

Corporate Parenting Strategy

2026 to 2028

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM)



**achieving
for children**

Our vision

'We will act with the compassion, kindness and love needed to ensure you feel safe, respected, and supported so you can lead a happy, normal life and reach your full potential.'

A word from our leaders

I am committed and passionate about you getting the very best start and living the best life you can live. It is therefore a privilege to be your corporate parent and to share this role with elected members and staff from across the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead council, alongside partners, parents, carers and guardians, to provide the best care and support that we can for you while you are in our care. In the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, we want to create an environment where you are respected, feel listened to, are valued, and feel a deep sense of trust, love and belonging. We have a shared commitment to think about your long term future.

We want to be able to provide the very best care and opportunities to the children and young people who have been disadvantaged or experienced trauma early in their lives. We strive to ensure that outcomes for you, whether that is in education, in health, in work or in your wellbeing. Working to reduce these inequalities is a priority, and providing good quality care that is designed to meet your individual needs will provide you with a solid platform to learn, grow and be independent.

Our corporate parenting strategy builds on the things that matter to young people and provides a framework to hold our system to account in delivering ambitious, hopeful, and meaningful outcomes for you.

It is my commitment that we will always seek to ask, 'Is it good enough for my child?'



A white cursive signature of Sarah Moran on a purple background.

Sarah Moran

Deputy Director Children's
Social Care & Early Help





Hello, I'm really pleased to be writing directly to you, because this strategy has been created with you, not just for you. From the very beginning, your ideas and experiences have shaped this plan. Your voices sit at the heart of it. As chair of the Corporate Parenting Forum, I have the privilege of meeting many of you. Those conversations are often energising, sometimes challenging in exactly the right ways, and frequently hilarious. They remind us why this work matters and why we need to keep getting it right. This strategy will guide how we will do our best for you and respond to what you've told us.

Cllr Amy Tisi
Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Windsor

This strategy is our commitment to building on what already works and to working alongside you to make changes you can actually see and feel. Thank you to Kickback and to every young person who took part. Your honesty has made this strategy more practical and more ambitious. You've been clear about what helps you feel safe and supported, and you've also been clear about where things could be better. What matters now is turning these words into action – and we'll do that together.



Lin Ferguson, Executive Director Children's Services and Education



I remember being interviewed by Kickback as part of the process for getting this job – it was the most interesting and engaging interview I've ever had. Achieving for Children provides services and support to children and young people on behalf of RBWM but, ultimately, it is the council who is responsible for your safety and wellbeing. We believe that being a 'corporate parent' means showing the same care and commitment any parent would want for their own child. As a parent myself, this is so important. This isn't something one person or one team can do alone – it's a shared responsibility across the council and our partners to make sure your experiences genuinely shape the actions we take.

Stephen Evans, Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

What does being a corporate parent mean?

When you come into care, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead becomes what is called your 'corporate parent'.

This might sound weird at first, but it just means it is our job to make sure you are safe, happy, and have everything you need as you grow up. To do this, corporate parents should always ask themselves a simple question: what can I do to improve the life of every child in our care?

What is this document about?

The RBWM corporate parenting strategy sets out our intentions and guidelines for how we are going to be the best corporate parents we can be for you.

We do this by identifying areas that can be better and telling you what we are going to do about them. This will be our plan for the next three years, and it will guide and help us in our ambition to be better corporate parents to you.

The rules we have to follow

This whole idea of everyone working in your best interest started with a law called the Children Act back in 1989, way before you were born!

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 then laid out our seven main promises (or 'principles'), the things we always have to think about when we support you:

- to act in your best interests and promote your physical and mental health and wellbeing
- to encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account your views, wishes and feelings
- to help you gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the council and its partners
- to promote high aspirations for you and seek to secure the best outcomes for you
- for you to be safe and to have stability in your home life, your relationships and your education
- to prepare you for adulthood and independent living

This year, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was changed to say that corporate parenting cannot stop with the local authority.

This means that places such as schools, NHS trusts, Justice Boards, the Care Quality Commission and all other governmental departments must all follow these seven corporate parenting principles.

It is our job to work with all those places to make sure they know what being a good 'corporate parent' means and that they actually follow the promises.

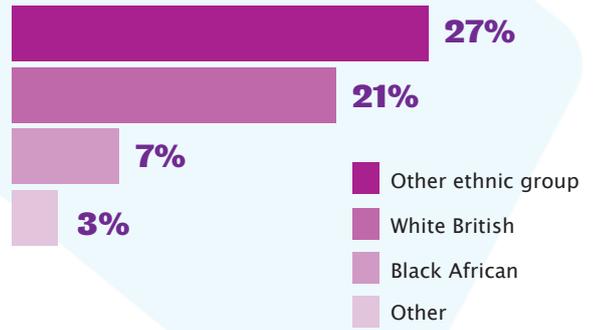
Information about the care experienced children and young people in RBWM?

153 children in care in RBWM

Local versus national average
(per 10,000 children)



Children in care ethnicity



106 care leavers in RBWM

Care visit timelines - combined visits



Children in care ages

65% over the age of 10 years

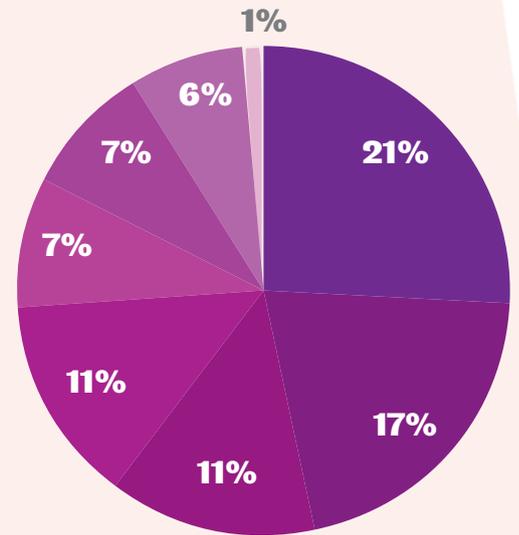
31% over 16 years (largest group)



Source: all data is from internal datasets accurate as at the end of December 2025 unless otherwise stated

Where our children live

- **21%** in short-term fostering with a foster carer
- **17%** in a children's home
- **11%** in long-term fostering with a relative or friend
- **11%** in short-term fostering with relative or friend
- **7%** in long-term fostering with a foster carer
- **7%** with their own parents or connected people with parental responsibility
- **6%** in semi-independent accommodation
- **1%** in other, includes remanded into custody, bespoke care packages or hospitality settings



These figures are very similar to those of previous years

2 children have been placed for adoption in the last **12** months.

43 **110**

There are **43** children in care in the borough, and **110** outside of the borough

57 young people live within 20 miles of the borough

84 children in foster homes

38

With RBWM foster carers

46

With independent fostering agencies

Young person's comment

don't always assume what's best for me 🙄👍

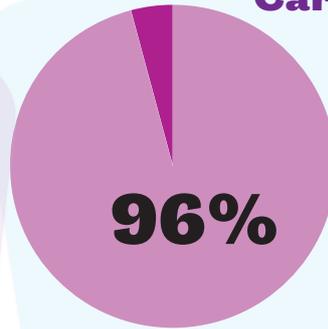
Children currently placed more than 20 miles from their home

2025/26	35%
2024/25	32%
2023/24	32%

Children in care who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children



Care leavers who are living in suitable accommodation

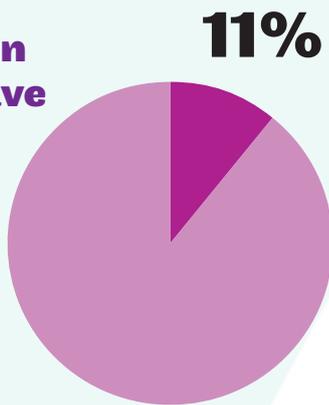


A slight increase on previous years:
91% last year
90% on 2023/24

Three of our care leavers are judged not to be in suitable accommodation: one in custody, one refusing to share info and one missing at the point of capturing the data

15 children in care who have disabilities

(in line with the national average)



64% of children have long-term stability at home

9% increase on the last year

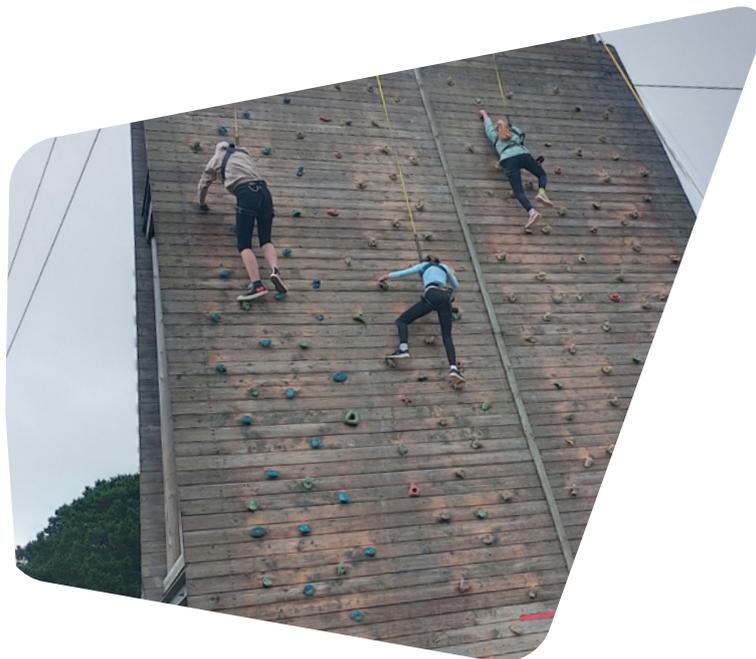
3% increase on the previous year

From September to December 2025

19 children came into care



9 children stopped being a child in care



'Call us in, not call us out'

A letter from Kickback



Dear corporate parents,

We are writing to you as Kickback, the RBWM Children in Care Council, but also simply as young people who want to be listened to and understood. Inspired by the words of human rights activist Loretta Ross, our hope for the next corporate parenting strategy is that you will 'call us in, not call us out'.

We would really value open and honest conversations with you, as professionals and as our corporate parents, so we can work together to find the best ways to support us to live happy and fulfilling lives. We want improvements not only for ourselves, but for every young person who will ever enter care. We hope you can listen with both your hearts and your professional perspectives.

We want to congratulate you on the recent Ofsted ranking, and we genuinely appreciate all the work that is being done for us. We also want to recognise that since we wrote to you for the last corporate parent strategy in 2022, there have been many positive changes. We know you are working hard on building a more stable, permanent workforce and we can feel the positive impact of that when our social workers do not change as frequently.

We are happy that there is now a home in RBWM that is just for us. This is a massive undertaking and we were so happy to be part of the process.

Having access to free prescriptions is great for us and we really enjoyed working with you on the 'RBWM Promise to care experienced young people'.

The reality is that being in care can sometimes be frustrating. We understand that there is national policy and guidance and that the reality is that being in care will mean some different rules for us, but it can still feel overwhelming at times. The amount of rules and restrictions can make it feel as though we're living according to someone else's plan, not our own.

In many ways, we just want a childhood that feels as normal as possible. We want to work with you to help get it right for us. Some rules feel unnecessary or make us feel like we are not fully trusted and can make us feel more like visitors than part of a family.

We sometimes question why we need safety plans when we are already in 'safe placements'. We would love to have peer mentors — people with care experience who truly understand what we're going through and who can guide us.

We want to be taught clearly what the journey through care looks like, and to have things repeated when we need reassurance. Not knowing what comes next can be frightening, and we need clarity, honesty, and preparation. We also need support in understanding and working through our trauma.

Please remember that we are not objects or cases. We are young people trying to navigate something that is already challenging.

When we receive birthday or Christmas cards from people we hardly know, it can make us feel as though decisions are being made about what we need without actually asking us. It might feel more meaningful if these came from the people we know best, like our social workers, personal advisers (PAs) or independent reviewing officers (IROs).

As corporate parents, we hope you can continue focusing on improving the parts of the system that aren't working so well. There are parts of the system that feel outdated or in need of refreshing. For example, do we always need to attend personal education plan (PEP) meetings when everything is going well?

Sometimes we hear the same messages again and again, even when we are trying to move forward or talk about what's happening in our lives now. It can feel as though some meetings happen out of routine rather than because they genuinely help us.

Moving placements can be incredibly difficult. Packing our belongings into bags or suitcases can make it feel like we're going on a holiday, when really we are moving homes, often more than once. We would really like to see more stability for children in care, and we would love to update the 'salvage your suitcase' scheme so that boxes or more respectful options are used instead. This is our life, not a quick trip.

Respite is important for everyone, carers and us young people, so we can all get a break. We want to talk about how we can make sure the chats about respite are always positive and supportive, so it feels like a helpful break instead of something we're worried about.

We hope you can understand one of the deepest feelings many care-experienced young people carry: that being in care can sometimes feel lonely. This can come from being away from family, becoming independent before we are ready, experiencing frequent moves, and losing relationships we thought would last. We do not want this for ourselves or for other young people who may come into care.

We want support to become resilient, confident, independent and kind adults. We need you to keep supporting Kickback, help get more care experienced young people to attend and ensure it remains a safe place for us to share our thoughts and feelings. It's a space where we can be open and, honest and most of all, not judged.

We're all about talking openly and honestly, even when it's tough. We really want to be involved in the decisions that affect our lives because our voices matter a lot. When you fully include us, we feel respected, valued, and it helps things to feel less scary and upsetting.

We believe that honest, open and sometimes uncomfortable conversations can become opportunities for learning and growth, for us and for you.

We want to live lives that reflect who we really are, not the roles society expects us to play.

So our invitation to you is this... 'Call us in, not call us out'.

Everyone in Kickback



What has actually changed since our 2022-2025 corporate parenting strategy?

Our last plan was from 2022 to 2025. Since then, we've worked with you to make some big, positive improvements to what it's like being care experienced in RBWM. Here is what we accomplished on our biggest priorities over the last three years.

Priority one:

'Your emotional and wellbeing and physical health'

We extended our in-house therapy service (for emotional and mental health support) to all care leavers up to age 25, and developed an in-house CAMHS support for our children in care.

Offering free eye and teeth check-ups for care leavers who did not get them already.

Care leavers (18 to 25 years) now get pre-paid prescription cards. This means you do not have to pay for your medication when you go to the GP.

Priority two:

'Your education, training and employment'

We ran a welcome programme for young people who have just come to this country, giving them two hours of English classes a week and three trips to help them get settled in the community.

There have been 'Better Future Events' with partners like John Lewis, Windsor Castle and Ascot Racecourse to help career development.

Priority three:

'Your safety, security and permanency'

We focused on reuniting families. Our strengthened approach helped five children go back to live with their birth families in the last year.

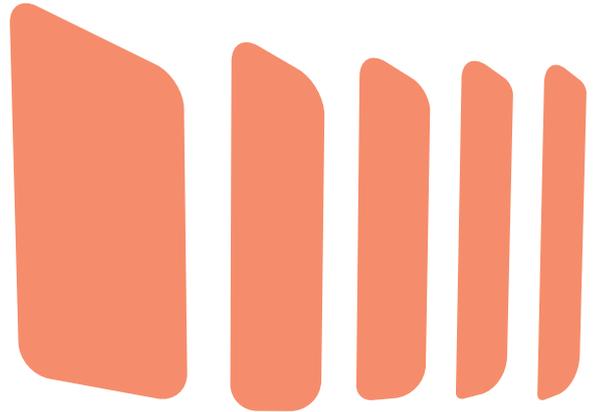
We built a new children's home to make sure young people have more places to live available. The home opened in November 2025.



Priority four: 'Your journey to independence'

During this period, it became clear this priority is relevant to all areas of corporate parenting, and so is no longer its own priority.

However, an example of progress is that the Local Offer is regularly updated and shows practical support for those nearing adulthood, such as free driving lessons and gym membership.



Priority five: 'Your voice and our communication with you'

Your feedback meant that the forms you use (like your 'children in care plans') had a total redesign. For example, you got to choose some of the language used and the colour of the form.

You met with specialist nurses about health visits and made a 'top ten tips' list for them. Because you spoke up, the health visit form was improved, and nurses now understand your needs and preferences better.

You told us to set up an Instagram account so that you get all the regular updates to keep you more informed. You can follow us on @RBWM_Care

We now have a care leaver champion. Someone with lived experience to help us understand you better and keep us on our toes about the language we use when we communicate with you.



Looking to the future: our promise to you

We wrote these promises with your help, working directly with Kickback, our Children in Care Council.

These promises are commitments to you, agreed by everyone who works across RBWM council and its partners. We will make sure that everyone who works in RBWM knows about this and keeps it at the centre of everything they do.



OUR PROMISE TO OUR CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

We will always be **C**ommitted to your care

We will be **A**mbitious for you

And be **R**ealistic with you AND

We will always **E**ncourage you

We will aim to **E**mpower you in all that you want to do

We will be **E**xciting and innovative for you

We will be **P**owerful advocates for you

And we will ensure **E**veryone in RBWM and all of our partners are on board in our pledge to you

Respecting you is one of our top priorities

We will be **I**nclusive and ask is this good enough for you?

We will be **E**nthusiastic when we meet you

We will **N**urture you and your aspirations

We will always be **C**ompassionate and champion the 'unique you'

We will strive for **E**xcellence as your Corporate Parents

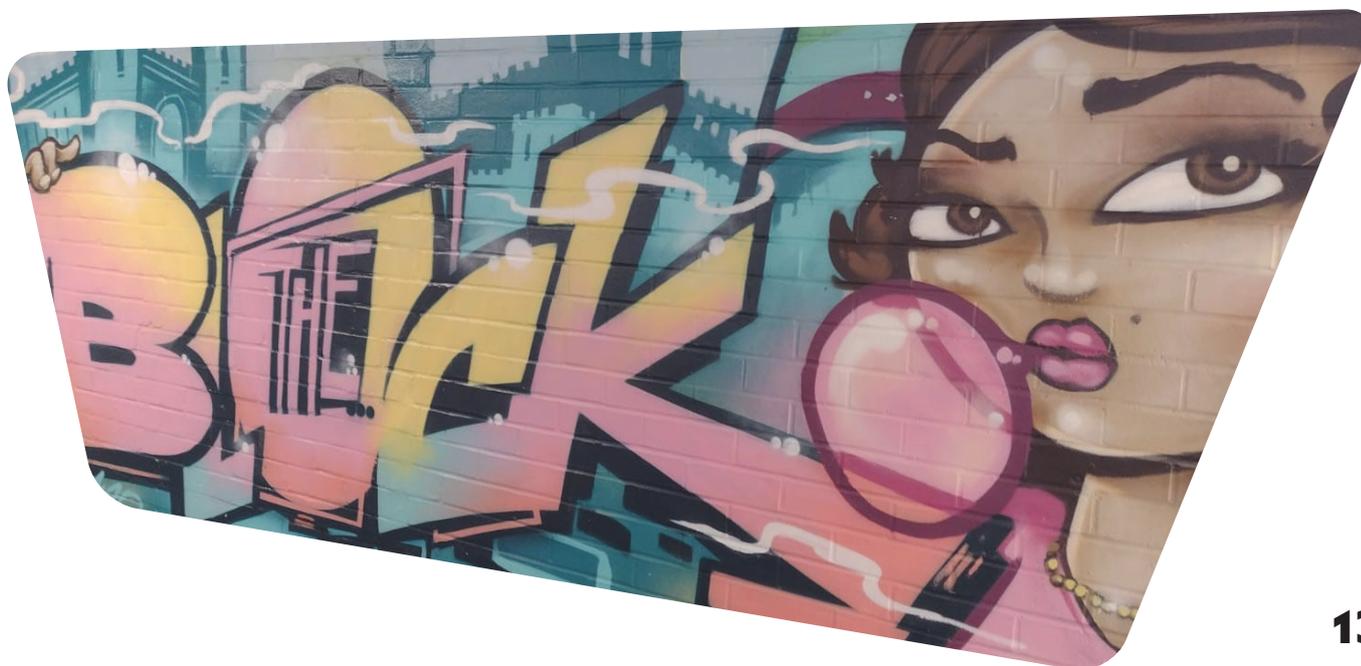
We want you to **D**ream big for you and support you all the way



Our new priorities



Using the feedback on the previous strategy and the views of people who attend Kickback, members of the Corporate Parenting Forum, councillors and officers of RBWM, we have agreed on the following priorities for the next three years.



Priority one

You feel healthy mentally and physically

What will this look like?

You will have more chances to spend time with people who have a similar experience to yours.

It will be easier for you to get support when you are struggling with your mental health.

All carers will understand your experience and how this might affect you.

There will be more opportunities for you to access fun activities in your community.

This is not all we will do, but to help us get there we will:

- run a peer mentoring programme
- expand specialist therapeutic life story work to more care experienced children, not just current children in care
- make sure all our carers are 'trauma informed'

Priority two

You feel safe and have more stability

What will this look like?

We will spend time to really understand what you actually want in life.

It will be easier for you to access opportunities near to you.

Our partner organisations will understand your experience and treat you with kindness and respect.

This is not all we will do, but to help us get there we will:

- complete a 'needs analysis' based on all your feedback
- research and tell you what opportunities are available in a really clear way
- make minimum requirements of what organisations need so they can work with us
- we will work with our partner organisations to ensure they understand your lived experience and treat you with kindness and respect

'Being in care shouldn't define me in all areas of life'

'We need more support to access opportunities in the borough'

Priority three

You feel respected by everyone and that your voice matters

'I need more reliability'
'I just want to live a normal life'



What will this look like?

Carers will love you unconditionally and make you feel at home.

You can count on getting emotional support from us, and we will not let you down.

Our emotional support will be available to more of you.

This is not all we will do, but to help us get there we will:

- allow emotional support even if you don't live in the borough
- provide all emotional support ourselves instead of using other organisations
- create a place for carers to come together and share experiences, there will also be a carer on the Corporate Parenting Forum.
- train carers on how they should speak to you



Priority four

You feel you have the education, training or employment to get what you want in life

'People need to listen more'
'Everyone should know what it means to be a corporate parent'

What will this look like?

There will be more people joining Kickback, and Kickback will have more power.

Staff will listen to your voice first before anyone else's.

Our partners will be better corporate parents. They will treat you with respect and will not make you feel shame or blame.

Your strengths will be recognised and your successes celebrated.

This is not all we will do, but to help us get there we will:

- increase advertising for recruitment to Kickback, particularly for those who don't attend as much, such as those living out of the borough, or with a disability.
- Kickback will be able to join more meetings and set the agendas so we speak about what is important to you.
- raise awareness and train our partners on what makes a good corporate parent.
- social workers will have to read your notes first

How will we achieve this together?

This strategy will be overseen by the Corporate Parenting Forum.

This group is here to:

- provide leadership across the council and its partners to help promote your safety and your health and wellbeing
- be responsible for making sure the services you get from us are good quality, as we strive for excellence
- share knowledge and ideas to help find solutions to complex issues
- decide what support and services matter most and should be the top priority for you
- listen to you and involve you in discussions and decision-making

Each priority will have a single leader in the Corporate Parenting Forum, who will be responsible for that area.



The RBWM Corporate Parenting Forum

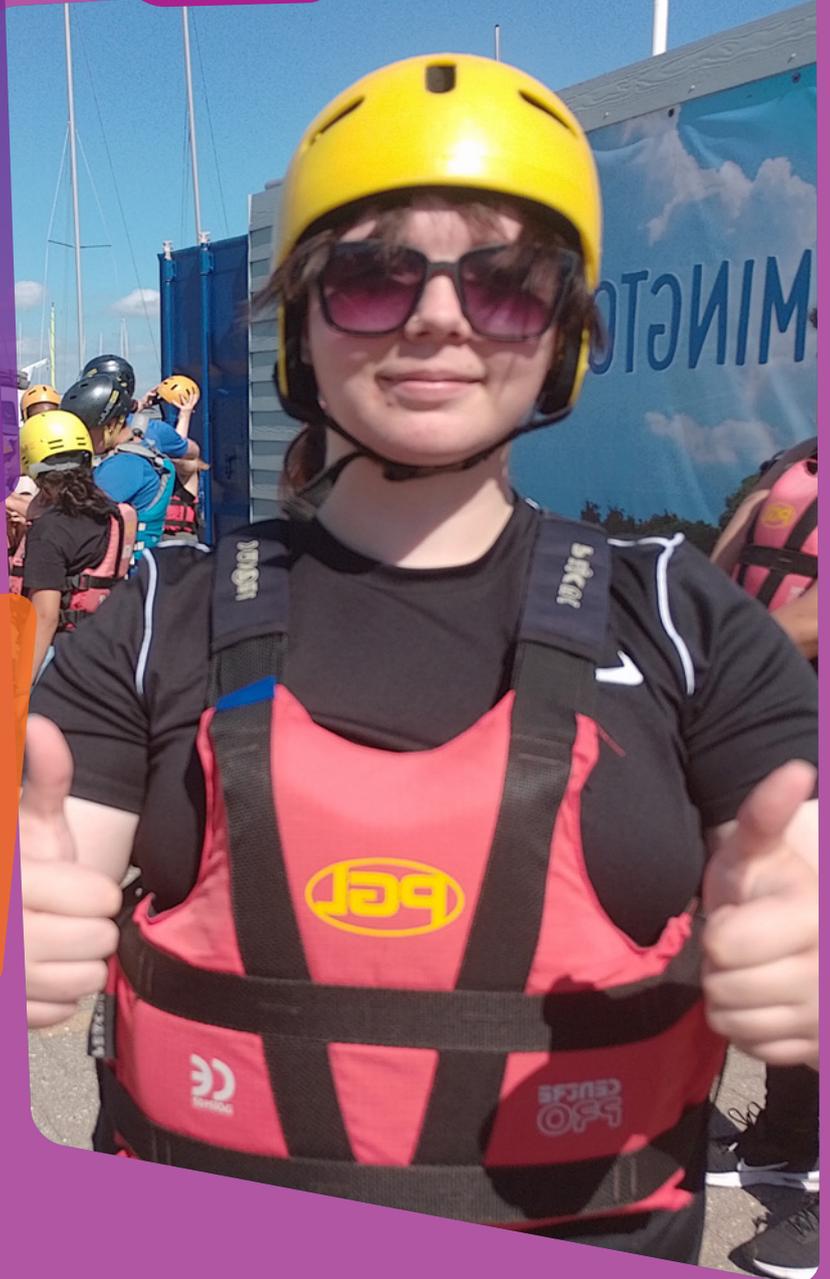
Who's in the Corporate Parenting Forum?

- A representative from Kickback
- Leaders from across Achieving for Children
- Leaders from across health services
- At least five elected members (local people who were voted into their position)

Who else is involved?

- In the coming years, the members of the Corporate Parenting Forum will work even more closely with our partners like schools, police, and hospitals.

Central to the Corporate Parenting Forum is you and your voice.



How is the Corporate Parenting Forum going to make sure this strategy is successful?

Over the next three years, we will embed participation and co-production with our care experienced young people as a standard practice across children's services, ensuring your lived experience directly informs and shapes strategies, services and decisions at every level. Your voice will drive meaningful change

We will remember when making decisions that children and young people's strengths and challenges are individual and unique

We remain committed to ensuring all children and young people have timely health and wellbeing support, that they are actively involved in planning, and that their voices are heard and acted upon

I am going to take the time to know something important about each child or young person

We are going to make sure our children and young people have the right place and way for them to voice what they want us to hear

We will celebrate your successes, big or small

If you have any feedback or want to know more about the strategy, email: cicteam@achievingforchildren.org.uk