales represents the Wales-wide brand for all Welsh local authority fostering teams, currently this brand is not well understood locally as being Monmouthshire CBC. In addition, since the last Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Placement And Support Team and Communications Team have worked closely together to run a series of successful hyper-local campaigns. With the introduction of Foster Wales Foster Monmouthshire all local authorities were encouraged to promote the Wales-wide brand to get this established. This has not been a successful strategy for Monmouthshire and together with other challenges, such as the pandemic, meant that 2020 – 2021 saw almost no recruitment of new in-house foster carers;
- We do not have sufficient Monmouthshire carers and remain overly reliant on independent foster agencies;
- Whilst there has been an increase in the number of care experienced young people remaining with their foster carers in 'When I'm Ready' placements, there is still a shortage of positive support and accommodation choices for care experienced young people;
- The Families Together Team (partnership with Barnardo's) continue to support Kinship Carers to achieve Special Guardianship Orders where appropriate, and assess families post statutory involvement for revocation of care order resulting in reduction of Children Looked After residing on a Placement with Parents order;
- Achievements of our Looked After children, young people and care leavers are not as well recognised or celebrated at a corporate level as we would want.



- The young people's participation group is not as well-developed as we would wish at this point. There is a desire to increase the support of and the link between Corporate Panel Members and members of the participation group.
- There is still work to do to ensure that all members understand their roles as Corporate Parents.

The Changing Context

- The Welsh Government has a stated commitment to eliminate profit from the care of looked after children in the term of the Senydd (2027). This is aimed at the removal of all private foster and residential care from Wales – all Welsh Local Authorities are working within a destabilised market, with no certainty of what the final position will be;
- Although the numbers of Looked After Children has stabilised over the last 24 months, the number of children who are looked after remains above the Welsh average;
- Although the number of children subject to Placement with Parent orders are reducing, the numbers of Independent Fostering placements has increased slightly from 2021 to 2022. IFA'S currently are recruiting aggressively in Wales despite WAG Eliminate agenda. The financial discrepancy between IFA payments and Local Authority payments are a factor particularly in relation to cost of living crisis. Monmouthshire will need to develop the packages of support available to Foster Carers beyond payments alone in order to be effective in the recruitment market;
- There remains a strong drive at national level to increase the regional alignment of fostering services through the National Fostering Framework;
- The launch of Foster Wales has created a national fostering brand for all local authorities;
- The Welsh Government has launched the 2 year Basic Income Pilot (BIP) scheme for care experienced young people. From 1 July 2022 young people leaving care in Wales will be offered £1,600 each month (before tax) for 12 month to support them as they make the transition to adult life. Monmouthshire currently have 12 young people eligible for BIP and are actively feeding back to WAG

Terms of Reference and Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel is below.


 Corporate
Parenting Panel - Te

How the strategy will be delivered, monitored and evaluated

The Corporate Parenting Strategy includes an action plan to support implementation of its aims and objectives. Where actions have been brought forward or amended from the previous action plan this is indicated. Measures have been put in place where possible, so that Corporate Panel members have an evidence base through which progress can be monitored. Implementation will be monitored and evaluated by the Corporate Parenting Panel on a 6-monthly basis. The Corporate Parenting Panel will present an annual report to Full Council on progress.

Action Plan

No.	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who is responsible	How will we measure progress?	Progress at review
1. Standing Action	Increase elected members understanding of their responsibilities as Corporate Parents	Induct all elected members Hold annual corporate parenting members' seminar Present annual report on Corporate Parenting to Full Council.	Lead Member for Children and Young People HoS	Elected members inducted Elected members attending corporate parenting seminar Dates of annual reports to council	This is a rolling action as newly elected members require induction. A new induction programme is required and annual corporate parenting seminar needs to be held.
2. Standing Action	Ensure that consideration of Corporate Parenting responsibilities remains high profile within the Council's Senior Leadership Team	Represent the rights of CLA and CEYP at SLT Annual reports	Chief Officer SCH	Dates of annual reports	Corporate Parenting responsibilities remain high priority within the Council's Senior Leadership Team
3. Standing Action	Celebrate the achievements of looked after children, care leavers and	Introduce programme of individual achievement awards Host an achievement event	Youth / Enterprise leads together with	Awards made Date of event	Progress to hold recognition events for CEYP, CLA and Foster Carers have been hampered by the Covid



	our foster carers.		Children's Services with the support of Corporate Parenting Panel and Foster Carer reps		pandemic. This action needs to be reviewed, revisited and an action plan created to take it forward. The importance of acknowledging the achievements of foster carers is recognised and will form part of the Fostering Strategy.
4. Standing Action	Ensure that children and young people in care and care leavers have a voice, are heard and can influence service development	Support the development of young people's participation group Implement CLA survey and respond to outcomes	Youth lead working with Team Manager, Long-Term Support	LTST Participation Action Plan.	Children Service Operational teams have developed Participation Action Plans. The Participation Group that was set up needs to be refreshed and relaunched following covid. This will form part of the LTST Participation Action Plan.
5. New Action	Ensure that children and young people are provided with information about their placement as part of placement moves	Create physical and digital booklets about our foster carers that can be shared with children prior to placement	Team Manager – PAST working with Team Manager LTST	Monitoring frequency	
6. Standing Action	Ensure that all Looked After Children and young people are offered advocacy through an 'active offer'	Promote the 'active offer' within social work teams and foster carers	HoS NYAS	# active offers # LAC / Care leavers involved in advocacy	This action is fully implemented
7. Standing Action	Make every effort to avoid unnecessary changes of placement.	Training, supervision and support for foster carers both 'practical' and 'psychological'. Ensure all foster carers are aware of the support available through BASE and MyST. Ensure good practice around matching processes. Ensure referrals to PAST are accurate including completing 'All About Me' Ensure 'Stable Lives, Brighter Futures' arrangements are fully complied with	Service Manager, Managed Care Service Manager Wellbeing and Family Support	# of unplanned placement moves / placement breakdowns	The Placement Pressures Group enables oversight of all vulnerable placements in order to promote children's wellbeing and placement stability. There has been a review of the Complex Care Panel which is being relaunched to ensure appropriate support is provided for children with complex needs.

8. New Action	Implement the Foster Carer's Charter	The Foster Carer's Charter represents a commitment on behalf of MCC	Service Manager Wellbeing and Family Support	Implementation plan in place Audit and monitoring of implementation Feedback from foster carers	
9. Standing Action (Amended)	Ensure appropriate support available to Special Guardians	Review of SGO policy and practice and implement new arrangements	Service Manager, Managed Care	# SGO support plans # SGO breakdowns and reasons	SGO policy and practice has been reviewed. The Families Together Team has been implemented which provides training, support, consultation and direct work with SGO families.
10. Standing Action	Ensure that adoption processes and adoption support is in place and working well	Ensure that operational link with SEWAS is working well	Service Manager, Managed Care working with SEWAS	SEWAS annual report including # of POs made and # of adoptions achieved	Increased numbers of Social Workers are trained in adoption and sitting on adoption panel. Children's Services Head of Services sits on the SEWAS management board. Increased numbers of children appropriately placed for adoption over the past 2 years as a result of a more robust process being in place and a clearer understanding of this.
11. Standing Action	Increase the number of CLA placements with Monmouthshire Foster Carers	Implement the objectives of the fostering project Development of the Fostering Strategy	Service Manager, Managed Care working with the fostering project board	# increase in placements with Monmouthshire carers Reduction in dependence on IFA carers	The number of Foster Carers has been steadily increasing since 2018. A Task Group focussed on hyper local campaigning has led to a recent increase in enquires which is translating through to applications and assessments.
12. Standing Action	Increase the options for support and accommodation for care leavers including 'When I am Ready' placements	Implementation of the CLA / commissioning strategy Where I am Safe Implement outcomes from the IPC review Complete Placement Commissioning Strategy for Monmouthshire Support CEYP as the Basic Income Pilot is rolled out.	Service Manager, Managed Care working with Lead Commissioner for CS	# Care Leavers experiencing period of homelessness or living in unsuitable accommodation	IPC review outcomes have been implemented. A joint housing scheme with Pobl Housing Association was opened in April 2022 to provide supported accommodation for care experienced young people. WIR placements are being provided for more young people and foster carers are routinely asked about providing WIR placements. MCC has a Placement Commissioning Strategy that is reviewed annually.

13. Standing Action	Ensure that all children who are looked after have a good understanding of their own "life-story" – why they live where they do and what the plans for their future are.	Ensure Support Workers, Social Workers and Foster Carers have skills and confidence in completing life-story work.	Service Manager, Managed Care	Via the SEWAS management Board data	Investment in workers and training in life journey work means that children have a better understanding of their own life-journey.
14. Standing Action	Narrow the gap of educational achievement between children who are looked after and their peers	Ensure that cluster bids are strategic and are focussed upon improving outcomes for CLA pupils. Report CLA outcomes on a cohort basis (e.g. mainstream, ALN, Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and CLA in PRU) Ensure PEPs are completed within timescales; are of high quality and based on a multi-disciplinary approach	Inclusion Manager CYP Social Services Service Manager	# (%) children reaching expected levels at key-stage Closing the gap between universal outcomes and CLA pupils at each key stage	There is currently a piece of work being completed by the Management Team within the LTST to quality assure the PEP's and ensure they are being completed yearly or if there has been a significant change.
15. Standing Action	Ensure that all CLA and CEYP are fully supported to engage in education, training or employment post-16	Ensure that Pathway Plans are implemented through a partnership approach	Enterprise Leads together with Team Manager Long-Term Support	# (%) of care leavers who are in education, training or employment	Pathway planning processes are being reviewed, however will remain committed to ensuring a collaborate and partnership approach.
16. Standing Action	Ensure the health needs of CLA and CEYP people are met	Undertake CLA health assessments Ensure that Health records and information travels with children moving placements or entering care	Lead Nurse for CLA ABUHB	81% (163) CLA health assessments were completed on time. Annual report	The health of children who are looked after is monitored through CLA reviews. Lack of NHS dentists has meant that CLA have not always had swift access to treatment and private dental care has, at times, been required.
17. Standing Action	Promote good emotional health and safe behaviours amongst all our CLA.	Support carers in meeting the emotional needs of CLA and young people Ensure CLA and young people have access to psychological and therapeutic support	Service Manager wellbeing and Family Support, Service Manager for Managed Care working with Family Support		The Risk Taking Young People's Protocol has been undated and implemented to provide a multi-agency approach when working with vulnerable young people. BASE provides psychological and therapeutic support to foster carers, CLA and CEYP

			services, BASE and MyST		The MyST service was opened in May 2019 and the provides support to children with significant mental and emotional health needs who engage in challenging, risk-taking behaviours and who are at risk of being placed in out-of-area residential care because of this
18. Standing Action	Ensure that all CLA and CEYP have access to a full range of 'extra-curricula' activities	Support carers and young people to access activities and events as identified based on understanding of children / young people's interests and potential	Service Manager, Managed Care working with youth, enterprise and leisure leads and schools	# CLA / CEYP participating in clubs and events	Regular event days for children who are looked after are set up in conjunction with Monlife to enable children and young people to meet up and spend the day together engaging in indoor and outdoor activities.
19. New Action	Ensure that foster carers receive the support and recognition they need to provide stable, secure and high quality placements to children who are looked after.	<p>Fostering Strategy</p> <p>Implement the proposed out of hours support line for foster carers.</p> <p>Review the core offer to foster carers to ensure it matches other fostering teams across Gwent.</p> <p>Actively seek additional benefits for foster carers including the Blue Light Card, free or discounted leisure passes, discounting council tax.</p> <p>Utilise the strengths in the social capital of Monmouthshire by actively seeking community support for foster carers.</p> <p>Run regular consultation events with foster carers to enable them to have their voices heard with regard to their support and training needs, service delivery and improvement.</p> <p>Promote attendance at support groups and ensure BASE, MyST and other relevant individuals attend on a regular basis.</p>	Service Manager, Wellbeing and family support	<p>Implementation of support line</p> <p># calls</p> <p>Review of regional core offer to identify opportunities to develop local offer.</p> <p>Council to consider opportunities to develop and improve the local offer.</p> <p>Work with Comms team to maximise opportunities to leverage social capital for the benefit of foster carers.</p> <p># of consultation events</p> <p>Action taken as a result of feedback.</p> <p>Improvement in feedback</p> <p>Monitor attendance.</p>	

