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# CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Making Kent a county that works for all children



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL  
Corporate Parenting  
Integrated Children's Services

## Foreword

### Ann Allen, MBE Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.



Welcome to our corporate parenting annual report, which details the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and our services to children in care.

The contribution from our children in care council and our apprentices is invaluable and indeed I could not fulfil my role as a corporate parent or the chair of the Panel without their guidance and support.

This year has been especially challenging for obvious reasons, but again our young people have led the way with their inspiring videos and innovative ways of support, which have given us a very useful training resource which is already receiving wide acclaim.

As parents we all want the best for our children. We are proud of their achievements and we will continue to create opportunities to celebrate with them in new and exciting ways.

I am proud of all our young people and their achievements and it is a privilege to work with them. As elected members in our role as a corporate parent we must take every opportunity to champion for them and it is our responsibility and duty as corporate parents to treat our children in care and care leavers as we would our own.

In that work, the Corporate Parenting Panel is vital, bringing together a wide range of partners but above all giving voice to the children and young people who this is all about. My personal thanks to everyone who have been outstanding in these challenging times.

### Caroline Smith, Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting



I am proud to be a corporate parent to over 1,800 children in care and over 1,900 young people who are care experienced and be able to share with you the work of my services to support them all.

Our annual report outlines our key services that support our children in care and young people who are care leavers, with a summary of the work presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel between September 2019 - September 2020.

I must acknowledge, that during this period of work all our lives were dramatically changed in ways we could never have envisaged, following the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly, this has impacted on many of our usual annual events including the Foster Carer Awards, Virtual School Kent children and young people's activity days, Award Ceremonies and the Corporate Parenting Panel Takeover Day.

Never have I known a time where our children and young people have needed us more, to be there for them, to provide the best possible support we can, as their corporate parents. As part of this, the support and encouragement from the members of the Corporate Parenting Panel is invaluable.

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## An introduction to Corporate Parenting

The government introduced clear corporate parenting principles that require all departments within a local authority, including staff, elected members and partner agencies, to recognise their role as a corporate parent and encourage them to look at the support and services they provide.

Kent County Council works to be the best corporate parent to our children and young people by following these key principles:

- To act in the best interest and promote the physical, mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people.
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- To help those children and young people to gain access to, and make the best use of, the services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.
- To ensure those children and young people are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education and workplace.
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## Corporate Parenting Panel and services

Our Corporate Parenting services are overseen by the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and comprise four key services: Kent Fostering, Kent Adoption, the Total Placement Service and the Care Leavers 18+ Service. In April 2019, Integrated Children's Services were restructured as part of the Change for Kent Children programme. The Virtual School Kent now sits under Sarah Hammond, Director of Integrated Children's Services (East), whilst continuing to maintain close working relationships with the Corporate Parenting services.





Corporate Parenting services work closely with our children's early help and social work teams, health, education, youth offending and our key partners including the Young Lives Foundation (YLF) and Kent Foster Carers Association (KFCA).

The services report into the Corporate Parenting Panel who meet 6 times per year and, alongside elected members, the panel has a wide range of independent members including foster carers, the designated nurse for children in care, YLF, KFCA and our participation apprentices. Following a previous challenge that children and young people wanted to attend the panel without having to miss out on their education, for the last year half of our panel dates were planned around school holidays to facilitate children's attendance. Sadly, our recent

panels have had to be held as a virtual briefing, as we have adapted to the Covid-19 and Public Health England working guidelines.

Each Corporate Parenting Panel includes a Cabinet Member update and performance scorecard that enables the Panel to monitor our key targets and statutory requirements. This year has seen us maintaining our targets across children in care services, achieving a majority of GREEN ratings across our key performance indicators. However, this has been impacted upon with the increased numbers of new arrivals of unaccompanied asylum young people in summer 2020, alongside the pandemic, leading to us being unable to maintain our performance in some of our health targets during the lockdown period. With dental checks being unable to be completed and Initial Health Assessments needing to be completed virtually, there will be a period of recovery in this area of performance.

The voice of our children and young people is represented at all panels by our Virtual School Kent apprentices and Participation Workers. Members of the panel are invited to attend celebration events, although sadly this year we are unable to do our events in the same way.

During the pandemic, our young people have been involved in making a number of videos to support our children in care and young people. These included information on their mental health and wellbeing, alongside the transition back into school. These have been shared widely with other Local Authorities and the quality of this work should be commended.

## Kent Fostering Service



The Kent Fostering Service has undergone a significant improvement plan, following the restructure of the service as part of the Change for Kent Children programme in April 2019.

Several changes were identified, driven by a recognition of the need to improve the support we offer to Kent Foster Carers, promote consistency of practice throughout the county and ultimately address the decline in the number of Kent carers that we had seen over the last three years. We have continued to implement actions around the development of our service delivery including measures to improve consistency of practice given directly to carers whilst strengthening the specialisms within the Service to enhance support.



This has been achieved through updating additional policies that we have been able to finalise and implement during this year. These include the Payment for Skills and Payments Policies, which improve and clarify the opportunities, rewards and payments available for all carers to progress their fostering careers, our Parent and Child policy and our Emergency Bed policy.

These now outline enhanced extra support and payments which acknowledge the additional, skills and abilities this work requires. The opportunities available have enabled us to use and retain more effectively the use of foster carers' skills and experience particularly within these high areas of need in order to provide additional support for carers to manage children with complex needs.

As of 31 August 2020, Kent County Council had 680 approved foster carer households (including connected carers). They were caring for 878 mainstream Kent looked after children and 63 children living with a family relative or friend under an interim or full care order or Section 20 (known as a Connected Person Foster Carer Arrangement).

## Transformation Funding

Kent has recognised the importance of growing our Fostering Service and has been allocated £500k transformation funding for service development.

The service is using this funding to help with the recruitment of more foster carers for older children with complex needs, sibling groups, hub families and parent and child placements. Kent Fostering have updated the branding of our materials and the Kent Fostering website as well as increased our use of social media. This has included Sky television advertising which is able to target specific Kent communities to maximise the highest number of effective enquiries. This investment has gone a long way in enabling us to meet our recruitment targets. A Kent Fostering App is currently in design phase, jointly with The Education People.

The funding is also being targeted at retaining our experienced foster carers through providing them additional support. 30 experienced foster carers are available to provide flexible support to other carers at times of crisis or to provide placement stability for young people.

Although some aspects of this workstream have been delayed due to Covid-19, the service have continued to see an increase in applications and have quickly adapted, to ensure virtual support, training and information events.

## Fostering Support Teams

Kent Fostering Service has five area Fostering Support teams, one in each of the areas within the North, South, West and two in the East district. Each support team has a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of 2 Senior Fostering Social Workers, 5 Fostering Social Workers and 2 Social Worker Assistant's. Whilst it has been difficult to stabilise staffing over recent years we are now in a position where we are fully staffed with permanent social workers, with locums only covering maternity leave. Some carers did experience a number of changes in their Fostering Social Worker during the restructure, however, this has now stabilised.

The support teams hold foster carer support groups across the county every month and include learning opportunities as well as a safe forum to share experiences with other carers. These groups are currently being held virtually via Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions. This has enabled carers, particularly those who have historically found it difficult to find the time to travel significant distances across Kent, to attend support groups and the feedback from foster carers has been positive.

In the last year all the teams held positive, inclusive activity events, taking into account the needs of the children who were attending. These events took place across the county in a number of different locations and venues.

## Placement Stability Team

The Placement Stability Team was established under the new Kent Fostering Service restructure and includes the Sense of Belonging Service which was established in September 2017. This team provides support specifically to Connected Carers across Kent and out of county, alongside focusing on improving stability for children with in house foster carers.

This team supports the Sessional Worker scheme, where experienced foster carers are identified to support other foster carers and their children and young people for short term pieces of work, either in a crisis or to promote stability.

Between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020, the Sense of Belonging service accepted 94 referrals for support. They continue to receive very positive feedback from the service and foster carers who have been involved and it remains a key element to the range of support services we offer to our carers and the children they look after.

Moving forward, we shall be able to take back some of the lessons we have learned from this work to the wider service in order to continue to promote positive outcomes for foster carers and the children they care for.

## Disabled Children Fostering Team

The Disabled Children's Fostering Team is a county wide team made up of experienced fostering staff who support foster carers to provide both full time care and Short Breaks for disabled children. They currently support 58 foster carers of which 17 are short break carers.

This year the team will also be assessing new applicants who wish to be foster carers for disabled children which will utilise their experience and knowledge in this field and allow for the smooth transition into support services as they will be remaining in the same team.

One of the main challenges for disabled children is to ensure that their thoughts and feelings do not go unnoticed or unheard, each social worker is creative in their approach to communicating with children regarding all aspects of their care and they are able to use a variety of tools, including a widget communication tool installed on their computer, in order to do this.

As well as this fostering social workers develop relationships with the children in placement as well as the fosters carers children and through observation and engagement, they gather their views which informs our ongoing services.

## Training and Learning

This last year Kent Fostering has looked at innovative ways in which to equip carers to support our children and young people and we have held conferences that delivered joint training to both foster carers and social work staff.

We introduced the Reflective Fostering Programme in 2018 and the Fostering in Today's World Conference which took place in March 2019, outlined the aims and purpose of



reflective fostering which has provided carers with practical ways to help build and maintain supportive relationships with the children in their care following the 'reflective parenting' model.

In January 2020, Kent Fostering were pleased to welcome Dan Hughes to Kent. He delivered training on 'Building the Bonds of Attachment' which looked at caring for children and teenagers who have experienced developmental trauma to Foster Carers and other professionals.

Kent Fostering also sought feedback from the Foster Carer Advisory group and have commissioned training on allegations made against carers and how to safeguard against these. Courses on Child Trafficking, Exploitation and Modern-Day Slavery, Caring for Children with Sexualised Behaviour and Online Safety have also been added to the training programme for this year.

In collaboration with Looked After Children Nurses, Kent Fostering are delivering training to support carers understanding of mental health and wellbeing. Following a delay to the roll out of this due to Covid 19, all foster carers and fostering staff will undertake Trauma Awareness training within the next year. Additionally, fostering staff and Looked After Children nurses are being trained to facilitate the Solihull approach 12-week programme to our foster carers.



### Foster Carer Recruitment and Marketing

The recruitment of new foster carers remains a challenge in the current competitive market in Kent and we have recognised the need to maintain a high profile and active presence through a variety of media outlets if we are to recruit the number of carers we need for our children.

This is due to the high number of independent fostering providers situated both within and out of the county who are actively placing children within Kent.

We have seen over the past year that the vast majority of enquiries comes from our website which is accessed through mobile phones. The service has therefore continued to increase the use of social media and the use of digital tools to promote Kent Fostering.

The use of MOSAIC and collaborative working with Digital Services and Management Information has enhanced our recruitment methods resulting in an increased interest in our difficult to target areas. We now have a greater presence within the local community via social media platforms.

In the period 1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020 KCC approved 134 new foster carers, 74 of these were Connected Carers.

## Fostering Review Team

Our Fostering Review Team has been in place since September 2016. Senior Practitioners in this team have taken on the chairing of foster carer annual reviews to give independency and consistency to the review process, with clear recommendations.

This continues to provide the level of independence required for the assessment of foster carers, a quality assurance function for the service and opportunities for reflection, learning and development for the whole service. This has been a successful year regarding foster carer annual reviews. Foster carer annual reviews have been key in safeguarding children, promoting good outcomes for children, foster carer retention, learning and improving practice for both foster carers and the wider service.

## Partnership Working

Our carers local Kent Foster Care Association is a small, registered charity which aims to work alongside the Kent Fostering Service to provide support to our foster carers. The charity was set up and is run by our foster carers with a desire to help all carers in this rewarding but sometimes difficult role. They protect and preserve the wellbeing of foster carers, the children in their care and the whole fostering family by providing advice, information, services, events, facilities and equipment.

In the past year they have organised and funded training opportunities, an annual conference and events for the foster carers. The events have been very successful and have included trips to Chessington, a training production of County Lines for foster carers and a county summer event at Buckmore Park in 2019 which despite the poor weather, was a great success where children enjoyed activities such as BMX riding and games. The event was supported by the Kent Police Cadets.

The KFCA Chair and committee are extremely supportive of Kent Fostering and contribute to the recruitment of carers and staff and ensure that the voice of Kent foster carers is heard.

Our inclusive working with foster carers has included Meet and Greet sessions with our Virtual School Kent, Independent Review Officers and child in care Service Managers which has enabled carers to share feedback and develop positive working relationships.

Working collaboratively with Foster Carer Ambassadors and Advisory Groups has ensured information sharing and foster carer participation in the developing of new policies and practice guidance.

New initiatives have included delivering joint training with our young people and Care Leaver Apprentices. A Teenager Conference took place in November 2019 attended by foster carers and a wide range of professionals and they were also part of the annual Panel Training.



Also as an addition to our normal yearly collaborations, as part of our Christmas celebrations the management team from Corporate Parenting joined the VSK Participation team in performing a rendition of Cinderella to children in care, foster carers, members and children's services staff.

### Covid-19

2020 has brought its challenges with the COVID-19 lock down. Since the lockdown was implemented in March 2020 the team have adjusted to working from home and embraced the new technology sharing knowledge and skills with each other. They have continued to provide a high level of support to foster carers via the telephone, WhatsApp and Microsoft Teams.

We have developed processes and procedures in line with the Fostering Regulations to provide an excellent service despite the barriers to having face to face visits. Supervision, unannounced visits, Health and Safety, Annual Review visits and other such statutory obligations have been fulfilled through the use of technology.

The BASW and Social Work England guidelines around digital social work has been utilised and where face to face support has been required, social workers have been able to risk assess with the foster carer and the children within the home to manage the visits with hygiene routines, social distancing and where appropriate the use of PPE.

Whilst we are now able to undertake face to face visits as the easing of restrictions have come into place, we know that should Government guidelines change, our services and our support to carers will be maintained.

Corporate Parenting Panel received reports on:

- The Kent Fostering Annual Report and Business Plan 2019- 2020
- Performance scorecard evidencing achievement across our key targets

## Kent Adoption Service

The work of Kent County Council's Adoption Service is governed by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Adoption Agencies Regulations and Guidance 2013, and the Adoption National Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act 2000).

Kent County Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people can remain in the care of their parents and birth families wherever possible. However, where it is not possible to achieve stability for the child or young person within the birth family, our Adoption Service work to achieve alternative permanent arrangements for the child or young person within a family setting and these include adoption.

### What our children and young people can expect from our Adoption Service



The purpose of our Adoption Service is to provide a comprehensive service to meet the needs of our children and young people who have been or may become adopted, birth families and adoptive parents.

This will include services in relation to those children and young people in our care with an adoption plan, and in relation to the non-agency adoption service. To achieve it aims our Adoption Service will ensure that the needs and wishes, welfare and safety of the child are at the centre of the adoption process.

We will welcome those people, who are interested in becoming adoptive parents without prejudice, respond to them promptly and provide them with clear information about recruitment, assessment and approval.

### Kent Adoption Service achievements 2019-20

Corporate Parenting Panel received reports on:

- The Adoption Annual Report 2020
- Performance scorecard evidencing achievement across our key targets

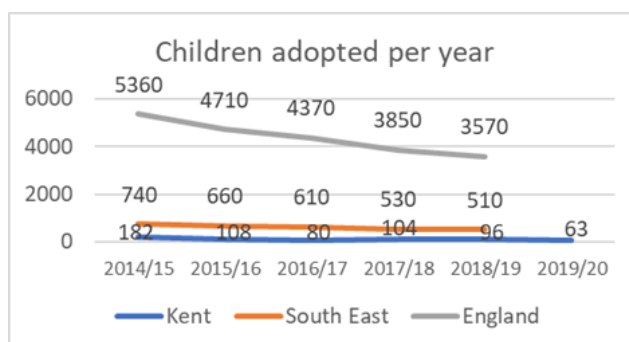
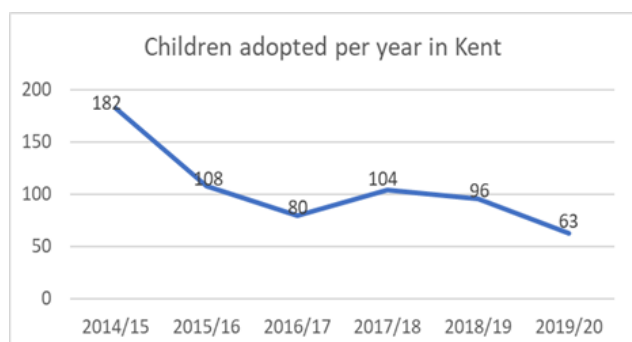
Kent has consistently been amongst the highest local authorities in terms of adoption numbers. In 2018-2019 Kent was the joint 1<sup>st</sup> of all authorities in England, and Kent's 2019-2020 figure would also put Kent 6<sup>th</sup> if comparing to national 2018-2019 data. The average time from the child being placed to adoption order granted in 2019 -2020 was 202 days. This was a 1% reduction compared to 2018-2019 when it was 204 days.

The performance of the Adoption Service in relation to progressing children’s plans of adoption is good and exceeds government targets.

Timescale indicator	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	From target 19/20 (days)
Became in care to initiation of adoption planning, in year	142.1	129.7	152.3	149	146.4	25.4
Initiation of adoption planning to agency decision, in year	37.3	30.2	32.7	30.8	26.9	-29.1
Agency decision to match, in year	153.4	178.6	181	160.9	137.7	-45.3
Placement order to matching decision, children matched in year	91	117.8	122	91.3	74.0	-47
Placement order to matching decision, children adopted in year	218.3	113.5	110.3	120.3	95.6	-25.4
Became in care to place for adoption, children placed in year	358.7	333.1	340.9	350	309.4	-116.6
Became in care to place for adoption, children adopted in year	485.7	351.4	320.7	363.4	336.7	-89.3

***There are various stages involved in the adoption process for a child and these are outlined above (dates are from 2000’s and all data within the report is correct as of 1.04.19–31.03.20)***

### Number of adoption orders granted



## Adopter's Journey Data

The Adoption Service's performance in relation to completing assessments of people wishing to become adoptive parents is outlined below, showing the two stages involved.

- Stage 1 – Which is adopter led.
- Stage 2 – Which includes the actual assessment.

Adopter activity	Number of families in 2017/18	Number of families in 2018/19	Number of families in 2019/20
Enquiries in year	275	281	252
Stage 1 starts in year	82	93	83
Stage 2 starts in year	86	77	77
Stage 2 ends in year	88	81	67
Adoptive families matched in year	77	73	54
Adoptive families with placements in year	77	71	55
Adoptive families with adoption orders in year	70	77	54

## Approval Timescales

- 11 of the 67 adoptive families approved in 2019/20 were fast tracked (foster carers and repeat adopters).
- 57 of the 67 adoptive families that were approved were assessed within the stage two 4-month timescale.
- The target duration for stage 2, assessment, is 4 months, 121 days. Kent's duration decreased by 3% to 94 days in 2019-2020 from 97 days in 2018-2019. This is still well within the target duration for stage 2.

## Adopter Gap

The latest data on the Adopter gap indicates that Kent had more Adopters waiting for a match than children with a placement order waiting to be matched. There were 20 children with a placement order waiting to be matched at the end of March 2020 and 55 adoptive families approved and waiting for a match, adopter gap of -35. The majority of the 20 children waiting had prospective adopter links identified and were awaiting matching panels.

Kent's performance has improved despite a negative trend nationally. Adoption leadership board data indicates that nationally the adopter gap had increased as there were 1,490 approved adoptive families waiting to be matched on 31 March 2019 and 2,800 children waiting to be placed for adoption with a placement order.

### Post Adoption Support Team

The Post Adoption Support Team's (PAST) vision is to ensure families in Kent have access to excellent adoption support and to ensure that the support offered to families at every stage of the family life is informed and tailored to their needs.



Threaded throughout the work is a developing therapeutic network which supports the family to thrive. The team values a service delivery that can provide layers of support to families both pre and post order.

The Kent Post Adoption Support Team is a unique partnership between a statutory and a voluntary agency, led by a social work Team Manager, who is employed by a local authority (KCC) and a Clinical Lead, employed by a voluntary agency (Coram). There are four (full time equivalent) Social Workers and five therapists within the team.

The team accesses government funding via the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) to support the costs of the clinical staff and any therapeutic intervention offered by the Social Workers. This enables creativity and the ability to provide a range of therapeutic provisions, dependent on the support needs identified during assessment and therapy.

Kent was visited by officers in the DfE earlier in the year to share information about its use of ASF and the multi-disciplinary service model of the Post Adoption Support Team. The DfE were able to share Kent's service model and use of the ASF, as learning for other Local Authorities, to promote the ASF scheme more widely.

The multi-disciplinary model allows for swift problem solving on a case work level as well as at aggregate level - which then allows us to think about how to shape the service moving forwards. This includes frequent liaison with commissioning and senior managers in KCC and Coram (and in turn their combined resources).

Data is collected and collated to identify needs and inform service design and delivery. If gaps in the skill set of clinicians and Social Workers are identified, a strategic approach is taken and training is accessed to develop staff and enhance their skill set, or the work force expands to include other disciplines.

The aim is for the team to meet the needs of adopted children and their families internally as much as possible, but if this is not possible, external providers of services will be commissioned.

The team of therapists provide therapeutic parenting, family therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). The social workers and therapist also deliver an extensive learning and development programme throughout the year.

The provision offered includes:

- Therapeutic parenting – individual and group therapy sessions for adoptive parents which are tailored to their specific needs and requirements. The service offers bespoke therapeutic groups on learning how to be the parent your child needs. In this group, one of the team's therapist will help parents build therapeutic parenting tools and strategies tailored to the needs of their child.
- Family therapy – therapeutic sessions for families to identify how specific behaviours affect others, learn new ways of relating to each other, resolve conflict and open lines of communication between family members.
- An extensive Learning & Development program which includes parenting programmes such as Non-Violent Resistance (NVR), Incredible Years and the STOP parenting programme.
- Parent workshops on life story work and other adoption related topics.
- Attaching Through Play which uses a combination of Theraplay and Sensory Integration approaches to support parents and children to bond and attach.
- Variety of support groups - Parents can also have quick access to a variety of different support groups. Some are led by parents while others are led by professionals.
- Some families will receive planned monthly telephone support with an experienced Post Adoption Support Team Social Worker, to assist and hold them through a planned period time.
- Other families will receive a programme of direct social work family support. This support might help with life story work, network connection, and behaviour management.
- Some children and families will receive a package of sensory integration or sensory attachment integration with one of the team's two occupational therapist. In addition to this some families will also receive parental support in regulating with their child. We call this co-regulation therapy.

### Post Adoption Support Data

The Kent and Coram Team:

- During 2019-20 385 requests for assessment for post adoption support were received from families
- Of these, 253 resulted in the provision of support
- 401 interventions were provided during the year
- Of these 334 were funded via the Adoption Support Fund



## 18+ Care Leavers Service



Kent Care Leavers 18+ service is based in West Malling and Dover. We work closely with our young people who are from or in care, aged 18-25 years' old. The service includes Personal Advisers who will support care leavers with their journey to independent living and we have a duty of care to support all children and young people who are care experienced until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday if they require or want this support.

There were 1,772 care leavers being supported by our service as of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020; 946 of these were unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, with 826 citizen young people.

Due to the increase in young people transferring to our service, and those wishing to remain with the service, we have increased our staffing capacity to reflect this increase in demand.

In response to the expansion of the service, the service has recruited a second Head of Service, splitting the county into two areas: South East Kent 18plus Care Leaver Service and North West Kent 18+ Care Leaver Service. Both Heads of service are working collaboratively together to ensure that it is still one integrated service and that a young person can expect exactly the same support wherever they happen to live in the county and also those who live out of county.

## What our young people can expect from our service

Our service can assist Kent County Council's young people through working with their personal advisors who are there to assist them by providing advice, support, encouragement and financial guidance in accessing housing, education, training, work experience and health services; supporting their successful transition to independence and adulthood and helping them to take every opportunity available to them.

## Care Leavers 18+ Service achievements during 2019-20

Corporate Parenting Panel received reports on:

- Kent County Council acting as a rent guarantor for our care leavers.
- Care Leavers Survey 2019.
- Challenge Card – agreement for KCC to pay council tax for young people who are care leavers aged 18-21 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
- Report on the types of accommodation for our children in care and care leavers.
- Performance scorecard evidencing achievement across our key targets.

## Care Leavers 18+ Performance August 2020

Action	Target	Achieving
Personal adviser to have contact with all their allocated young people a minimum of once every 6-weeks	85%	88.8%
Care leavers in suitable accommodation (of those the service are in touch with)	90%	88.3%
Young people in education, training or employment (of those the service is in touch with)	65%	61.2%
Pathway plans to be updated and reviewed every 6-months	95%	93.6%
Those receiving their health history records at aged 18	100%	100%

## Key new developments and initiatives

- External funding to allow for the development of specialist posts within the service (Rough Sleeping Grant has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021).

### Drop-in service

Prior to Covid 19 pandemic we had increased on the number of drop-in sessions across the county to include Education, Training and Employment specific drop ins.

The service's Care Leaver Apprentices also attend the drop ins to offer support. Working in partnership with other organisations we have been able to offer the drop ins in local libraries, youth hubs and KCC Social Care buildings. The main purposes of our drop-in services are:

- To offer networking opportunities for young people.
- To provide access to advice for education and careers for those who are not in education, training, or employment.
- To maintain constructive contact with our isolated and vulnerable care leavers.
- To promote re-engagement with care services.

This has been suspended for the duration of the national lockdown, but we are looking forward to re-launching this as soon as we are able to, so there is an option for our Care Leavers to seek direct support in their local communities across the county.

### Mental Health Social Workers

We have recruited two Approved Mental Health Practitioners (AMHP) to the Service to provide specialist support to our Personal Advisors who work with young people with Mental Health needs.

Secondly the role is to support the young people access appropriate support from Adult Mental Health. The role is also helping to improve on the collaborative working with our colleagues in Adult Mental Health services and safeguarding.



### Young People vulnerable to becoming homeless

Through the Rough Sleeping Grant, we have dedicated staff members who are able to give extra support to our most vulnerable young people who are at risk of homelessness. The project has seen the collaboration with district councils and external agencies linked to the private rented sector to help increase the accommodation options and availability for our young people.

The development of the Personal Housing Plan by the 18plus Housing Support team has been instrumental in achieving successful outcomes that this grant has funded.

This has been extended to 31st March 2021.

### Rent Guarantor scheme

This scheme is now part of our local offer and continues to support our young people to access private rented accommodation, including university accommodation. During the first pilot year we supported 26 young people. In total, to the end of August 2020, we have supported 79 young people, with 7 of those supported twice for their university accommodation.

### Project funded specialist roles

#### Young Inspectors' Scheme

The Young Inspectors scheme has been developed to look at the standards of shared accommodation for our care leavers.

The team have designed a training programme to recruit volunteers to carry out the inspections to help us review and improve the quality of the accommodation offered by Kent County Council. The progression of this scheme has been impacted by the covid19 pandemic and is another area we are keen to see restart as soon as we can.

#### Community engagement

Through the Control Migration Fund, we saw the development of community engagement activities to help improve on community relationships.

The project also saw the development of a football team, a summer service activity day and our first ever care leaver Christmas lunch where all our young people received a Christmas gift donated by Kent County Council staff.

#### Floating support

The four floating support workers have their allocated geographical areas in the county (Canterbury and Medway) and we have already seen the impact of this through an increase in community cohesion, supporting young people to integrate into their local communities, a reduction in neighbour complaints and warnings issued to our young people living in shared accommodation.

#### Young People who are care leavers in custody

Since recruiting a Care Leavers Offending Co-ordinator (October 2018) with the aim to review all custodial sentences and support discharge planning, liaising with Benefits and Housing officer and look at lessons learnt to prevent and reduce custodial sentences; we are in a better position as a service in terms of how our young people in custody are supported in and outside prison.

We have developed Crime Prevention workshops with our unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people to ensure that they are aware of the UK laws and the feedback from the young people has been positive.

We now have access to the Youth Offending Service data system which aids us in our risk assessment completion. We have developed a custody process to make Personal Advisers

aware of the process when a young person enters custody and the statutory requirements for visits and Pathway Plans.

Due to attending Release Planning Meetings we are better able to plan for prison releases, ensuring young people have suitable place to live, with support if required, claim their benefits, refer them to Employment Training and Employment opportunities to reduce the chances of the young person reoffending due to not having these in place.

### Care Leavers Survey

In October 2018, we undertook our first Care Leavers survey followed again in October 2019. This Survey is undertaken independently through our business intelligence unit and a report of the outcomes will be presented to the Corporate Parenting panel.

There was a 10% increase in respondents in the 2019 survey along with increases in the percentage of young people feeding back that they have good relationships with Personal Advisers, receive help with a range of issues and being positive about the help they received. There was also an increase in the number of young people satisfied with their pathway plan.

The Service is in the process of preparing to launch its 2020 Care Leavers Survey in the month of October during Care Leavers week.

### Transition Policy

The service has launched a Transition Policy that outlines how all relevant teams will work together to support a smooth transition for a Child in Care becoming a Care Leaver by allocating a Personal Adviser early to start the joint working processes. Having 'Transition Champions' in the service coordinates the allocation of cases, including early identification of Personal Advisor allocation for young people presenting with complex needs by 17.5 years.

### UASC Update

The number of unaccompanied asylum young people continues to grow in the service, and it is positive that the funding we receive from the Home office has increased. Following the launch of the new information management system Power BI, we are now able to monitor and review the immigration status of our asylum seeking young people to help ensure those with limited leave to remain are able to apply for further leave to remain in good time with the Home Office. Staff members are trained in order to help young people understand the triple planning process in regards to asylum so that they can understand the consequences of any negative decision in regards to their Asylum decision by the Home Office and are supported through these complexities. To achieve this, our Human Rights assessing social workers complete regular immigration checks via KCC's Single Point of Contact (SPOC).

## Future aims for the service

### Management oversight of the most vulnerable young people

We are developing a Care Leavers Risk Management Panel to discuss and review our complex and vulnerable care leavers who are potentially perpetrators or victims of offending behaviour by case mapping and to ensure safety plans are in place.

We are hoping to involve our Key partners agencies such as Adult Safeguarding Unit and Kent police in the complex risk management discussion which will be set within a contextual safeguarding framework.

From August 2020, there will be a monthly High Cost Placement Panel to review the suitability of the accommodation and ensure cost effective use of resources.

### Housing Support

Developing our housing options:

- Developing Personal Housing Plans for all young people for onward plans.
- Bringing the Supported Lodgings service inhouse
- Increase the use of floating support services following the success of the CMF Floating Support roles.
- Developing relationships with private rental sector to increase accommodation options for young people.

### Our Covid 19 response

There have been many challenges to the service during the current pandemic in maintaining a service to our young people. During the peak of the pandemic and national lockdown staff stepped up the level of contact they had with young people especially those who had more limited support networks. This contact was often virtual through the use of Media Apps such as WhatsApp and Face time, due to the new social distancing rules. Where young people struggled because of loss of income through being furloughed the service provided emergency food parcels and additional support where needed. Staff adapted well to the new ways of working and service delivery through working at home and the use of multimedia platforms, and where necessary face to face work has continued using Personal Protective Equipment to ensure staff and young people's safety and minimisation of risk.

Sadly, despite the increase in phone contact and virtual support with young people the service did experience 4 tragic unexpected deaths, 3 as a result of suicide. As a result of this the service with the support of colleagues reviewed all of our most vulnerable young people age 18-25 and audits were commissioned through safeguarding and quality assurance to look at how we could learn from these sad incidents and improve our support to our most vulnerable young adults. This has included some additional in-service training facilitated by our colleagues from Adult Services and from the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team. Despite these huge challenges the service has been able to maintain its contact and support to over 1,800 Care Leavers both within and outside of Kent during this pandemic.

## Kent Total Placement Service



The Total Placement Service (TPS) is part of Strategic Commissioning, working for our children and young people in care and care leavers to find them safe, stable and appropriate homes. We provide a one-stop shop for social workers and personal advisers to access good quality homes for the children and young people in our care.

The service is managed by a Service Manager and there are 3 teams which each have a manager and placement officers who try to find a variety of different homes. We have 17 placement officers. The Residential Team look for homes in both secure accommodation and regulated children's homes.

The Fostering Team look for homes with our in house foster carers and homes with foster carers who are with an Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA). The 16+ Team look for homes for those young people and care leavers who are 16 years and over primarily in supported accommodation, shared accommodation, semi-independent accommodation and manage the referrals for Staying Put arrangements. Historically the TPS business team had sat within the service, but this has now been moved more centrally within commissioning.

Our service is compliant with Ofsted and the Quality Care Commission requirements and our work is governed by a range of legislation and regulations, including the Children's Homes Regulation 2015, Fostering Services Regulation 2011 and Children Act 1989.

The teams use Placement Plan referrals to share information about children and young people with those providing homes so that we can identify and match them together. Often, children and young people write profiles about themselves which can really help with identifying a good match.

Our principle aim is to find stable and well-matched placements to avoid unnecessary moves for children and young people, supporting them to enjoy a positive childhood and experience where they can have a sense of belonging and realise their potential.

Currently performance reported in the Children's Social Work Performance Report for July 2020 is indicating that we still have some work to do in this area when considering the two key indicators. The first indicator to consider is where a child has had 3 or more moves in the last 3 months which in July showed that 11.7% of our children and young people had been subject to this, our target is 10%.

We have just over 69% of our children and young people who have lived in their current home for more than 12 months, our target is 70%; these figures indicate there is more to do.

The service works closely with colleagues in commissioning to provide data and information to help to ensure the commissioning of providers is intelligence led. This helps to shape the profile and recruitment of our in house foster carers and in securing the right external providers to offer the homes we need.

Placement officers work to build effective relationships with our foster carers and providers in the external market to optimise offers of homes to us where there is increasing demand regionally and nationally.

We have a keen and continuous focus on being able to find homes for our children and young people with our in house foster carers who currently provide just under 50% of homes for our children in care, utilising 95% of available in house foster homes.

There is a small project being undertaken between TPS, In House Fostering and the Improvement Team to ensure our processes, systems and work are effective at maximising the use of in house foster homes. The use of IFA homes continues in the main to be for young people aged over 13 years and parent and child placements.

There have been two significant stresses on the service, principally the increased number of unaccompanied minors who arrived during the summer months and the Covid 19 pandemic.

Both issues resulted in some difficulties in locating homes. To identify a home TPS undertake a search of both in house and external provision. Initially, we saw a reduction in the number searches during the early months of the pandemic which was due to the restriction of only undertaking placement searches for essential moves in line with the government advice. The details and comparison of searches between last year and this year is detailed below.

The increase in the later months is an indicative of a relaxation of restricted movement which is echoed in carers and providers being more willing and able to consider referrals and provide new homes.

Month	Searches 2019	Searches 2020
April	370	212
May	370	262
June	335	318
July	385	327
August	312	293

The service, almost without exception, are working from home and continue to deliver the same standard of performance as when office based. Staff have worked to continue to maintain the service identity and connectedness supporting one and other in the work and future planning and developments.



## Developments

We continue to contribute to the South East Regional of the Sector Led Improvement commissioned by the Directors of Children's Services and funded by the Department for Education regarding the use of high costs placements.

The focus now is on developing a small-scale model on a collaborative approach between local authorities and providers initially that will be:

- Flexible, creative provision designed to meet the needs of complex children, including options to 'step across' various forms of provision (e.g. residential to fostering).
- Keeping children local, as close to their home address as possible.
- Working with providers who already offer both residential and fostering services and with small providers, developing joined up partnerships, enabling movement between each as appropriate to need.
- Exploring options for considering lifetime costs for placements, the potential to invest in more intensive early interventions, with a view to improving outcomes and potentially reducing longer term costs.
- Including measures of progress for children placed based on assessment at the point of placement (regularly reviewed up until placement end using an evidence-based assessment tool).

Provider Hub: have been working with colleagues in the Management Information Unit, ICT, Commissioning and the LADO service to develop the Provider Hub within the Liberi Children's System.

This will allow us to have access to a centralised hub of information regarding external providers of homes including any issues or concerns, positive feedback, any embargo issued to a provider and much more. This will assist us in ensuring homes are safe and of the required standard.

## Total Placement Service Priorities

- Using effective and efficient processes and systems to find homes optimising the use of in house foster carers and reducing delays.
- Building effective relationships with providers to ensure we can provide the best value homes for our children that give stability and meet the needs of our children and young people.
- Ensuring effective matching between homes and our children and in doing so promoting stability and supporting children and young people to realise their potential.

Work commenced last year on the redesign and publication of the new placement plan referral and this is almost complete. Engagement and contributions from our Virtual School Kent apprentices and our Children in Care council means that the referral has the child's voice at the centre of the home finding activity, and we believe this will support improved matching and stability.

## Future Aims for the Total Placement Service

- Focus on the interface with adult services and adult commissioning in identifying appropriate Care Quality Commission regulated placements for 16+ young people with complex needs.
- Delivery of the new Placement Plan Referral and associated launch and training to key stakeholders.
- Continuous building of effective working relationships with colleagues and key stakeholders through delivery of web-based training events.
- Continued inclusion in the South East regional complex/high cost placements of looked after children project to consider future commissioning options.

A few exemplary accomplishments which I believe deserve to be mentioned.



Of course, with our sporting prowess and the help of the young people on our team (not to mention our incredibly competitive nature) we won the 2019 Corporate Parenting Sports day and we shall rather cheekily keep the title by default until the next event!



And finally, oh no you didn't, oh yes, we did 'Charm' participants and attendees at the 2019 Christmas Panto!

## Virtual School Kent Participation Team and Apprentices

The Participation Team's role and responsibilities have continued to grow to support wider networks of children and young people. Additional funding was agreed to support the additional work requests that were being directed to the Team and to recruit two further apprenticeship posts, giving more young people opportunities to take up a role within the Team.

The Participation Team's aim is to extend and match some of the successes it has had around positive participation with our care experienced young people with other cohorts of children and young people who come under or sit alongside the Corporate Parenting family and also to ensure positive outcomes are achieved for children and young people.

The apprenticeship programme has had another successful year with one apprentice gaining a qualification in Level 2 Business Administration who is now working as a Nursery Assistant, and a further three who have completed a Level 3 Operation Delivery qualification.

One is now working as a Teaching Assistant at an alternative curriculum education provider, another successfully applied for a position in the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs under the Dept of Education's Internship Programme for Care Leavers. The third has remained in the Team and has been promoted to a Participation Support Assistant role.

Three new care experienced apprentices were recruited in December 2019 and February 2020 and are studying either level 3 Operational Delivery or level 2 Business Administration qualifications. The Participation Team is managed by a Participation and Engagement Manager who supports our apprentices alongside a small team of Participation Officers who, along with carrying out their own job role responsibilities, provide daily advice and guidance to the apprentice team.

The Participation Team values its younger team members and recognises the benefits they bring to not only the team, but also to the wider CYPE Directorate. The apprentices bring a fresh outlook and honesty to the team. As well as helping senior staff with ways to improve working practices, their personal experiences and involvement in Social Care services are very current and their insight into what young people think and their relatability is a valuable asset to the team.

This year has been a year of two halves, with the first six months full of lots of new and exciting ways we have supported and engaged with young people, the second half, due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been very different and at times challenging, with face to face contact abruptly halted.

The team has had to work hard to think creatively and find new ways to keep in contact with young people we already had a connection with but also how we would build new relationships with young people. However, the team has risen to the challenge with some very positive outcomes.

## Young People's Councils

Our Young People's Councils in Kent consist of 4 strong, well represented groups of children and young people:

- The Young Adult Council (YAC) for care experienced young people ages 16-25.
- Our Children and Young People's Council (OCYPC) for young people in care ages 11-16.
- OCYPC Extra – an outreach group for care experienced young people aged 7 to 16 who are unable to make the main meetings held in Maidstone.
- The Super Council for children in care ages 7-11.
- The Adoptables for adopted young people aged 11 – 18.

Membership of our Young People's Councils has remained strong with meetings taking place around the county and virtually via Microsoft Teams since the Covid-19 pandemic made face to face meetings not possible.

The Councils provide a forum for all our children and young people to allow their voice to be heard and be a part of making positive changes within Kent County Council's care system.



## Challenge Cards

The Challenge Card system has been an innovative concept that holds Corporate Parents to account and is a really powerful way for young people to challenge their Corporate Parents on key issues and improvements they want to make to the care system. Successful challenges made this year included:

- The continuation of the Rent Guarantor Scheme for Care Leavers.
- Council Tax Exemption for Kent Care Leavers up to the age of 21.
- 'Mind your Language' campaign encouraging professionals to consider the language they use when speaking to and writing about young people who are or have been in the care system. This is a short film the Team have made to reflect the work that has been undertaken.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://vimeo.com/441243489/8ebbf9a36>

## Key Pieces of Engagement Work

### Fostering TV Advert

Some of our care experienced members of the team worked with the Comms Team to co-produce a TV advert and social media marketing campaign to help support the recruitment of more Fosters Carers in Kent. They shared their ideas and experiences of previous Fosters Carers to come up with the concept of a fostering superhero.



### Corporate Parenting Presentations

The team continued to support the Corporate Parenting Assistant Director with promoting the importance of corporate parenting to its colleagues in other Services and Directorates.

One initiative that has been particularly successful has been delivering Corporate Parenting presentations at service days and team meetings to KCC colleagues. Recently this has been delivered to the following services:

- Growth, Environment and Transport
- Attendance and Inclusion Service
- Comms Team
- Strategic Commissioning

These sessions have increased staff knowledge about their corporate parenting responsibilities to our young people, what it actually feels like to be in care or a young care leaver and has raised the profile of the corporate parenting pledges.

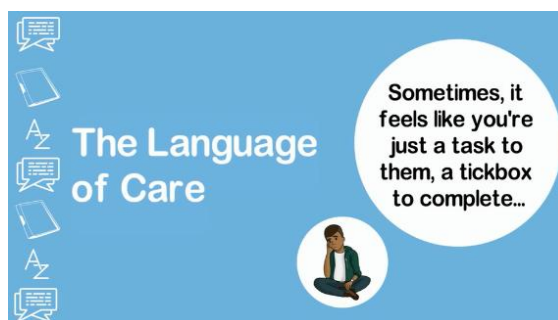
### 'Virtual' Triathlon Charity Fundraiser

In October, the Young Adult Council along with members of the Participation Team took over the Stone Hall, Sessions House in a bid to complete our charity fundraiser, a Virtual Triathlon. The challenge was to cycle, row and run over 350km around Kent.

The chosen charity for the event was Young Lives Foundation. The event was well attended by many members of KCC staff, young people, and elected members, who helped clock up miles on the bikes, rowing machine and treadmill.

It was a long hard slog, but the team completed the challenge in just under six hours. The Participation Team and young people also raised money by visiting various departments within Sessions House, selling cakes, biscuits and sweets.

A big thank you to all that sponsored the event and bought cakes, we managed to raise over £900 for Young Lives Foundation.



**Steven Gray, Chief Executive Officer of Young Lives Foundation said**

*"A HUGE THANK YOU for the Triathlon Fundraiser! We were so pleased to have been chosen by you guys as the charity for the fundraiser this year....and were blown away by the amount of work you had put in to ensure the day was so professionally delivered. It was a privilege to participate (even at a measly 5k!) and I was pleased some of the YLF team and I could be there to support your amazing efforts...thank you. I can assure you any funds raised will be put to good use supporting young people across Kent!"*



### Corporate Parenting Team Challenge Day

In October, the team held the Corporate Parent Team Challenge Day at Detling Showground. This was an opportunity to reaffirm the responsibility of all KCC staff's responsibility towards our Children in Care.

The eight teams were made up of young people, foster carers, corporate parents and elected members working together to win the ultimate Corporate Parenting Team Challenge cup.

The day was a huge success with everyone taking in part in activities such as giant inflatable darts, traverse climbing wall, the eliminator and finishing with the grand finale of the 'Are you a good Corporate Parent fancy dress race' which involved space hoppers, wigs and balloons!

As well as being a fun day it also gave the Corporate Parents an opportunity to meet our young people and see how amazing our young people are and why it is so important to continue to be a great corporate parent.

To end the day, prizes certificates and the winning cup were presented to the winning team by Kent County Council's Corporate Parenting Panel Chair, Ann Allen.



### Fostering Teenagers Conference

The Participation Team worked with Kent Fostering to deliver the 'Looking After Teenagers in Today's Modern World' Conference in November.

After an inspiring keynote speech from the care experienced author, Jenny Molloy, the younger members of the Participation Team, many of whom are still teenagers themselves, took over!

They wanted to help the foster carers and practitioners in the audience understand what it is really like to be a teenager today and the pressures and challenges they face, particularly if they are growing up in care.

Many of them shared their own personal stories about growing up in care and reflected on those things that helped them the most.



### Feedback from a Social Worker

*"I have been working in Fostering for nearly 9 years... hearing the Participation Workers speaking of their own experiences was the most valuable training I have ever attended as a Social Worker (and the first time I've ever been moved to tears in training!) thank you! Ps: I think the Children's Social Workers need to hear this too!"*

### Christmas Concert

December was The Participation's Team's 'Express Yours-ELF' Christmas Concert. The concept of a Christmas concert was to allow some of our young people who do not always get the chance to shine, to have the opportunity to step into the spotlight.

Staff from Corporate Parenting and from the Participation team also stepped up with performances to entertain our young people in the audience.



Children and young people from our Children in Care Councils were joined by our friends from Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub's Arts and Music group to put together a performance full of fun, laughter and joy and managed to put the audience, consisting of young people, KCC staff, Elected Members and foster carers totally in the Christmas spirit.

These events leave our children and young people with happy, positive memories and a sense of achievement – two outcomes that the team think are very important for our young people and work hard to embed in their work.

### Covid-19

Working from home has been a very different experience for the Participation Team. We think we have learnt a lot and have found ways to continue to provide support to young people. We have had to be creative to find ways to ensure that young people are still getting opportunities to get involved and have their say.

We have been conscious that it has been particularly difficult for our apprentices who are used to receiving face to face support, and also enjoy each other's company when at work. They have risen to the challenge and the team have found ways to remain in close contact and stay in touch every day.

Young people have been very open with us and have been keen to share how they have been feeling during this time, and we have been able to share these views widely in various formats with Directors, senior staff and colleagues.

As it has not been possible to meet young people face to face, we have worked to find other ways to give young people opportunities to engage and share their feelings; young people have completed short online surveys and sent us artwork and pieces of creative writing – this has meant we are hearing from a wider cohort not just from our Council members.

### Virtual Social Groups and Activities

As the Participation Team were not able to run its programme of activities and events that would usually be run over the summer holidays, the team devised and facilitated a variety of online activities for wider groups of care experienced young people, their foster siblings and also with young people who have been adopted.

There were groups for different ages with online activities varying from pre-school story time to scavenger hunts and online gaming. Summer holidays activities have also incorporated a wider variety of activities including online dance, science, musical theatre, animal interaction, sweet making and arts and crafts sessions.



## What words describe how you feel about your Social Worker since lockdown?



These activities were very popular and fully booked with young people we already have a relationship with and have been a way to engage with new cohorts of children and young people.

### One adopted parents' feedback

*'Thank you to you and all the VSK team for organising these activities. Emma has loved the past month of workshops. Today's session was just up her street, she is dreaming of lots of new pets now! Philip was great in answering all the questions. Emma loved that they said hello and goodbye to the animals, although they were on screen, it felt like they had a connection with them.'*

*Very often our children are the ones that miss out on things compared to their peers, but I do think they've been the lucky ones this summer to have these opportunities. As a Mum, it's also given me an hour to potter in the background getting some jobs done whilst I've been listening in and/or watching which is an added bonus.'*

### Small Group Activities

The Team were so happy to be able to safely deliver some small groups of activities in Kent Country Parks over the summer holidays.

After some vigorous risk assessments some team members met up with small groups of children and young people often from sibling groups in support bubbles of six. The activities consisted of arts and crafts, fun social distanced sports.

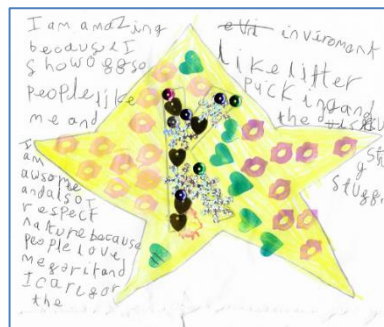
These sessions provided an opportunity for fosters carers to take some shorts breaks, whilst giving the Team an opportunity for some face to face time with children and young people again, hearing their news and discussing their feelings about returning to school. These sessions have been the highlight of our whole summer!



### Competitions

The Team have run fortnightly competitions for young people to enter with an amazing response. Young people have sent in an array of submissions. Competition themes included creative writing pieces like 'Who is your hero?' and 'What are you looking forward to and your hopes for the future?', with young people writing very powerful pieces and producing some emotive artwork.

Another was a nature photography competition, encouraging young people to capture nature's beauty on their daily walks around their community. Over the summer we ran competitions asking young people to design a star and tell us why they have been a star recently, send in their favourite positive quotations and make their favourite breakfast and send in photographs of it.



The Participation Team will continue to work to develop new ways to engage with young people whilst their usual events and activities are paused.

## How can our elected members get involved?

### Christmas Giving Tree 2019

By far our biggest achievement in 2019 was the Christmas Giving Tree at Sessions House, where with the support of KCC staff, their families and our elected members we had 1839 presents donated for our young people who are Care Leavers. This exceeded our target of 1700 and presents were distributed in December to every young person. This was the first time we had undertaken anything of this size and Corporate Parenting were overwhelmed by the generosity and offers of help that were received during this time. The patience of the staff in our post rooms, managing the boxfuls of gifts and the sheer determination of our Personal Advisors and Apprentices, to get everything out before Christmas, was truly inspirational. Genuinely staff made a difference, as for some young people this was their only gift on Christmas Day. Corporate Parenting are now planning for the 2020 Christmas Campaign.



KCC Chairman in December 2019, Mrs Ann Allen supported the Corporate Parenting Christmas Card competition and hosted tea for the winner, 9-year-old Ronni-Rose, sharing the celebration with her sister and KCC foster carer Hayley. Ronni-Rose then got to work with the Creative Team who stayed late in their working day, to show how the design was turned into the KCC Christmas Card. It was a very special visit, supported by several teams, to create a very special memory for one of our children in care.



All our Corporate Parenting services welcome visits from elected members and ask for their ongoing support for our children and young people. Whether this is through sharing in the children's achievements at our celebration events such as the VSK award ceremonies or through more formal training events such as our yearly conferences.

The children and young people welcome meeting their corporate parents at activity days, this helps them to understand the role of a Corporate Parent and be able to speak openly about their experiences. We are very sad that at this time, due to Covid-19 we can only make these events virtual, but we look forward to bigger and better live events once it is safe to do so.

Members are essential in being champions for our children and young people in care, to ensure their voice is heard. We also ask our elected members to promote the recruitment of foster carers for the Kent Fostering service and assist our vision to have more Kent families, to care for our Kent children and young people.

Thank you to all Kent County Council staff, partner agencies and elected members who have contributed over the last year, in supporting Corporate Parenting to make a difference to the lives of the children and young people in our care.



***Thank you to you all from all of us in Corporate Parenting***