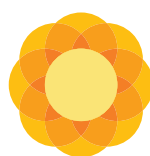
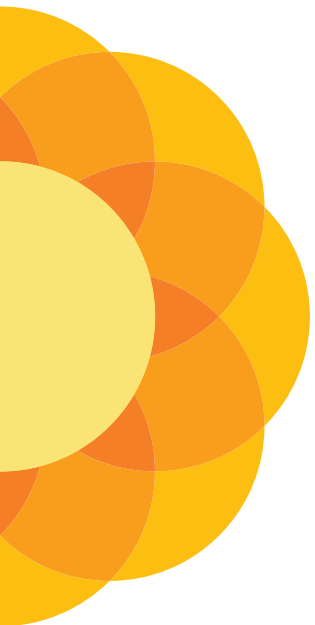




**Corporate Parenting
Annual Report
2021 - 2022**

September 2022



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

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1. Introduction

At Birmingham Children's Trust, it is our job to support the most vulnerable children and young people in Birmingham and keep them safe, happy and healthy.

We work with care and compassion to listen to what children need and we involve them in the decisions that affect them. We understand, too, that everyone's needs are different. So, we structure our services in a way that means we can adapt to what's right for every child.

Based on the most up-to-date research, we know that our children are very likely to have experienced significant trauma and abuse prior to being in our care. They may also be at greater risk of sexual exploitation, going missing, offending and they are likely to experience greater educational challenges.

It is essential that our children in care and care leavers receive the best possible services from us as corporate parents. We have a collective responsibility to support them in achieving what we would want for our own children. We believe that good local service provision is likely to improve our children's life opportunities. Birmingham Children's Trust and Birmingham City Council take their corporate parenting responsibilities very seriously.

Collectively, we are fully committed to being the best parent we can be to our children. The following annual report will set out the key activity and outcomes achieved over the last 12 months.

2. Executive Overview

What has gone well

- The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) in January 2022 reflected on the past 12 months and now has a new structure and governance, ensuring the Board is more accountable, impactful and driven by children and young peoples' views and experiences.
- The Board structure ensures children and young people's voices are central to the Board, the young people's successful Take-Over Board is also now a permanent feature in the meeting cycle, taking place twice annually.
- We have delivered Member training in May 2022 post elections and plans for a full council focus on Corporate Parenting is planned later in the year.
- Our Bfriends charity is now officially a registered by the Charity Commission and its first Trustee Board meeting took place on the 9th February 2022. This includes young people, business, and organisations across the city, ranging from Aston Villa Foundation to Barclays.
- Our Trust Holiday and Food Programme (HAF) hub model has been held up nationally as a good practice model for delivery and has impacted on 1,000s of children and young people across the city.
- Our Apprenticeship Programme has been developed and we now have 14 Apprenticeships for Care Leavers with a wide range of opportunities across the trust. Roles include Rights and Participation workers, Youth Worker in YOS Music Programme, Business Support Officers.
- We have appointed a Mentoring Coordinator that will support our Mentoring Programme and Reverse Mentoring programme. The previous Cllr Sharon Thompson has championed the Reverse mentoring programme and its development will ensure that our children and care and care leavers shape and influence Cabinet, Elected members and senior leaders across the council and trust.
- Our Participation work continues to be developed and presented on a local, regional and national stage
- We have four Transformational and Improvement apprentices. These apprentices are delivering training across the Trust, championing Mind of My Own, supporting participation groups and leading on specific projects.
- Our Participation Strategy has an active working group represented across the Trust and is making progress against the strategy in how as a Trust we ensure the voice of children, young people and our families are heard and central to decision making.
- BFF' Exhibition and Volunteer Recruitment Campaign Launch for Independent Visitors. This was opened by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham Muhammad Afzal and presentations were given by Cabinet Member for Vulnerable Children and Families Councillor Sharon Thompson and the Chief Executive of Birmingham Childrens Trust Andy Couldrick. Over 70 key stakeholders, partners, community leaders and businesses from across the city attended our black carpeted event including the Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council, Deborah Cadman. As a result of this campaign we are looking at a total of 70 IV's across the service once all checks have been completed this is an increase from 16 IVs back in November (over 400% increase in 6 months)
- 'Future You' Film Premier at Millennium Point - Four care leavers took part in a 12-month programme to develop aspirational videos for children in care, care leavers and professionals and members of the public. The four short films were screened at a red-carpet event opened by Cllr Sharon Thompson and closed by Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Birmingham Children's Trust. The films were produced by Abba Loughran from our Corporate Parenting Team and were films made and produced by Care Leavers.

- The Future You Films will now be part of a structured training programme and it is planned for the films to be played at a Full Council Meeting focused on Corporate Parenting.
- Holiday and Food (HAF) Programme has continued to within the Trust December 2021 this included the Winter Funland at the NEC, Winter Bonanza at Millennium Point and Karting and Laser Tag at Teamworks Karting – this reached over 2,500 children and families. In Easter 2022 we had 3 separate HAF events running simultaneously across the city supporting 100's of our children and young people in Erdington, Aston/Lozells and Small Heath.
- Our Commonwealth Games (CWG) Programme and events continue to take place and have delivered different CWG sports, events, and job/work experience opportunities. In each half term there have been more than 2 CWG hubs across the city working in partnership with Donate1 Create 1 and Birmingham City Football Club.
- The CWG Volunteer support and benefits (like free travel, free food and refreshments, green room space and chaperones if required) were shaped by our Care Leavers working with the West Midlands Combined Authority and CWG team to reduce any barriers to applying. 30 Care Leavers applied as CWG Volunteers, they were given a unique reference code and supported in their application process.
- The 'Future You' films were also shown at a Commonwealth Games Civic Event hosted by our Care Leavers, Abba Loughran, Andy Couldrick and The Chair of the Trust Board, Andrew Christie
- Apprenticeship Launch Event – took place to promote the advertised roles. The event had 49 Care Leavers and 18 staff from the Care Leaver Service attended, there were stalls with representatives from all posts, stalls from Catch 22, DWP, Halesowen College and Mind of My Own. There was afternoon tea and cakes, music and raffles and prizes. Feedback was amazing from young people and will be the launchpad for future events
- Apprentice Week - 'Give 45' event where colleagues, partners and businesses volunteered time to support young people to find apprenticeships and new opportunities
- Meet our Apprentices Webinar – young people got to talk about their roles and the life of an apprentice working in Birmingham Children trust to staff and colleagues in a live webinar.
- Care Leaver Job Conference - we supported our 18+ service to deliver a job conference – over 20 business and partners with prizes, food and music.
- Development and Consultation on Care Leaver offer is underway both internally and in partnership with the West Midlands Participation Groups. This work is looking at a universal offer that should be in place for all care leavers across the region.
- Rights, Participation and Corporate Parenting Training to ASYE students – feedback was excellent and was one of the best receive courses delivered to the ASYE group

1. What needs to improve

- Ensure that Corporate Parenting is understood, supported, and promoted across the council and its partners.
- The development of our offer from Birmingham City Council and its partners and the work and understanding of Corporate Parenting in the council needs to be strengthened. Birmingham City Council's Chief Executive Deborah Cadman and Director of Children Services Sue Harrison are very committed to children and young people across the city and have strong ambitious for improvement and are supportive to Corporate Parenting developments.
- We need to develop a coherent offer for children in care and care leavers working closely with the council, its partners and Birmingham Children's Trust.

- We need a new Corporate Parenting Strategy that is co-produced with young people and the board
- We need to hold others to account for their role in Corporate Parenting and their offer to our children and young people
- The speed of recruiting our IVs and matching to our children we need to clear the backlog and match those waiting for an IV
- We also need to promote the service internally through the Trust once we have a surplus of IVs.
- We need to recruit more male IVs and those from Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities who currently represent 68% and 60% of those waiting for an IV.
- We need to consider an extension to the statutory offer post 18 in line with the National IV Network and other authorities leading this offer like Leeds
- We need to review the resources needed to deliver IV as our numbers increase
- Our Advocacy offer across the Trust needs to be better promoted and understood well known. There are low referrals for children from our SW colleagues for instance in child protection.
- We have a small pool of advocates (who also lead on participation and support the groups and forums). This staffing resource is something that may need to be increased to meet an increase in demand as the service is building effective links with principal officers and social work teams.
- We need to decide as a Trust what our offer is for Children in Need. Our Advocacy does not provide a service to children in need, this is something we do pick up on occasions, often when referred by the children's commissioner
- Our Charity Bfriends has a challenge to support funds being raised to cover staffing costs and be self-sufficient
- Our groups and forums need more support from Trust colleagues to raise numbers active within the groups
- Our Participation strategy needs to be developed Trust wide and each area of service needs to be responsible for how it supports the voice of children and young people, building this onto service plans and delivery.
- Uptake of Mind of My Own across the Trust

3. Rights and Participation (RAP) and Corporate Parenting Service – Overview

The Rights, Participation and Corporate Parenting Service is made up of five main areas

- 1. Participation** – responsible for the Children in Care Council, Junior Children in Care Council, Children with Disabilities and SEND Council, LGBTQ+ Young Parents Project and our Care Leaver Forum
- 2. Advocacy** – responsible for advocacy for children and young people across the trust
- 3. Independent Visiting (IV)** – provides an IV (befriending) service for children in care across the trust
- 4. Corporate Parenting** – The team is responsible for overseeing corporate parenting developments to ensure the Trust, Birmingham City Council and its partner agencies understand and embed corporate parenting principles in the work that they do – includes mentoring programme and Reverse Mentoring programme
- 5. Apprenticeship Programme** – responsible for support and development of apprenticeships both in the trust and externally

4. Participation

Our Groups and Forums:

Junior CiCC	Up to the age of 13
Children in Care Council	Young people up to the age of 18
Care Leavers Forum	Adults up to the age of 25
Young parents' Project	Young parents various ages
Birmingham Roaring Lions	Forum for disabled young people from our internal children's homes
Don't Dis-Ability	Forum for disabled young people and those with special educational needs
LGBTQ+	Forum for children who identify as LGBTQ+

The inclusion of children and young people voices within the Trust, regionally and nationally continues to grow. This includes young people writing and presenting training, interviewing staff and consulting to improve understanding and services.

Our Groups and Forums have found new ways to work:

- More flexibility through hybrid group meetings supporting a wider reach of children and young people like those who live out of the city or have anxiety
- The use of film and video content this is proving very powerful and increasing our voice's direct access to audiences for training and service improvement
- Use of targeted online meetings allowing for quick, targeted and timely consultations giving real time feedback

Some of the work highlights:

- Young people influencing the new Trust Practice Standards
- Consultation on 'What makes a good and stable relationship' feeding into the Trust's Relationship-based Practice model.
- Children and people had a 'Take Over' of the Trust's Corporate Parenting Board in May 2021 and helped to influence the Board and hold Corporate Parents to account. Due to its success and a review of how children views influence the Board. These are now planned twice annually.
- The Perinatal Pathway has been shaped by our young parents' experiences that were shared at the Board. This was eye opening for board members. Our Young Parents are now shaping the multi-agency regional offer to new parents through our coproduction work with Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Care Group's work
- We have four Transformational and Improvement apprentices recruited. The apprentices are working on the delivery of care experienced training working with Steven Russell to produce training designed and delivered fully by those with care experience.
- These apprentices are also championing Mind of My Own, supporting participation groups and leading on specific projects. One of the projects in a coproduced Peer Research Study into Participation with Senior Lecturer Clive Diaz from Cardiff University.

- Our Transformation and Improvement apprentices also delivered training to the IRO service at their service day, sharing young people's views on making their practice more child centred. It also allowed the service to reflect on how well they engage and involve children in the review process

Training and Recruitment Highlights

- Young people were specifically interviewed & filmed for training to the workers of the new Life Story project, this was delivered by our Childrens Rights Officer and Transformation apprentices. The second part of this training, sharing the views of birth parents, co-presented by a birth parent.
- Training was delivered to ASYEs sharing young people's core messages (Mind Your Language, Relationships are central and be honest, be brave) using videos and quotes in a fun and interactive full day session which had huge impact and great feedback.
- Our young people delivered a workshop at the VOXCOM national conference (Mind of My Own's Annual Conference).
- Members of all of our groups were supported to share their thoughts & feelings on 'love', specifically Professional Love and a training video has been produced, was used as part of ASYE training and a Trust webinar
- We ran a second training session for young people who want to be on interview panels to recruit staff and we now have over 25 young people trained and experienced who can join a professional panel as an equal.
- We have interviewed a large number of staff this way including, senior positions, advocacy posts, IROs, CIC Head of Services, residential workers for new in-house residential home staff and TESS senior practitioner posts 'every' Trust ASYE candidate.

Looking Forward to 2022-23

We will work to ensure:

- to take the Trust's priorities and link these young people's aims to give outcomes with more focused operational impact both internally and externally.
- We work in partnership with the Practice Hub and individual service areas we have identified interconnected themes with existing young people's campaigns. The amalgamated priorities give a work schedule which is varied and requires all of the diversity of the participation groups and wider.
- Increasing children's voices and lived experiences in assessments and planning
- We work on Housing, Accommodation and Transitions supporting the working group between young people, housing, adult services and Trust services areas, using young people's experiences to produce a protocol which improves transitions to adulthood. This will include Pathway Plans, housing bidding and allocation, pre and post tenancy support and effective interactions between CIC and the 18+ service.
- The CICC placements campaign to improve young people's voices in placement matching via a young person's report held on record will be consolidated and work on a belongings and

savings inventory will take place between young people, CIC teams, fostering and placements service.

- We aim to work with young people, both subject to child protection plans and in care, to identify what works for them, as well as working with practitioners to look at barriers and potential solutions.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing remain one of the top 3 priorities for our participation groups. After powerful presentations at the Corporate Parenting Board in 2021 created an appetite for change, young people want to continue their work to improve the accessibility and quality of the provision available to them.
- We improve the training offer to the Trust, in part by utilising our apprentices and their expertise along with that of our wider cohorts. We have had success with hybrid delivery of training – young people and/or staff in person with pre-recorded content from young people, which we will continue
- Improving memberships of our groups and forums – we need Trust support with this too
- The development of more video content to support our training and awareness raising
- Mind of My Own is used more consistently across the Trust

Some of the activities already planned include:

- Young people to work with the Practice Academy on the New Into Care and Moving Once in care offer.
- We are already part of the CP participation working group led by Stuart Lowe and will be supporting a willing Child in Care Team to run a pilot of the package when it is finalised.
- We are working with young people and Forward-Thinking Birmingham and are looking to increase the enlarge the current working group (i.e. TESS, with CIC, 18+, commissioning)
- Mind Your Language - Young people will expand on the previous work on the impact of words, content and context in written recording to support the Trust in making professionals recordings more child focused and friendly. Potential models include writing recordings to the young person.
- 'Be Present' Care Experienced training has been drafted and will be piloted and then rolled out
- Completion of Peer Research Project with Clive Diaz (Senior Researcher Cardiff University) and plans for Participation Conference
- Being central to Participation Strategy to improve children and young people's participation and co-production throughout the Trust
- We have planned for our Apprentices to continue promoting our groups within the Trust.
- We will also be developing a Black, Asian and other minorities group recognising the Birmingham is a very culturally diverse city and experiences of services can be very different based on issues of culture, race and ethnicity.
- We will be working with colleagues to improve engagement with those struggling with contextual safeguarding issues and in contact with youth offending or custodial institutions.
- We will be supporting education colleagues to improve the voices of children in response to the gap identified via their safeguarding audits
- RAPs has run an initial training session for Designated Safeguarding Leads and is supporting BCC Education safeguarding colleagues to draw together and progress a working group which we will support going forward.
- We are part of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership and have several requests to share lived experiences to student social workers as part of their degree and to be part of recruitment onto university courses.

- The Care Leavers Forum will work with the 18+ Head of Service to review the Local Offer to care leavers, produced collaboratively in 2018.
- Young people met with the Practice Academy on a targeted piece of work on Life Story work in February. The Children in Care groups will be continuing to support the work on New into Care packs.
- We will continue to support the academy in undertaking young people's surveys as part of practice evaluation cycles.
- Mind of My Own Train the Trainers is in place to support roll out of Trust wide training

5. Advocacy

The aim of RAP service is to ensure that Birmingham children in care, care leavers and children on child protection plans (wherever they may live) are entitled to have the support of an advocate and have access to children's rights and an advocacy service (one to one advocacy support/ visiting advocacy to disabled children's homes), that supports children and young people's voices. The goal is to the promotion of better outcomes and the improvement of services for them.

Various legislation and policy have been vital in establishing a child's right to be heard but the core principles for RAP advocacy are derived from The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified in the UK in 1991, "**Article 12 – Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.**"

2021-22 Data - Children and young people's advocacy needs

Percentage of status of children accessing advocacy support for this period:

- 40.2 Children in care
- 49.5% Children on Child Protection Plans
- 8.7% Care leavers
- 1.6% Other (Children in need)

The two top advocacy issues within 2021-2022 were

- Support at meetings
- Placements

Support at meetings: It is a primary role of an advocate to support a child to participate in meetings. Children want support at their Child in care or child protection review meetings, Family group conferences/ review of family plan meetings, education meetings (PEP) and placement meetings. Children also want support at meetings regards their Complaints which can be resolved informally, or progress through stages, one, two or three of the formal complaint's procedure. If there is still no resolution advocates support children to take their complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Children and young people are encouraged to express their views in a range of ways. The Mind of My Own APP and Mind of My Own Express App are promoted widely. This enables children and young people to use a web-based resource to gather and capture their views however other children and young people benefit from more creative engagement activities or just having someone with them (and on their side) for moral support.

Placements

Placement issues are the second highest reason for children and young people accessing RAPS advocacy service. Children and young people using the service are worried about, or disagree with, the planning and decision making about where they live, or they don't feel their current placement is working and want to be moved. The advocacy service helps

Children and young people engage with the process and decision making, ensuring their voices are heard. Often, by empowering the child or young person to engage with the professionals, they gain a better understanding of why decisions are being made and feel more comfortable with them – giving better long-term stability for the young person.

Looking Forward to 2022-23

We will work to ensure:

- Our Advocacy offer across the Trust is not well known and there are gaps in referrals for children from our SW colleagues for instance in child protection.
- We know that we do not cover enough children on current referrals and that we have more children who should be receiving a service.
- We have a small pool of advocates who also lead on participation and support the groups and forums and cannot manage a larger rise in referrals, we will need to ensure we fulfil every child's entitlement to advocacy – this may need additional resources
- Our Advocacy does not provide a service to children in need, this is something we do pick up on occasions – often when referred by the children's commissioner

Some of the activities already planned include:

- To continue working with the Trusts Child Protection Participation Group led by Lara Timms and how we support a pilot for an 'opt out' of Advocacy for Child Protection in the NWC area, this would lead to a large spike in referrals and additional resources to support
- Improving our visibility in records is something we plan through being able to access Eclipse to enter case notes and leave a footprint of advocacy on children's files
- Improvement in our data capture through work with the Data and Performance Team
- Continued training to external and internal partners like SW teams, supported accommodation, IFAs and children's homes

Resource Needs and Decisions on Service offer

- We have a small pool of advocates and cannot manage a larger rise in referrals, we will need to request additional resource to support any large increases in referrals particularly with the work being done within child protection
- We need to decide what the offer is for children in need and any resources implications of this

6. Independent Visitors

Independent Visitors April 2021 – March 2022

“A local authority looking after a child must appoint an independent person to be the child’s visitor if – (a) the child falls within a description prescribed in regulations made by the appropriate national authority; or (b) in any other case, it appears to them that it would be in the child’s interests to do so.

Childrens Act 1989

(2) “A person appointed under this section must visit, befriend and advise the child.”

The Childrens and Young Persons Act 2008

Introduction

Our Rights and Participation Service manage the Trust’s Independent Visitors Service, which provides volunteer befrienders known as Independent Visitors or IVs for children and young people in the care of and care leavers of Birmingham Children’s Trust.

Key Objectives 2021-22

The key objectives and focus for 2021-2022 has been to build on work developed throughout the previous year including:

- Raising the awareness of Independent Visitors and increasing recruitment to meet the needs of our children and young people
- Recruiting volunteers from communities who can support the needs and wishes of children and young people who wish to have an IV.
- Increasing participation of children and young people in care and care leavers in shaping the Independent Visitor Service and the National Independent Visitors Network (NIVN)

Recruitment of IVs

In August 2021 we brought an additional Participation and Advocacy Worker/Advocate specifically across to support with the recruitment of IVS. In October and November, we planned and launched our ‘BFF’ (Best Friends Forever) Recruitment Campaign with a Gallery Event in November 2021. This led to an increased understanding of the project as well as a large rise in applications.

Our BFF Volunteer Recruitment Campaign was launched with our BFF Exhibition at the Gallery Church in the Jewellery Quarter. This recruitment campaign was co-produced with children, young people, and our IVs. Large life size black and white photos of our children and young people and IVs were suspended from the ceiling. The power of an IV and the need for an IV were stories presented through video content and a booklet allowing people to tour the gallery and understand the story behind each photo. The event was opened by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham Muhammad Afzal and presentations

were given by Cabinet Member for Vulnerable Children and Families Councillor Sharon Thompson and the Chief Executive of Birmingham Children's Trust Andy Couldrick. Over 70 key stakeholders, partners, community leaders and businesses from across the city attended this black carpeted event including the Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council, Deborah Cadman.

The success of the BFF Campaign generated over 31 applications in November alone with this reaching to 50 by March 2022.

The BFF Campaign was presented to the Corporate Parenting board to showcase our plan and strategy for IV over the next twelve months, it was also an opportunity to share and promote IV across all services within Birmingham Children's Trust to generate new referrals for children and young people.

We also presented the BFF Campaign on a national stage at the Annual National IV Conference. The presentation highlighted the work behind the campaign and the impact it was making. One of our young people took part in delivering the presentation, the feedback received was positive and showed Birmingham Children's Trust to be leading the way in tackling national recruitment shortages for IVs.

Looking Forward to 2022-23

We will work to ensure:

- All children and young people in the care of Birmingham Children Trust are aware and know how to access a BFF Independent Visitor if they choose to have one
- Independent Visitor will be increased through better promotion and targeted active both in the Trust and externally
- Ensure volunteers are from local communities, are representative and well matched to our children and young people this includes matching to:
 - 60% of our young people who are waiting who are from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups
 - 68% who are male
- We will increase opportunities for virtual and e-learning training and development for IVs
- Better promotion and use of social media platforms to support the work across the service
- Review and evaluate service impact on rights, participation, IV and advocacy services
- Improved data and performance information to support areas of improvement and development
- We aim to work towards approx. 10% of children in care to have an IV in line with the National Independent Visitor Network (NIVN) 'Right Friend campaign' This would represent a continued growth from approx. 70 IVS matched and going through recruitment to 200. We aim a minimum of 100 by the end of 2022-23, which would represent 5%, which is higher than the national average of around 3.3%

Some of the activities already planned include:

- Library of Birmingham Recruitment Event (linked with fostering, SW recruitment, Mentoring, Apprenticeships and IV) Event Sept/October 2022
- Senior Leaders of BCC, Birmingham Children's Trust and Councillor Event at the Mockingbird Cinema on IV and other aspects of Corporate Parenting (October 2022)
- Visits to Teams within the Trust to promote IV
- Full Council Meeting on Corporate Parenting (including the importance of IV and recruitment)

- Social Media and Comms for young people and internal and external stakeholders through our social media and Digital Marketing Apprentice starting in September 2022

7. Corporate Parenting

Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children’s Trust, and all our partners in the NHS, the Police, in schools and colleges, and in the business community of Birmingham are working together to give our children in care and care leavers the best opportunities and support. We are committed to making sure that every young person in, and leaving, our care, can say the following:

- I am fully aware of this City Pledge.
- I am settled where I live, and I feel safe and well cared for
- I enjoy school and I am being supported to fulfil my learning potential.
- I go to college or university, or I am in work learning the skills I need for the future.
- I have opportunities to develop my talents, have fun and enjoy my free time.
- I know who I am, where I am from and I am in touch with the people in my life with whom I will have lifelong links, relationships and support: they might be family, or friends.
- I am healthy, I feel good about myself and I get the help and support that I need.
- I have a good and stable relationship with professionals who support me.
- I know what the next year will bring, where I am going to live and who in my life will support me into the future
- I have someone independent in my life to support me should I wish.
- I am given opportunities to have my say and shape the services I receive.

The City Pledge is under consultation in year 2022/2023, to make sure each pledge is still relevant and most important to our young people. Our Pledge shapes and structures our Corporate Parenting Board Agenda and forward plan. Our Pledges are available on our website and promoted with partners and through the Trust. Corporate Parenting Board is well represented with key partners and senior representatives from the Trust, Birmingham City Council, the NHS and health partners, The Virtual School and business partners. Foster carers and children and young people are also presented on the Board and have opportunities to feedback and hold the Board accountable to against Our Pledges.

The Birmingham Corporate Parenting Board meets bimonthly to discuss issues that are important to children and young people in care and care leavers. The Board is responsible for making sure that the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the accompanying City Pledge is monitored to ensure that children receive the best possible services. The Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Vulnerable Children and Families and has cross party representation, it also has leadership from Birmingham Children's Trust, Birmingham City Council and other partnership organisations.

The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) in January 2022 reflected on the past 12 months and now has a new structure and governance, ensuring the Board is more accountable, impactful and driven by children and young peoples’ views and experiences. The Board structure ensures children and young people’s voices are central to the Board, the young people’s successful Take-Over Board is also now a permeant feature in the meeting cycle. Children in care and care leavers have shared their personal experiences driving each groups campaign at the board.

Overview/Date of Corporate Parenting Boards – 2021/2022:

24th May 2021: Young people takeover board – relationship-based practice, Apprentices' achievements, Bfriends charity, moving and living post 18

26th July 2021: Care leavers data, placements, sufficiency, fostering project, IRO annual report, stability data, foster carers and fostering support.

27th September 2021: Perinatal pathway, UASC, Forward Thinking Birmingham, Emotional Wellbeing / Mental Health, Children in Care Council, EmpowerU

22nd November 2021: Ofsted visit, Independent Visitors, the Trust Practice Model, Lifelong Links, CWG and the Trust Engagement Model.

24th January 2022: Apprenticeship update, young people participation plan, board structure and priorities.

28th March 2022: Board structure and governance, Virtual School update, employment/apprenticeships/education, CWG presentation.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

Our Strategy is currently being reviewed and a new draft planned for September 2022.

Our Training Model

A big area for the Corporate Parenting team, is develop a training model that can be delivered to internal Trust staff, City Council staff and internal partners. The focus of the training is to make sure people understand what makes a good Corporate Parent and to understand what their responsibility is as a Corporate Parent.

In April 2022, the Corporate Parenting, Rights and Participation service delivered a training session to a group of 18 AYSE's this included they could get involved.

In May 2022, the Corporate Parenting Team presented at Member induction, to the new councillors.

Our 'Future You' Films launched at the IMAX in Birmingham these will provide a platform for training and workshops on the subject of being in care and leaving care and the importance of supporting our young people's future education and employment opportunities.

Commonwealth Games – Unlocking the Games

- Birmingham Children's Trust were gifted 5,000 tickets from the Organising Committee and Birmingham city council for children in care.
- Care Leavers were given a bespoke code to put when applying to volunteer at the Commonwealth Games. The Corporate Parenting Team led the discussions with the Care Leavers service to gain interest as well as sending out specific links. There were also 3 bespoke events for Care Leavers to meet CWG in person and apply.
- The Commonwealth Games Youth Collective gave the Trust, a bespoke offer for 14- to 17-year-olds to be kit carriers at the Games time events. We had 12 young people, and 4 chaperones signed up to take part.

Unlocking the Games – Hub model

- Due to the funding received by the Commonwealth Sports Foundation, the Corporate Parenting team, Bfriends charity, and key partners have been able to create a sustainable hub model within deprived communities.
- From October 2021 to May 2022, there has been regular Commonwealth Games activity within the Erdington and Small Heath community, which has reached 1,050 young people.

Our HAF journey with Street Games and our network of partners

A number of HAF programmes were supported by the Corporate parenting Team

- **The summer spectacular** was created as a hub of activity each morning in August at Teamwork's Karting in Digbeth offering a range of sport, health and wellbeing sessions delivered and supported by Team GB Olympians and elite athletes. Alongside this there was karting, laser tag and virtual simulator racing. The programme finished with a Carnival Finale that celebrated the achievements and milestones of young people who had attended the programme.
- **Birmingham Children's Trust's Contextual Safeguarding Unit Summer Activity 5** Community Interest Companies supported young people and their families to strengthen opportunities for contextual safeguarding partnership work and build community guardianship. There were activities for 715 young people in total. Reaching out to families in Aston, Newtown, Lozells, Handsworth areas of Birmingham.
- **Winter HAF 2021**- 2,000 young people and families were welcomed to the NEC in Birmingham and enjoyed a range of activities and experiences including a gigantic ice-skating rink, a traditional circus, Santa's grotto, a craft arena and a full-sized fairground made up of more than 40 rides. The trust also provided a coach service from four sites across the city 500 people attended.
- Our **Winter Wonderland event** was sponsored by partners of the trust, Millennium Point in partnership with Think Tank. The day included a theatre experience of the polar express in the IMAX cinema, winter bonanza activities including a giant snow globe, snowboard simulator, arts and crafts, dance experience and entry for all to the Think Tank. The event was fully inclusive for all with every element of the experience being fully accessible and a range of sensory activities we included. 400 people attended the event.
- **Winter Hub** - two weeks of activities were provided for children by Donate 1 Create 1. Each day beginning with a healthy breakfast club, which was followed by a whole range of activities including football, drama, basketball, dance, arts and crafts, hockey, trampolining and more.
- **Easter HAF** programmes were delivered to 120 children and young people a day by Donate 1 Create 1. This included children with SEND. Activities included football, boxing, dance, trampolining, multisport, hockey, basketball and drama. Work with Foundation for the Future CIC helped to deliver conflict and resolution, character building and positive affirmation imagery workshops. Children explored sensory activities, had adventures in the soft playroom and played outdoors learning about plants and insects.

Partnership working at Birmingham Children's Trust highlights 2021- 2022

Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote cooperation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in turn. Guidance on the Act highlights that corporate parenting is a 'task that must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies'. Birmingham Children's Trust partnership team works alongside partners to support them in delivering their corporate parenting role, especially in relation to the provision of services.

The team works with and supports the Trusts network of partners, businesses and the community a network of now over 150 to ensure the delivery of a successful range of projects, programmes and events for children in care, care leavers and other young people and adults known to the Children's Trust.

Birmingham Children's Trust has developed this offer to underpin an extra layer of corporate parenting opportunities and experiences linked to education, wellbeing, sport, health, volunteering, employment pathways and life skills. All activity that takes place is funded through projects, programmes, bids and work in kind supported by partners, business and the community.

Future You Project Film Premier at Millennium Point

Four care leavers took part in a 12-month programme to develop aspirational videos for children in care, care leavers and professionals and members of the public. The four short films were screened at a red-carpet event opened by Councillor Sharon Thompson and closed by Andy Coultrick, Chief Executive, Birmingham Children's Trust. The films were produced by Abba Loughran from our Corporate Parenting Team and were films made and produced by Care Leavers.

The Future You premiere was hosted on the 7th of April and had 250 attendees of young people and staff members of Birmingham Children's Trust. The feedback we had was positive lots of staff commented on how the films will be a good step to staff understanding what young people go through and how their impact on young people's lives.

The Future You Films will now be part of a structured training programme and will also be played at a Full Council Meeting focused on Corporate Parenting.

Bfriends Charity

Our Bfriends charity is now officially a registered charity by the Charity Commission and its first Trustee Board meeting took place on the 9th February 2022. This includes young people, business, and organisations across the city, ranging from Aston Villa Foundation to Barclays. The Charity has seconded Natalie Loon the Corporate Parenting Manager three days a week into the Charity as the Operational Manager to work with Trustees and lead on the work of the charity of the next 12 months. Natalie in her role in her split role has championed the HAF working closely with Bfriends Trustees to support a Hub model that's recognised as good practice by the DfE.

Apprenticeship Programme

The Care Leaver Apprenticeship Programme has doubled in size we have 14 apprentice posts, which is now led by Dawn Crooks who was appointed in our new Apprentice Co-ordinator Manager post. We have a range of opportunities and posts now including Music Programme Youth Worker in YOS, Rights and Participation workers, Business Support Officers as well as opportunities for Construction, Hair and Catering.

We had an Apprenticeship Launch Event to promote advertised roles –the event had 49 Care Leavers and 18 staff from the Care Leaver Service attended, there were stalls with representatives from all

posts, stalls from Catch 22, DWP, Halesowen College and Mind of My Own. There was afternoon tea and cakes, music and raffles and prizes. Feedback was amazing from young people and will be the launchpad for future events.

In Apprentice Week we had a 'Give 45' event where colleagues, partners and businesses volunteered time to support young people to find apprenticeships and new opportunities

We also had a Meet our Apprentices Webinar where young people got to talk about their roles and the life of an apprentice working in Birmingham Children trust to staff and colleagues in a live webinar.

Our apprentices have settled in well in the respective areas/services. They all undertook a weeklong induction, where they had a safe space to learn about the organisation and what is expected of them. We have continued to offer bespoke training and support for our apprentices focussing on wellbeing and transitioning to the professional working world environment. We have built strong relationships with our college/ course providers, as we understand how important it is that our apprentices have a robust provision in place for the duration of their apprenticeship.

We have a steady and growing presence with our corporate partners and lots of conversations with potential partners. These discussions have led to businesses offering work experience, support and even jobs to our young people. These relationships have strengthened our presence in securing opportunities for our young people.

We are also working closely with the Care Leaver Covenant on awareness raising, including connects and signatories.

Business and Partner Support for Jobs

We have offers and jobs in a wide range of areas from partners, more work is needed to support our young people to be aware of the opportunities and access them. We need our partners to be offering fenced opportunities and jobs, work experience, training and apprenticeships.

Areas for Development:

- Ensure that Corporate Parenting is understood, supported, and promoted across the council and its partners.
- The development of our offer from Birmingham City Council and its partners and the work and understanding of Corporate Parenting in the council needs to be strengthened.
- We need to develop a coherent offer for children in care and care leavers working closely with the council, its partners and Birmingham Children's Trust.
- The Corporate Parenting Board needs to continue to strive to be more impactful and hold others to account
- We need a new Corporate Parenting Strategy that is co-produced with young people and the board
- We need to hold others to account for their role in Corporate Parenting and their offer to our children and young people
- Improved offer of employment, apprenticeships and training from our partners
- Our Charity Bfriends has a challenge to support funds being raised to cover staffing costs and be self-sufficient

- Our Reporting needs to be linked more to Pledges and activities of the Board and wider – bringing in all partner contributions to one report

Some of the activities already planned include:

- Working discounts on Utilities to Care Leavers including another water company
- Working on 50% Broadband roll out through work with BCC Digital Inclusion Team through
- Library of Birmingham Recruitment Event (linked with fostering, SW recruitment, Mentoring, Apprenticeships and IV) Event Sept/October 2022
- Senior Leaders of BCC, Birmingham Children's Trust and Councillor Event at the Mockingbird Cinema on Corporate Parenting (includes SW and Fostering recruitment) (October 2022)
- Full Council Meeting on Corporate Parenting
- Social Media and Comms on Corporate Parenting through our social media and Digital Marketing Apprentice starting in September 2022
- Completion of Corporate Parenting Video (story board has been developed and filming to commence)
- Working with Bfriends on their Business Plan to gain additional support and funding to support our children and young people
- Roll on of Rights, Participation and Corporate Parenting Training to ASYE students
- 'Future You' Training for trust staff and partners -plans also for second film
- Increasing externally funded apprenticeships outside of the Trust through work with the council and our partners – this is being supported by new material and an apprenticeship video
- Development of Life Skills offer for our children in care and care leavers including:
 - Employability sessions run by Barclays
 - Financial Literacy sessions delivered by PWC
- Development of Mentoring Offer – new branding, programme of support and recruitment (1st October 2022- Launch)
- Reverse Mentoring offer to follow launch of wider mentoring offer
- Work planned with Care Leaver Covenant on relaunch of Care Leaver App (all our offers-support and jobs can go live on this app for Birmingham Care Leavers) working with Covenant to get sponsor for launch event
- Working with companies on their offer for ring fencing of opportunities including jobs, work experience, training, and apprenticeships