

# Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 - 2027

## Our vision

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The Barnet Children's and Young People's Plan 2023- 2027 [*Link to be added*] has the visions of Barnet being the best place in London to raise a child and for all children to thrive, be healthy and achieve their potential – socially, emotionally, and academically. Through our plan we aim is to make Barnet the most family friendly borough, where children, young people and their families are safe, healthy, resilient, knowledgeable, responsible, informed and listened to.

As Corporate Parents we embrace this vision and want the same things for the children and young people in our care as any good parent would want for their child. We want our children to be resilient; by that we mean for you to have a healthy and happy childhood, to feel valued and loved, and to have the chance to grow, develop and learn so that you can find your own way in the world as an adult.

*A care experienced young person said, 'My worker's really been there for me and changed my life'*

*My worker may not know all the answers or have the solutions to my life problems but is always looking out for me'.*

## Our pledge

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### **We, your Corporate Parents, will:**

- Support you to fulfil your dreams
- Be there for you, when you need us
- Support your mental and physical health
- Listen, communicate and make decisions together with you
- Support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood
- Celebrate you, your achievements, identity and culture

The responsibility for corporate parenting sits with the whole council, Councillors, community services, education support, schools and health services; we all have a vital role to play in supporting you to do well. As with all parents we know we will not always get things right, but we pledge to do our best. Our Corporate Parenting Officers Group (CPOG) will continue to take lead responsibility for the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. CPOG will report into the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel and the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress against each pledge. On an annual basis, the progress against each pledge will also be held to account by you, our children and young people, at different forums. Each area has measures of success against it, to help you hold us to account.

The Council accepts that care experience is a protected characteristic and resolves to lobby government for a change in the law to allow Care Experience to become a protected characteristic under the Equality Act and other legislation so that it will enable this to be a

requirement for both the private and public sectors.

Barnet recognises that care experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination and recognises its duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision making through co-production and collaboration. We will ensure that future relevant decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be reviewed through assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience.

Barnet has become a signatory to the Care Leavers Covenant and will continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.

Do you want to get involved? Please contact (to be confirmed for final). For more information about different opportunities for you to have a say on issues that are important to you, please see <https://www.itsaboutme.org.uk/>.

## Your voice

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At the end of 2023, we commissioned Coram Voice in partnership with the Rees Foundation to undertake the second Bright Spots survey with our children in care and care experienced young adults. 147 children (49%) and 159 (50%) care experienced adults completed the survey, sharing views about how you felt about your lives and wellbeing. This is a follow-up to the initial survey completed in May – June 2021, and evidenced a much stronger response from our children in care and care experienced young people.

This strategy will aim to deliver on the things you have told us need to be better, will further strengthen the things you told us were still working well and will set out to ensure that we remember to celebrate your achievements, emotional wellbeing and your happiness.

## The Strategy

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### Support you to fulfil your dreams

*'I feel good talking to my social worker because they say nice things about me', aged 4-7 years*

*'I like talking about my life in foster care. It feels good', expressed a child aged 8-11 years.*

According to the Bright Spots survey, majority of the children liked school, with 85% of children aged 4-7 and 84% of children aged 11-17 liking school 'a lot' or 'a bit', a significantly larger proportion compared to other looked after children (74%).

**Children and young people liking school is a Bright Spot of practice in Barnet.**

**We will continue to deliver**

**We will focus on**

**Measures of success**

<p>Supporting your educational and career dreams through providing the best possible quality of education and exploring options for additional educational support through the virtual school and other opportunities in the community.</p> <p>A Virtual school that is dedicated to helping you get the best you can from your educational experience in order for you to have exciting choices later in life.</p> <p>Barnet Education, Employment and Training Support (BEETS) providing careers guidance, information and advice for young people in Barnet after leaving Year 11 until the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with statements/EHCP).</p> <p>The BELS 16+ Care Leavers Project, with multiple projects focusing on supporting you to move into further education, employment and training opportunities (EET).</p>	<p>Working across the council and with our partners to increase the number of work placements and apprenticeships available to you.</p> <p>Developing further our mentoring support, to ensure that it meets your needs.</p> <p>Progressing our 18-25 NEET to EET panel as part of the Care Experienced EET project and enhanced our offer of dedicated EET support to 16 and 17 year olds.</p> <p>We will launch a 16-17 year old NEET to EET panel with support from the Virtual School, supporting young people's progression into Education, Employment and Training.</p>	<p>Key indicators across projects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % in Education, Employment or Training (EET)</li> <li>• % of children in care and care leavers attending schools rated "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted</li> <li>• % of children in care who achieve 4 plus in English &amp; Maths</li> <li>• % of children in care Year 11 completing qualifications</li> <li>• % of care leavers completing qualifications, including apprenticeships</li> </ul> <p>Bright spots survey, measuring subjective well-being</p>
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## We will be there for you when you need us

*'I appreciate  
by my foster*

*I love being with my foster family. It  
feels like home.'*

*"unless u have a placement u can truly feel  
happy in then its the worst thing in the world, out  
all 11 of my homes I only felt truly happy in 3'.*

The Bright Spots survey shows that for children in care, the level of trust in their social worker was considered high, with 92% of children aged 4-7, 88% of children aged 8-11 and 94% of children aged 11-17 trusting their social worker.

Most young people (87%) continued to have someone who listened to them. 90% of children responding had someone who told them when they'd done well, up from 88% in 2021. Nine in ten

(92%) young women had someone who believed that they would be a success and 87% of male respondents, similar figures to the 2021 survey results (90%), identified that they had someone who believed in them.

<b>We will continue to deliver</b>	<b>We will focus on</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>
<p>Collaborative working that focuses on our relationships with each other as professionals, across different parts of the council and with partners, working together with your best interest in mind.</p> <p>A safe and secure home environment: We plan for your alternative home (we call it placements) in a way that is centred on you and takes your views into account. We think about how suitable the home is and consider your needs and our safeguarding concerns. This also includes your cultural background, and your relationships and connections in your local area. When we plan for your new home, a family like environment in foster care is our main option. Where this is your long-term home, we focus on supporting you to stay there through any “rocky” periods.</p> <p>We will focus on having the right information from the start of your care journey, so that you are, as far as possible, placed in the right home, the first time.</p> <p>Recruiting more Barnet based foster carers, so that you can stay close to your school and other relationships, were that is in your best interest</p> <p>Deliver on our inhouse option within our children’s homes, New Park House and Greenbank House reducing the number of children having</p>	<p>We want you to be able to tell us something once, and to not need to repeat it to multiple people. We will strengthen this through developing a “Tell it once” strategy. We will ask all social workers and partner agencies to sign up and commit to supporting young people to not have to retell their care story.</p> <p>The further development of our in-house alternative home arrangements with the creation of 2 small children’s homes for children requiring a ‘circuit breaker’ home to provide them with stability and containment.</p> <p>Working with local providers of residential provisions and continue to develop our own semi-independent provisions so that you have the right placement option at the right time to ensure you are safe and secure.</p> <p>The recommissioning of strong advocacy options with you, to ensure you always have the opportunity to have your say and that it effectively informs decisions for you.</p> <p>We will ensure we meet all our advocacy duties to children in care and care experienced young people and ensure consistency of approach and accessibility. <a href="#">DCS Guide A4 (for publication 17 May 2024)</a> <a href="http://article39.org.uk">article39.org.uk</a></p> <p>Developing a Kinship care policy promoting and</p>	<p>Key indicators: % of children that have stable placements (e.g. where you haven’t had to move frequently) % children in care that are living with Barnet foster carers % of foster carers that are satisfied with the support they receive</p> <p>Evaluation of the effectiveness of the multi-agency panels that have been implemented over the past three years including: Mental Health transitions panel Care Leaver Housing Panel Adults at Risk Panel Children’s Resource Panel Multi-Agency Thinking Space Creative Solutions Forum</p> <p>Continue to have low numbers of children in our care and care leavers that: Experience exploitation Offend for the first time (first time entrants to Youth Justice System) Reoffend</p>

<p>to live at a distance from Barnet.</p> <p>Ensure that all of our foster carers feel supported so that they are able to fully support you.</p> <p>We are piloting a pan-London alternative to custody scheme in Barnet, where young people live together in shared house together with staff that support you to make changes to your life.</p> <p>Work together with the Youth Justice Board to make plans to address disproportionality of different groups of young people in the justice system.</p> <p>The Care Leaver Housing Panel with Barnet Homes and confirm our commitment to supporting care leaver parents with an entitlement to a 2-bedroom property.</p>	<p>supporting family arrangements.</p>	
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## We will support your mental and physical health

'Care can be a handful if you've had terrible experiences. It would have been good to have a little more trust and freedom.'

'I am thankful because I know why I am in care and I am grateful that I have carers to look after me.'

'it has been a really long process, but it has been worth it. I feel like I am doing well where I am now.'

'I am grateful for the chance of being in care as it gives me hope'.

The majority of children and young people who participated in the Bright Spots Survey (2023) reported being happy the previous day. A significantly larger proportion of young people (91%) in Barnet reported that they were satisfied with their life, compared to young people (84%) looked after in other local authorities. This is considered a Bright Spot of Practice.

Young people aged 11-17 years were asked about how positive they felt about their future, with 71% (81) feeling positive and 20% (21) feeling moderately positive. Only 3% (3) has low scores and did not feel positive about their future, compared to 12% of their peers in the general

population and 12% of young people looked after in the care of other local authorities. This is a Bright Spot of Practice.

<b>We will continue to deliver</b>	<b>We will focus on</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>
<p>Access to different social and physical activities, from gym membership and cooking classes, to volunteering opportunities. Strong mental health support services for you, that can meet your needs. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online support, for everyone up to the age of 25.</li> <li>• In- person and more comprehensive support through Barnet Integrated Clinical Service (BICS) and through our key mental health partners</li> </ul> <p>If you have additional needs we will support you through our Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy. You can find out more about it here: <a href="https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/">https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/</a></p> <p>Raising awareness of opportunities, ensuring that all of you are aware of services and how our mental health services can work the best for you, thinking about any gaps in the support available; the support you receive as a child in care, and what happens when you become older.</p> <p>We will continue to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working together across different parts of the social care, education and health systems as part of your care planning, to ensure that your health needs are given the priority they need.</li> <li>• Supporting you to have a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood whilst ensuring your health and wellbeing are considered in your wishes on how and where you want to live.</li> </ul>	<p>Embedding the multi-agency mental health transitions panel attended by colleagues across adult social care, adult mental health and the NHS, that will include a referral pathway for children aged 17.5 into adult services.</p> <p>Continue to develop the therapeutic support to the children’s homes for our children and young people in care through the Barnet Integrated Clinical Services (BICS).</p> <p>Review the therapeutic support at Onwards and Upwards that provides face to face and virtual therapeutic support for everyone up to the age of 25.</p> <p>Continue with the programme of change within the LAC Health service to ensure that all children and young people have a timely initial and review health assessment and dental checks.</p> <p>Improving the timeliness of Initial Health Assessments for all children entering care.</p>	<p>More children and young people access the positive activities.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of young people accessing mental health services</li> <li>% satisfied with mental health services</li> <li>% reporting improved mental health after accessing support</li> <li>% reporting good well-being as part of Bright Spots survey</li> <li>% of care leavers report having a long term health problem or disability.</li> <li>% of young people who are not in employment, education or training due to an illness or disability.</li> <li>% of children receiving an initial health assessment within 28 days of entering care.</li> </ul>

**We will listen, communicate and to make decisions together with you**



*I want to find my family and hope to see them some day'.*

*'I'm happy but I miss my family'*

*'The Home Manager is going to try and help me find my brother via the Red Cross.'*

*'I feel happy and supported by the adults who are caring for me, I am so happy working with my IRO who has worked with me since I came into care'.*

*'I like living with my siblings'*

*Similarly, another young respondent, stated 'I am happy with the decisions that are made about my care. I see my social worker's regularly and I always attend my CIC review meetings. They listen to me and I am happy for this'*

The majority of looked after children in Barnet feel that have a say in the decisions that social workers make about their lives. The Bright Spots survey indicated that 93% of children aged 8-11 all or most of the time, felt they had a say, and 87% of children aged 11- 17 felt all or most of the time that they had a say.

A larger proportion of children (93%) aged 8-11 reported that they had a say in the decisions made about their life compared to children (85%) looked after in other local authorities.

<b>We will continue to deliver</b>	<b>We will focus on</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>
<p>A service where you are listened to, with your voice at the centre of any plans. This includes a strong focus on All About Me assessment and plan, as well as embedding and capturing the narrative of your life journey through Life Story work.</p> <p>A strong emphasis on the voice of the child, whereby you, our young people, are involved in co-production and consultation activities and other feedback opportunities, such as our annual feedback survey, demonstrating our commitment to providing an excellent service informed by your experiences.</p> <p>Our <a href="#">Local Offer</a> with information for those of you that have left care, and our <a href="https://www.itsaboutme.org.uk/">https://www.itsaboutme.org.uk/</a> website for all of you.</p>	<p>We will continue to support quarterly "Lundy Briefings" with our Corporate Parenting Service to strengthen our feedback loops and ensure the views of children and young people are fed back to the children's workforce, and their engagement is active in supporting our children in our care to attend #BOP.</p> <p>We will continue to champion children in our care via #BOP and aim to encourage as many young people as we can to take part by offering a broader range of activities as chosen by them.</p> <p>We want to further develop the opportunity for children in our care to influence service delivery in partnership with managers and practice leaders.</p> <p>We will work in partnership to ensure the voices of our</p>	<p>Evidence from audits - this is when we look at how we have supported you and think about what worked well and what we could have done differently and what you have said to us in your feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More diverse group of young people are involved in our participation activities.</li> <li>• % of children in care and care leavers filling in the new Bright Spot survey</li> <li>• % of children attending the Children in Care Council and actively having their say</li> <li>• % reporting good well-being as part of Bright Spots survey</li> <li>• Impact of different consultations and activities is seen, including through "you said, we did" activities.</li> <li>• Increased usage of websites.</li> <li>• Your feedback on the reviewed Local Offer and website.</li> </ul>

<p>Embedding Life Story work into practice, including for those among you that have been in our care for a longer time.</p> <p>Having your say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together with you, we will focus on continuing to grow our different forums, such as our Strength and resilience forum (one of our forums for those that have left care) and our Children in Care Council for children in care.</li> <li>• Our annual feedback survey that will help us to better understand what makes life and care good for you and what needs to be improved.</li> <li>• Working with you to review our Local Offer and website, to ensure that it meets your needs and that it is used; and to communicate the information on it through different means.</li> </ul> <p>Raise awareness of what advocacy is and how it can support you in ensuring your voice is heard.</p>	<p>children and young people are acted on in all areas of service development and staff service events. This will include focus on those with protected characteristics e.g. children with a disability, young people in our LGBT+ community and care experienced young adults.</p> <p>Hearing the voices of children specifically on DOLS or secured as a marginalised group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of children in our care and care leavers accessing advocacy services.</li> <li>• Your feedback on the service.</li> </ul>
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## Support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood

*'It's near my university so it's very convenient, it's also nice and safe. I like being in a neighbourhood that fosters a sense of community'*

*'Leaving care is really good for me. I was at first scared cause I didn't want to join but they showered me with so much love'*

*A care experienced young person said, 'I feel comfortable and safe environment for me to stay and quiet enough for my*

*'it's a little bit scary to leave care and start on your own, I do wish there were more talks about the future realistically and not what we want or expect to happen. it would be helpful to know more about what other support is available as well.'*



The Bright Spots survey, Your Life Beyond Care, states that a significantly larger proportion of care leavers (76%) in Barnet reported that where they lived was right for the compared to care leavers (68%) nationally. This is considered a Bright Spot of Practice.

Financial challenges were identified as an area of concern and change for care experienced young people between the Bright Spot Surveys. 59% of care leavers in Barnet reported 'living comfortably' or 'doing alright' in 2023, compared to 62% in 2021. 19% of care leavers in Barnet found it 'quite' or 'very' difficult to get by financially, compared to 9% in the general population, a slight decrease from the 16% who identified this as a significant worry in the 2021 survey.

<b>We will continue to deliver</b>	<b>We will focus on</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>
<p>Independent living skills programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For 15-17-year olds through our stepladder programme, that includes financial management.</li> <li>• And for all of you, supporting you to develop independent living skills as part of the support you receive in your alternative home.</li> <li>• The Asdan Independent living program in partnership with BELS, providing a series of accredited modules to prepare young people to live independently based on the co-designed 'We build the Home' workshops.</li> </ul> <p>the Care Leaver Housing Panel in partnership with colleagues in Barnet Homes to ensure young people are accessing their housing entitlement at the right time for them.</p> <p>A home with support that is based on what you need, not your age, and that prepares you for independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together with you, we plan for where you will live when you get older, preparing for independence (we call it pathways).</li> </ul>	<p>Lobbying Government to agree 'protected characteristics' status for care leavers.</p> <p>Implement our Placement Sufficiency Policy (2023 – 2027) to ensure there are sufficient accommodation options for children and young people.</p> <p>Revised our fostering recruitment strategy, focusing on increasing the offer of supported lodgings.</p> <p>Further developed the UASC specific accommodation with Barnet Homes</p> <p>Celebrating the graduation of young people from the ASDAN and ESOL courses</p> <p>Develop a council wide apprenticeship offer for care experienced young people that effectively support young people to become a successful part of the council with good employment options.</p> <p>Continue to creatively develop training options for migrant young people awaiting their status.</p> <p>Deliver on the Parenting pledge by ensuring every care</p>	<p>Workshop space created. Number of people attending it, and your feedback on it.</p> <p>Key indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of young people living with supported lodgings hosts</li> <li>• No. of young people living in Moving Forward properties</li> <li>• No. of young people living independently</li> <li>• No of young people completing the ASDAN independent living modules</li> <li>• No of young people with their Housing nomination in place by age 17.5 years</li> <li>• % young people with up-to-date Pathway Plan</li> <li>• % of children attending 'Get to know you' events prior to turning 18.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where it is the right choice for you, you can remain with your foster family post 18 as part of a “staying put” arrangements.</li> <li>• Where it is right for you, you live together with other young people in a home, were staff offer you support on developing your independent living skills.</li> </ul> <p>Offering additional support if you are experiencing difficult parts of early adulthood, such as sudden unemployment, or what to do when you have missed bills through the Onwards and Upwards support centre and commissioned services through Centrepoint and Settle.</p>	<p>experienced parents it supported and the necessary advice and interventions are available to ensure effective parenting.</p>	
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## Celebrate them, their achievements, identity and culture

***A Black Boy Fantasia | For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too***

*The young people had a fantastic time and the feedback from them has been incredible. “Amazing”!!! is the word they are all using.*

*The event was a success on so many levels. This was the first experience for some of the young people attending a theatre and they are all super excited about it.*

*Thank you so much for the theatre tickets*

*“It was such a lovely moment for B. It was a super boost for his confidence. It was a brilliant event. All the young people were so*

*“The show was amazing, D really enjoyed it even more so as he is taking GCSE drama and has never been to the theatre. His actual words were “I can see myself on that stage”.  
Barnet Foster Carer*

**Heavy**

The Bright Spots survey, 'Your life Your Care' (December 2023) evidenced that nearly all (96%) of the children and young people (8- 17yrs) reported that the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education. This continues to be a Bright Spot of practice.

<b>We will continue to deliver</b>	<b>We will focus on</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>
<p>Individual care plans that acknowledge your differences and reflect your nationality, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and disabilities and strive to ensure that you are able to remain in contact with your cultural background.</p> <p>Services and activities that support and celebrate you and your identity, including facilitated events such as care leavers week and Black History Month</p> <p>Support to those of you that came to us as unaccompanied asylum- seeking children, including maintaining your cultural links as well as learning about British culture, assisting with your asylum claim, and accessing education and training opportunities. Commissioning a OSIO officer in partnership with the Home Office to support and track the progress of young people's asylum claims.</p> <p>Continue to recruit carers, including supported lodgings hosts, from diverse backgrounds, that can support you in your alternative homes.</p> <p>Ensuring that the right advice is available on all matters to do with immigration and obtaining settled status.</p>	<p>Co-producing with you, activities and celebration events to reflect your diverse identities such as a cultural expo that focuses on food, culture and history from countries across the world.</p> <p>Plan, with you, an annual celebration awards/graduation event for children leaving care and care experienced young adults.</p> <p>Ensuring that the achievements of our young people are shared with all corporate parents and acknowledgements are received by our young people.</p> <p>Promoting our Borough of Sanctuary accreditation for UASC.</p> <p>For children in care who are known to Barnet Family Services and who are EU, EEA or Swiss citizens, social workers will need to ensure that appropriate and timely applications are made to the Home Office under the EU Settlement Scheme</p>	<p>For all children and young people in care, the 'All About Me' assessment and plan continues to be an essential piece of direct work and planning that social workers complete with the child and young person.</p> <p>Your All about me plan reflects that you feel heard, seen and kept in mind by those around you.</p> <p>A calendar of events for young people and their carers that is well attended.</p> <p>Ensuring that all UASC children and young people who have journeyed to the UK feel settled in their new home in Barnet. We will seek feedback from you and evidence this through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance in education</li> <li>2. Community and sports activities</li> <li>3. Immigration advice and processes</li> </ol> <p>Evidence from audits - this is when we look at how we have supported you and think about what worked well and what we could have done differently – there is a section on diversity and identity.</p> <p>Your views and experiences on racism inform Barnet's Anti-Racism strategy.</p>

Working with you to ensure you have the space to share your views on your experiences of racism and inequality.		Activities that promote different cultures and identifies.
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The Corporate Parenting Strategy aligns with priorities set out in other current strategies including;

- Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy
- SEND and Disabilities Strategy
- The Barnet Plan
- Education Strategy
- Barnet Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- My Say Matters: Child Participation and Family Involvement Strategy
- Community Participation Strategy
- Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategy
- Youth Justice Plan
- Child and Family Early Help Strategy
- Children & Young People Mental Health Strategy

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