

# CORPORATE PARENTING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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# CHAIR'S FOREWORD

**I am pleased to present Rotherham's first Corporate Parenting Partnership Board (CPPB) Annual Report, which reflects our strengthened commitment to the children and young people who rely on our care, support, and advocacy.**

The creation of the CPPB has been a significant milestone. Over the past year, the Board has amplified the voice and influence of children and young people, ensuring their insights drive improvements in health assessments, social work practice, education, and what a safe, nurturing home should feel like. We supported the Children in Care Pledge, the redesign of the Journey Hub, oversaw improvements to care leaver pathways, including strengthened housing prioritisation and expanded accommodation options, scrutinised the timeliness of health and dental assessments and promoted more integrated support for emotional wellbeing through closer multi agency working.

We continue to invest in in house residential and fostering services to increase local placement options. Our ambition remains clear: every child should grow up in a stable, loving home close to their community. Strong progress has been made, and our plans for 2026 build on this firm foundation. We have encouraged partner involvement and created meaningful opportunities for Rotherham's young people to shape decisions and strategic direction with their valuable accounts of lived experience.

Working collaboratively across the Council, its partners, and with our children and young people, we have strengthened our corporate parenting offer and embedded clearer governance, accountability, and shared ambition. The Board's governance ensured robust monitoring of priorities and contributed to wider system improvements that supported Rotherham's Outstanding Ofsted judgement for children in care services. Whilst we celebrate this achievement, we remain committed to further progress.

Being a Corporate Parent is one of our greatest responsibilities. This report acknowledges achievements, highlights areas for improvement, and reaffirms our commitment to always ask: ***"If this were my child, would this be good enough?"*** We will continue to remove barriers, strengthen support, and create the conditions for every child and young person to thrive.

Finally, I thank our children and young people for their trust and contributions, and recognise the dedication of our carers, staff, partners, and elected members who work tirelessly on their behalf.



**Cllr Victoria Cusworth**

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  
**Chair, Corporate Parenting Partnership Board**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first annual report of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in relation to Corporate Parenting. It showcases the work completed to deliver our duty as a Corporate Parent. The purpose is to set out how the Council delivers consistent high-quality care and how the Council, with partners, support opportunities for Children in Care, Care Leavers, and supports them with progressing key priority areas including placement sufficiency and youth participation. This Annual Report also summarises progress by the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board against the Corporate Parenting Strategy and sets out priorities for 2026.

## ***Highlights from 2025:***

- Established the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board with strengthened partner membership and clear lines of accountability.
- Expanded opportunities for children and young people to influence decisions, including refreshed Voice and Participation groups and the launch of 'The Journey'.
- Continued investment in the in-house residential estate and foster carer recruitment to improve local placement sufficiency for children in care.
- Aligned themed priorities to Corporate Parenting sub-groups (health, housing and education) to accelerate delivery against priorities.

**Areas for continued focus in 2026.** Delivering the enhanced offer for care leavers; embedding the CYP Pledge; continued implementation of sub-group action plans; regional work for care experienced young people with a focus on housing allocation policies; and further focus on the voice and participation of separated migrant children.

# BACKGROUND

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined in legislation **corporate parenting duties** for local authorities, improving support for **children in care and care leavers**. It noted that local authorities must act as the best parents possible for children in their care, ensuring stable, positive experiences, and better support for care leavers, including published offers for their transition to adulthood.

The Corporate Parenting Duty places a legal as well as a moral obligation on public bodies to act as responsible parents for children in care and care leavers, ensuring their stability, well-being, and opportunities, making sure these children achieve similar outcomes as their peers, with a focus on education, health, and becoming independent adults, supported by specific duties under the Children Act 1989 and other acts.

## **Core Responsibilities:**

- **Stability & Support:** Ensuring safe, stable homes, education, and relationships.
- **Aspirations:** Having the same high aspirations for children in care as for their own children (the “would this be good enough for my child?” test).
- **Preparation for Adulthood:** Helping young people develop independence, access opportunities, and achieve positive life outcomes.
- **Collaboration:** Working across agencies (health, education, justice) to provide a joined-up approach.
- **Monitoring:** Paying attention to key issues like missing episodes and ensuring children’s voices are heard.

Locally in Rotherham, The Corporate Parenting Partnership Board replaced the Corporate Parenting Panel to strengthen the voice and participation of Children in Care (CiC) and Care Leavers and to broaden membership across key partners. As a corporate parent, the Council asks at every stage: ‘If this were my child, would this be good enough?’.

The Board oversees service delivery and outcomes of children and young people in our care and care leavers, working with elected members, officers, partners and, crucially, children and young people themselves. Each of the six strategic priorities is sponsored by an elected member and supported by lead officers and partners, with an associated action plan. Significant progress has been made to date in terms of delivery whilst maintaining a strong governance mechanism ensuring continual oversight and scrutiny

# THE CORPORATE PARENTING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

## GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Board is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Young People and the Service Director for Children's Social Care. Dedicated time is provided at each meeting to hear directly from children in care & care experienced children and young people via our Voice and Influence arrangements. This ensures authentic co-production of service development between members, officers, partners and most importantly young people.

The Lead Member has a wealth of experience from her role as former Scrutiny Chair for children and young people, Corporate Parenting Partnership Board Chair, and the joint vice chair of the regional LGA Board. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee elected members hold the Lead Member, the Strategic Leadership Team, and our partners to account.

Children in Care and Care Leavers benefit from strong Corporate Parents. Senior Political leaders, Officers and Partners work together to support our children and young people to thrive.

Children in Care and Care Leavers – Performance.

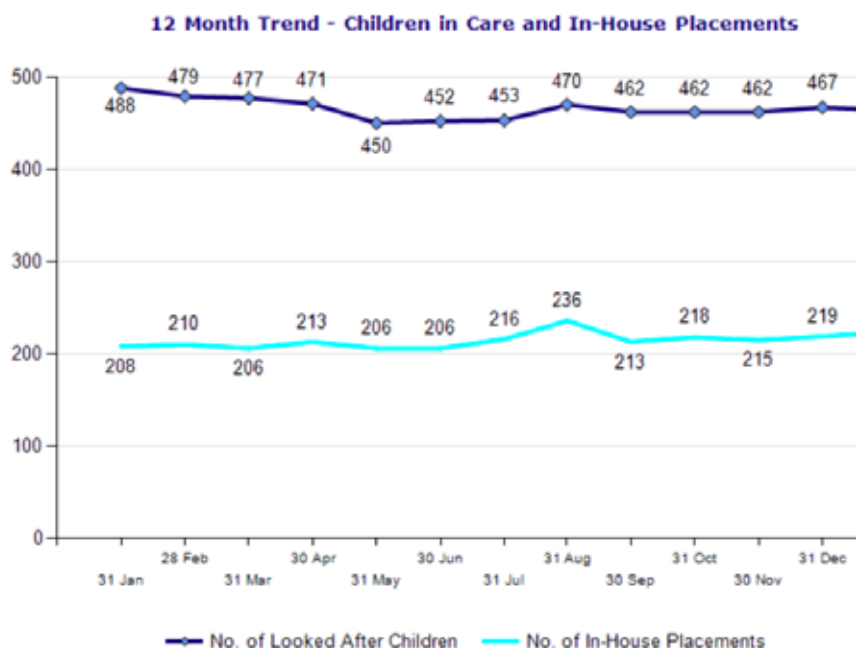
Working with children and young people rightly takes an individual approach and behind each number is a young person and their individual life experiences. Despite that, numbers are not unimportant, and these trends are a way of identifying the strength of our work and horizon scan to ensure resources are in place to meet the needs of children and young people now and in the future.

Performance reporting is advanced, comprehensive, and widely shared, demonstrating transparency in all aspects of children's services. This informs more nuanced reporting of specific issues into the Member arena. Regular detailed reports are an integral part of our Corporate Parenting Partnership Board, which allows challenge to all Corporate Parents.

To strengthen transparency and accountability (drawing on best practice from other authorities), the Council will continue to report a concise scorecard information to the Board. Headline indicators will include:

- Children in Care (CiC) and Care Leavers – numbers, entries, exits, UASC
- Placement type mix and stability (short- and long-term)
- In-borough placements and distance from home
- Initial and Review Health Assessments timeliness; dental checks
- SDQ completion and outcomes; CAMHS access and timeliness
- Education (attendance, exclusions, attainment) and Virtual School KPIs
- Care leavers: in touch, accommodation suitability, EET
- Advocacy uptake and issues raised/resolved

The chart below shows the Children in Care numbers over 2025.



The data shows that there has been a slight reduction in Children in Care numbers with a slight increase in those in house provision moving from 42% to 47%.

The table below shows movement of young people both entering and exiting care

Month	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025
Month Start	488	479	477	471	450	452	453	470	462	462	462
Month End	479	477	471	450	452	453	470	462	462	462	467
Admissions	10	12	12	4	16	19	25	8	17	19	20
Ceased	19	14	18	25	14	18	8	16	17	19	15
Net +/-	-9	-2	-6	-21	2	1	17	-8	0	0	5

There were significant efforts made in year to support some children on a Care Order return home; this cohort accounted for a significant number of the children ceasing to be in our care. There were also some seasonal trends in relation to children and young people entering care. Review of the young people’s personal circumstances identifies their entry into care was suitable and appropriate.

# CHILDREN IN CARE EDUCATION

Rotherham's Children in Care continue to show extraordinary resilience, courage, and growth in the face of adversity. As Corporate Parents, we are immensely proud of every child and young person we support. Their journeys are shaped not only by their determination but also by the inclusive, trauma informed environments we strive to create around them. We recognise the unwavering commitment of the professionals who work within the teams supporting each child.

Their compassion, creativity, and trauma aware approaches are vital in helping our children feel safe, valued, and empowered to succeed. The Virtual School provides high-level support to all stakeholders, with rigorous tracking of progress, attainment, and attendance. We ensure every child (0–18) receives a high-quality, termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting that reflects their individual needs, strengths, and aspirations. Our team offers bespoke, child-centered advice, guidance, and challenge to the professionals around each child.

We also provide training and development opportunities focused on inclusive practice and trauma-informed approaches, delivered by our Education Advisers (VSEA), Educational Psychologists (VSEP), Speech and Language Therapists (VSSALT), and Sensory Occupational Therapist (VSSOT). We work in close partnership with education settings, social care professionals, external agencies—and most importantly, with our children themselves.

Together, we aim to reduce barriers, promote healing and belonging, and support every child to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We are incredibly proud of our Key Stage 2 children, who have performed exceptionally well, achieving outcomes above national comparators. This is a testament to their hard work, the dedication of our staff, and the strength of our curriculum.

There has also been a notable improvement in the Good Level of Development (GLD), reflecting the strong foundations laid in our Early Years provision. We are delighted that all of our 2, 3, and 4-year-olds are accessing high-quality Early Years education, ensuring every child gets the best possible start. Our mainstream secondary children have seen a decline in attainment, but was in relation to a specific group of children who experienced significant change around the end of year period. There has been an increase in the numbers of our Post 16 children accessing Higher education. There has been a slight decline in the percentage of our children in education, employment and training. Our children's attendance has remained stable and 2/3 of our children have attendance over 95%. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of children who are persistently absent.

The number and percentage of our children who have been suspended and the number of suspension incidents and days lost to suspensions have all increased this year. The percentage of suspended children with EHCPs has decreased. The Virtual School team work closely with schools to support intensive intervention work to reduce suspensions and support children at risk of suspension. Three children were permanently excluded, although one of these was rescinded, and eight children at risk of exclusion were maintained in school. In response to the challenges outlined above, Rotherham Virtual School has continued to adapt, develop, and strengthen the offer available to our children.

Further details relating to how we support our children in care with their education and the progress we have made can be seen in the Annual Report of the Virtual School 24/25.

# CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS HEALTH

**There were a number of initiatives in 2025 that were developed and implemented to support the health and wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers.**

## **Pathway to Primary Care**

Work across South Yorkshire has included the development of review health assessments specifically aimed at care leavers and transitions. Inclusive of this work is the creation of a care experienced marker or 'flag' to add to GP records. This now enables the looked-after children's nursing team to ask for consent from young people to mark their health record with the care experienced flag. This will enable a seamless pathway to primary care, where GP services will understand if a young person is a care leaver, and be able to adopt a trauma informed response, such as enabling consistency with clinicians and offering longer appointment times. We have launched this pathway, working with the named GPs for Safeguarding across South Yorkshire and the pathway is being embedded within our primary care services in Rotherham.

## **Children in Care Privacy Card designed by TRFT Looked-after Children's Nursing Team**

The Rotherham Foundation Trust Looked-after Nursing Team has designed a card to help protect the privacy of children in care and their carers. It was designed to reduce the risk of information breach, increase carers' sense of security and enhance awareness of the need for privacy and safeguards when interacting with children in care. This can be presented at routine appointments to indicate that the child being brought is a child in care. The Privacy Card is now in circulation gaining positive feedback.

## **Effective joint decision making via Dynamic Support Register (DST) for Children and young adults eligible for S117 and Joint Resource Panel for young adults who are continuing care eligible.**

NHS South Yorkshire ICB have set up a working group to ensure children and young people in 38/52-week residential school settings are aligned to the DSR process. This is to build on the learning from the national panel review regarding children in residential settings with complex health needs.

## **Support in the community**

A project has been established in Rotherham to support care leavers with independence by utilising drop-in sessions led by the looked after nursing team. After evaluating attendance, it was decided to pause the project, and re-launch with the learning gained from evaluation. This included the provision of more targeted support (about specific health themes) that may impact care leavers.

Sessions have been restarted and there are plans to offer an individual with a background of adoption and is a trained chef who would like to offer sessions to young people on shopping, budgeting, cooking and general life skills via the support from an adoption experienced Chef.

## **New Service Specification for looked-after Nursing Team to extend support up to the age of 25**

A new service specification was developed and has been issued across South Yorkshire, that is intended for all children legally defined as a 'looked after child' based on statutory requirements to support Children in Care and Care Leavers up to the age of 25yrs based on an assessment of need. The service will work with partners to deliver care that focusses on the improvements it can make for Children in Care, Care leavers and their foster carers/adoptive parents/birth parents and relatives in terms of; clinical effectiveness, enhanced emotional and social benefits and health outcomes.

# OUR PRIORITIES 2025

To ensure we continue to deliver the best standard of service to children and young people we developed a set of priorities to be themed areas of focus for the year. This was referred to as the Corporate Parenting Action Plan and was supported by wider project support from within CYPS.

Priority sponsors, leads and partners are set out below.

PRIORITY	SPONSORS / LEADS
<p><b>Promoting and celebrating success, ambition and aspiration for Children in Care and Care Leavers</b></p>	<p><b>Champion Member:</b>  <b>Councillor Cusworth</b> – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p> <p><b>Lead Officer:</b>  <b>Monica Green</b> – Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care (latterly Stuart Williams – Service Director Children’s Social Care)</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b>  <b>Jane Wood</b> – Head of Service for Children in Care  <b>Tony Morrissey</b> – Head of Service for Safeguarding (latterly Chris MacDonald)  <b>Jo Hacking</b> – Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</p>
<p><b>Leaving Care / Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)</b></p>	<p><b>Champion Member:</b>  <b>Councillor Fisher</b></p> <p><b>Lead Officer:</b>  <b>Kirsty Littlewood</b> – Assistant Director for Adult Care and Integration</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b>  <b>Jane Wood</b> – Head of Service for Children in Care</p>
<p><b>Suitable accommodation and placement sufficiency for Children in Care and Care Leavers</b></p>	<p><b>Champion Member:</b>  <b>Councillor Cusworth</b> – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p> <p><b>Lead Officer:</b>  <b>Julie Warren-Sykes</b> – Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding</p> <p><b>Helen Sweatton</b> – Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Quality and Performance</p>

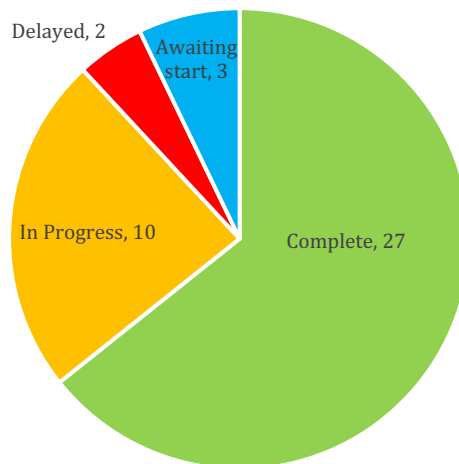
PRIORITY	SPONSORS / LEADS
<p><b>Education, Employment and Training</b></p>	<p><b>Champion Members:</b>  <b>Councillor Brent</b> – Vice Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission  <b>Councillor Knight</b> – Wickersley North</p> <p><b>Lead Officer:</b>  <b>Niall Devlin</b> – Assistant Director Education and Inclusion</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b>  <b>Tina Hohn</b> – Virtual School Headteacher (Primary)  <b>Pete Douglas</b> – Virtual School Headteacher (Secondary)</p>
<p><b>Fostering – Family Based Care</b></p>	<p><b>Champion Member:</b>  <b>Councillor Ismail</b> – Mayor</p> <p><b>Lead Officer:</b>  <b>Stuart Williams</b> – Head of Children’s Provider Services (latterly Jane Wood)</p> <p><b>Supported by:</b>  <b>Jane Wood</b> – Head of Service for Children in Care  <b>Vicky Chew</b> – Service Manager – Fostering Service</p>

## The Corporate Parenting Action Plan

The full plan is an Appendix to this report.

When considering the priorities of 2025 there has been significant progress made. There were 42 sub actions that were identified to support improving outcomes and services for children in care. Progress is summarised below:

### PROGRESS OF ACTIONS



The three actions noted as 'awaiting start' were new actions following the ILACS inspection of November 2025.

Where there are actions that have been delayed, it can be seen from the action plan that there has been movement on this and there is a confidence that this will be completed in the early part of 2026.

# CO-PRODUCTION AND VOICE

We have strengthened the voice and influence of children and young people through our Voice and Influence service. Young people act as Young Inspectors, support recruitment to key senior posts, co-chair agenda items, and help design and evaluate services.

In recent years we have reviewed our support to children in care and established our Voice and Influence Team, which brings together our advocates, Children in Care Council (Now called In Care Youth), Voice and Participation workers, Care Leaver Forum (now called Look Ahead) and Young Inspectors.

Consultation has taken place with our children and young people, and we continue to look at ways in which we can increase the engagement of our children and young people, including developing a virtual group to widen engagement. Both the In Care Youth and Look Ahead Groups play an active role in our Corporate Parenting Partnership Board and are influencing future agendas, based on their priorities. In addition, we have strengthened links with our separated migrant children; however, this remains a key priority moving forward.

In Care Youth and Look Ahead are represented on the Children and Young People's Partnership Board which provides an opportunity for design, scrutiny and oversight of partnership activity to achieve the strategic priorities set by the Rotherham Together Partnership.

The Voice and Influence Team work closely with the Children in Care service, along with our residential service to ensure that all young people in care understand their rights and entitlements.

In 2025 we refreshed our Voice and Participation groups and launched 'The Journey'—a safe space for those with care experience. Children and young people contribute to specific projects, training, regional and national events, and our programme of celebration events.

## *Key areas of involvement in 2025 included:*

- Advisory group for mental health
- Foster carer recruitment and training
- Sharing experiences of Independent Visitors
- Refreshing our Corporate Parenting Pledge
- Improving the joint housing protocol for care leavers
- Input to the Leaving Care Local Offer
- Shaping local placement sufficiency and our new residential offer
- Workshops with social workers on 'what good looks like'
- Young people interview panels for key appointments

# SUFFICIENCY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

We have continued to enhance and invest in our children's residential services, expanding the in-house estate and increasing the number of foster carers. This supports children to remain connected to their communities, friends, education and health services, and gives the Council greater influence over quality and outcomes.

The council has invested significantly in an ambitious residential development programme to create local homes for children. An additional £700k recurrent investment was provided by the Council in 2025 to ensure the residential workforce is equipped to provide the best possible care to our children and young people.

Where children cannot be placed within inhouse provision, we work closely with local private fostering agencies and residential settings to ensure children remain connected to their meaningful people and have the highest quality care, focused on supporting them to achieve their full potential. This is managed through a well established and mature commissioning and brokerage function within CYPS.

When children need to live away from the area social workers and the virtual school are tenacious in ensuring they have access to services that meet their needs.

The Council is committed to placing more children and young people in family-based settings. To achieve this the fostering service have delivered on ambitious plans to increase the number of approved foster carers. The performance should be considered in the national context of challenges in recruiting foster carers. We have commissioned an external partner to develop and implement a digital recruitment strategy and pathway, as part of the wider fostering recruitment plan. The digital approach uses industry leading online approaches to maximise the reach.

There has been a continued focus on the significant benefits of maintaining children in care within their wider family networks. Investment in the Family Group Conference Service has supported this further with a growing cohort of children in care remaining within their wider network when entering care and exiting care through permanence arrangements within their network by way of legal order.

# THE YEAR AHEAD (2026)

The approach to Corporate Parenting is continuous, unwavering, and persistent. With that in mind, there is a need to ensure that there is a focused effort in the year ahead to continue to excel in our areas of strength but equally enhance areas of services which could be improved for some children in care.

Elements of care and support were identified as focus areas in the recent inspection in 2025. This identified specific work relating to Care Leavers which will be a focus of efforts in 2026, although some progress has already been made.

*Specific elements of focus are set out below:*

Area of focus	Actions to be taken	Impact
<b>Improve Pathway Plans for Care Leavers.</b>	Undertake a review of the current CYPS Pathway Plan for Care Leavers to identify the specific content required and implement an agreed revised approach that better supports Care Leavers and frontline practice. This will include production with care-experienced young adults.	Care Experienced Young People will have accessible plans that are unique to their own individual needs, without poor quality generated templates.
<b>Ensure Care Leavers have access to Health Passports.</b>	Undertake a review of Health Passports for Care Leavers via the Health and Wellbeing Board to identify and implement any required areas for improvement.	Care Experienced Young People have a comprehensive and consistent understanding of their health history when they leave care and progress into adulthood.
<b>Improve local sufficiency for Children in Care.</b>	Continue to recruit foster carers to care for children in our care. Continue to ensure robust commissioning arrangements for foster care placements within the Rotherham area. Complete the Residential Development Programme. Enhance our Supported Accommodation offer for Children aged 16+.	Children and Young People will have safe, suitable and local places to call home.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks to delivering our strategy are overseen by the Board, with mitigating actions tracked through sub-group plans. Key risk themes include placement sufficiency, timeliness of health assessments and dental access, mental health support, engagement in education and EET, and access to suitable accommodation for care leavers. The action plan and priorities set out work underway to address these areas of risk and reports progress to the board.

## IMPLICATIONS

There are no decisions sought within this report. Any financial, legal, workforce or equalities implications arising from specific actions will be considered through normal governance routes.

## CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Author</b>	<b>Stuart Williams</b> – Service Director Children’s Social Care Children and Young People Services
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### Appendix 1 (Corporate Parenting Partnership Board Priorities Action Plan)

# OVERVIEW

This action plan provides the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board's 6 agreed areas of focus and agreed priorities. The plan supports the monitoring of progress in relation to the actions identified.

## GOVERNANCE

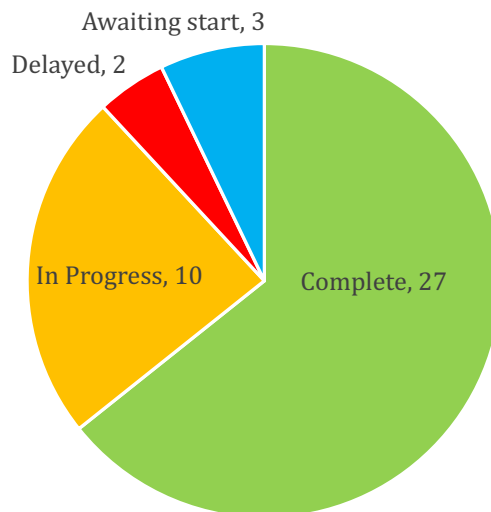
Progress against the timelines and expected outcomes outlined in this action plan will be reported and challenged at the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board every six weeks. Experts from the service are responsible for ensuring the timelines and outcomes of actions under their allocated priorities are met, overseen by 'Champions', consisting of a lead Councillor.

	Priorities	Champions
1	<b>Promoting and celebrating success, ambition and aspiration for Children in Care and Care Leavers</b>	<b>Councillor Cusworth</b> - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People <b>Stuart Williams</b> - Service Director for Children's Social Care <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Service for Children in Care <b>Chris MacDonald</b> - Head of Service for Safeguarding <b>Jo Hacking</b> - Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance <b>Lauren Roe</b> - Communication and Marketing Lead CYPs
2	<b>Leaving Care, Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)</b>	<b>Councillor Fisher</b> - Sitwell Ward <b>Kirsty-Louise Littlewood</b> - Service Director for Adult Care and Integration <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Service for Children in Care <b>Kim Wilson</b> - Service Manager, Children in Care and Care Leavers <b>James Chapman</b> - Service Manager, Children with Disabilities Service
3	<b>Suitable accommodation and placement sufficiency for Children in Care and Care Leavers</b>	<b>Councillor Clarke</b> - Chair of Standards and Ethics Committee <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Service for Children in Care <b>Vicky Chew</b> - Service Manager, Fostering Service <b>Richard Fisher</b> - Service Manager, Residential Care Services
4	<b>Good health and emotional wellbeing including Mental Health/ recognition of Neurodiversity</b>	<b>Councillor Cusworth</b> - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People <b>Julie Warren-Sykes</b> - Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding <b>Helen Sweatn</b> - Joint Service Director, Commissioning, Quality and Performance <b>Kim Wilson</b> - Service Manager, Children in Care and Care Leavers
5	<b>Education, Employment and Training</b>	<b>Councillor Brent</b> - Vice Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission <b>Councillor Sutton</b> - Maltby East <b>Niall Devlin</b> - Service Director Education and Inclusion <b>Kim Wilson</b> - Service Manager, Children in Care and Care Leavers <b>Tina Hohn</b> - Virtual School Headteacher Primary <b>Pete Douglas</b> - Virtual School Headteacher Secondary
6	<b>Fostering – Family Based Care</b>	<b>Councillor Ismail</b> - Mayor <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Children in Care <b>Paul Stinson</b> - Head of Children's Commissioning <b>Vicky Chew</b> - Service Manager, Fostering

RAG Status is shown against the actions which indicate whether sufficient progress is being made, i.e. the right amount of progress in the right direction at the right pace.



### PROGRESS OF ACTIONS



## 1. Priority 1 - Promoting and celebrating success, ambition and aspiration for Children in Care and Care Leavers

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<p><b>Councillor Cusworth</b> - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  <b>Stuart Williams</b> - Assistant Director for Children's Social Care  <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Service for Children in Care  <b>Chris MacDonald</b> - Head of Service for Safeguarding  <b>Jo Hacking</b> - Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance  <b>Lauren Roe</b> - Communication and Marketing Lead CYPS</p>					
1.1	Celebration events to be held, promoting the achievements of our Children in Care and Care Leavers. Cllrs to be involved in attending and celebrating alongside the children/care leavers.	There has been a celebration event at Wentworth Woodhouse on 11th August 2025. There was a further event on the 2nd of October 2025 to celebrate our young people.	Jo Hacking	October 2025	Complete
1.2	Promotion of the celebration events amongst the community to enable the events to be facilitated.	Ongoing promotional activity to ensure our children and young people are aware of all the events to maximise attendance and participation. The launch of the Journey took place on the 29th of May 2025. This will act as a hub as a promotion for all activities for care leavers.	Jo Hacking	May 2025	Complete
1.3	Promotion of the needs of care leavers and how the community can support/engage including: - Volunteers to lead The Big Christmas Dinner.	We are creating The Pledge and will ensure that the offer from RMBC and wider partners is included in this. The initial launch was at the August 2025 Celebration Event, and a QR code and petition-style list of signatories is being developed for January 2026 for our Staff Engagement Event. Through our Leaving Care Service and the Journey, we have established that few care leavers in Rotherham are alone at Christmas. We have two offers for Christmas Dinner for our care leavers – Arc Cinema has offered places at their Christmas Buffet on Christmas Day, and Hollowgate are offering Christmas Dinner to care leaving young people.	Jo Hacking	26th December 2025	Complete
1.4	Ensure mechanisms for service delivery to be reviewed by children and young people and ensure that opportunities for coproduction are considered.	Young Inspectors inspect areas of service across the organisation and influence service plans to ensure the voice and views of children and young people are considered as part of continuous improvement work. Young Inspectors have already inspected the IRO service and Liberty House, and an inspection of the disability service is planned for February 2026.	Jo Hacking	December 2025	Complete

## 2. Priority 2 – Leaving Care, Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<p><b>Councillor Fisher</b> - Sitwell Ward  <b>Kirsty-Louise Littlewood</b> - Assistant Director for Adult Care and Integration  <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Service for Children in Care  <b>Kim Wilson</b> - Service Manager, Children in Care and Care Leavers  <b>James Chapman</b> - Service Manager, Children with Disabilities Service</p>					
<p><b>2.1 To improve the quality and accessibility of Pathway Plans so they are young person-centred, outcome-focused and clearly evidence planning, review and impact.</b></p>					
2.1.1	<p><b>New Action following Ofsted Feedback:</b>  Redesign and simplify the existing Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan so it is concise, accessible, and meaningful to young people.</p>	<p>A Development Day with Leaving Care PAs has taken place.  Advanced Practitioners (Leaving Care and CiC) have completed work on what a good Pathway Plan would look like. This now needs embedding in further work to improve Pathway Plans.</p>	Beccy Hinnet/ Sarah Vallance	End of May 2026	In progress
2.1.2	<p><b>New Action following Ofsted Feedback:</b>  Integrate the new templates, Practice Guidance, PWP on a page and standard feedback letter from the worker to the young person following each review into one single Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan framework and procedure that supports consistent and high-quality practice.</p>	<p>A Pathway Plan on a page has been drafted and will be incorporated into the work to update the pathway plan template and guidance.  AP from Leaving Care will undertake a training session on Pathway Planning with locality managers/teams by the end of May 2026.</p>	Beccy Hinnet/ Sarah Vallance	End of May 2026	In progress
2.1.3	<p><b>New Action following Ofsted Feedback:</b>  A final Need Assessment and Pathway Plan template and procedure to be designed alongside care leavers Voice and Influence Group and reflecting their feedback.</p>		Beccy Hinnett/ Sarah Vallance/ Voice and Influence Lead	End of June 2026	Awaiting start

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
2.1.4	<b>New Action following Ofsted Feedback:</b> Workforce Implementation and Training across localities of the revised Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan practice guidance.		Beccy Hinnet/ Sarah Vallance/ AP and APs from Leaving Care and CiC.	August 2026	Awaiting start
21.5	<b>New Action following Ofsted Feedback:</b> Audit and Dip Sample to take place 3/6 months after implementation of the new Needs Assessment and Pathway Plans		Toni Traynor/ Tracie Setter/QA lead	Nov 2026	Awaiting start
<b>2.2 Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)</b>					
2.2.1	Start transition early/ allocation of PA/TA for care leavers.	Allocation of PA at 16 yrs (14 yrs for co-allocation of CSC and Adult Transition team). All 16 years olds are allocated to PAs. We are focussing on earlier work being completed in preparation for independence via PAs. 16+ panels track the progress of young people to ensure that the plan is focussed on destinations and stability for care leavers.	Kim Wilson	July 2025	Complete
2.2.2	Provide independence skill support to care leavers	The Local Offer for care leavers has been published on the Council's website and is continually reviewed and updated. Number of CLs accessing supported accommodation Hollowgate, 16plus, dispersed accommodation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hollowgate - 9 young people currently in dispersed, 4 under 18 years of age.</li> <li>Externally commissioned 16+ placements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under 18s - 25 in group living; 7 dispersed with floating support; 0 floating support only.</li> <li>Over 18s - 2 in group living; 40 dispersed with floating support; 2 floating support only.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> As part of the transition to adulthood, when appropriate, CLs are supported by their PAs to complete A Place of Your Own to help ensure they are tenancy ready. Tenancy support offer to foster carers and provider engagement will be tracked through permanency panel and the IRO service.	Kim Wilson	December 2025	Complete

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
2.2.3	Develop a digital offer to communicate support available for children and young people, ensuring it is inclusive and accessible to diverse groups, including those with SEN.	Helen has attended the IC Voice Group, the Look Ahead Group and the Guiding Voices Group to ask them what they would like to see from a digital offer to communicate support available to them. Feedback was overwhelmingly in favour of an App which provides a range of information. As the ask from young people was much broader than those who would move to adult social care, the PFA Board has proposed that this action transfer to the Local Offer for progressing. The Service Director will review this action with the relevant Heads of Service.	Helen Fisher	March 2026	In progress
2.2.4	Develop a model of engagement which ensures the voice of young people preparing for adulthood helps shape and improve services.	Meeting with Genuine Partnerships and RPCF to explore opportunities to collectively deliver the model through a partnership / consortium approach. A proposed model is being drafted for consideration in early 2026.	PFA Board /Kirsty-Louise Littlewo	March 2026	In progress
2.2.5	Launch a Transitions Guide which will support the young person, their family and carers, to prepare for the transition to Adult Services. The guide will be made available to young people, carers and families at the post-14 EHCP review.	Feb-26: A final draft of the Transitions Guide has been approved by the Preparation for Adulthood Board and provided to the Communications team on the 19th September 2025 for publication. The communications team have provided a draft template and continue to work on creating the on-line resource. No publication date has yet been confirmed. The guide will be available on the local offer page, with hard copies provided for services when necessary, so it can be amended and updated in response to feedback. Helen Fisher confirmed that the Look Ahead Group were pleased about the Transitions Guide, but that they often held different priorities, so the young people's version will needed to be developed with their input. Engagement with young people suggests their preferred method of accessing information is via an 'app' style site with fewer clicks required to get to key information. A meeting with ICT and Customer Services confirmed that once the content is available digitally this can be reviewed by young people to establish the priority information they would like to access and can them be presented in an 'app' style format.	Helen Fisher/ Helen Sweaton	Dec 2025	Delayed

### 3. Priority 3 – Suitable accommodation and placement sufficiency for Children in Care and Care Leavers

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<p><b>Councillor Clarke</b> - Chair of Standards and Ethics Committee  <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Service for Children in Care  <b>Vicky Chew</b> - Service Manager, Fostering Service  <b>Richard Fisher</b> - Service Manager, Residential Care Services</p>					
3.1	Ensure that our care leavers have access to good accommodation options in good areas, where they can establish safe and secure homes /community connections.	<p>The local authority aims to ensure there are sufficient accommodation options for children in care and care leavers. This will involve enhancing the current in-house offer as well as continuing with effective commissioning arrangements. The local authority has their own in-house supported accommodation provision, which allows the placement of children in care (16+ with support needs) in either group living settings or in dispersed accommodation.</p> <p>There have been ongoing interactions from housing colleagues that ensure care experienced young people have suitable priority when seeking housing options in Rotherham. This aligns to a current local offer for care experienced young people and is reflected in the housing strategy.</p> <p>There is ongoing work across the region to consider reciprocal arrangements for housing priority status for care experienced young people.</p> <p><b>Dec 25:</b> a cross-Council working group has been established to identify property options most suitable to meet current demand and includes work with external stakeholders. Options appraisals have been completed for all considered options and will be shared with the directorate leadership team.</p> <p>There is continuous support to foster carers to encourage staying put arrangements for children in foster care and this continues to be a priority.</p>	Richard Fisher/ Vicky Chew	January 2026	Complete
3.2	Provide access to a choice of accommodation options that suit the individual needs of our children in care and care leavers community – including those with additional needs, SEND, support needs and those ready for independence.	<p>Ensuring robust commissioning arrangements that provide children’s social care with placement options which include a combination of family based placements, supported accommodation and residential care options.</p> <p>Tracking of the use of unregulated accommodation. Weekly meetings take place to provide oversight and monitoring of any child in an unregulated provision and ensure swift movement of children and young people who are not placed in placement settings which are aligned to their individual assessed needs.</p> <p>Tracking of placement stability / breakdowns and placement moves.</p> <p>Significant priority given to kinship arrangements with resources available to support family decision making meetings which should include assurance that Family Group Conferencing and Family Network Meetings are happening as we would expect them to.</p> <p>There continues to be an ambitious programme of work to ensure the development of in-house residential care. This includes significant financial investment from the council. The local authority is taking the approach of developing a blended residential estate, which will equip us to offer placement opportunities for children and young people with a varying degree of need.</p>	Jane Wood/ Paul Stinson	August 2026	In progress

#### 4. Priority 4 – Good health and emotional wellbeing including Mental Health and recognition of neurodiversity

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<p><b>Councillor Cusworth</b> - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  <b>Julie Warren-Sykes</b> - Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding  <b>Helen Sweaton</b> - Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Quality and Performance  <b>Kim Wilson</b> - Service Manager, Children in Care and Care Leavers</p>					
<p><b>4.1 Provide information, including data to support and increase children’s and their carers’ understanding of the health assessment and need pathway and why it’s important to them.</b></p>					
4.1.1	Produce a letter or video which explains ‘what is a health assessment, and why is it important’ with a view to involving young people in its production. All children in care and are leavers will have a health passport.	<p><b>3/7/25</b> Spoken to Jo Hacking, lead of voice and influence to start initiating conversations. Early planning discussions have started, considering who might be involved and what external support we might need to complete.</p> <p><b>Jan-26:</b> Evening meeting arranged for 20th Jan, where Looked-after Children’s Nurses will attend the IC Youth Group to establish with the group, and wider children in care not linked to the group, how they would want this to look, and what skills we have within the group to move this forward.</p> <p><b>Feb-26:</b> Named Nurse attended IC Youth Group presented a video that Barnsley did, the YP felt they could produce better and had some suggestions. Given that the group is quite small they are also reaching out to YP from residential homes and UASC cohort to come with a plan. They have also had an offer from a young journalist to write the script for a video.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	October 2025	Delayed
4.1.2	All our Care Leavers will have a specific leaving care health summary. We will develop an audit schedule to monitor compliance with this.	<p><b>3/7/25</b> updated templates in system one, so that reports can be generated. Lynda Briggs, Named Nurse, will discuss with system one business analyst lead to identify when these reports will commence. Anticipated start date August. Reports to be run quarterly, for the previous quarter. To consider options to enable young people to receive as a digital offer. <b>22.10.25.</b> Discussion took place with the new System Analyst, reporting templates to be established <b>Nov 2025.</b></p> <p>Template complete. Named Nurse to meet with data analyst 17.11.25 to determine the launch date.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	Complete Nov 2025	Complete
4.1.3	Following each health assessment, ensure that a summary and outcomes and any plans are written and discussed with the child or young person. We will develop an audit schedule to monitor compliance with this.	<p><b>3/7/25</b> Every health assessment has a summary that is discussed with the young person. Looking into possibility of capturing reporting on when this summary is discussed with the child/ young person.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes		Complete

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
4.1.4	Ensure children in care are aware of their rights to refuse health interventions based on Gillick competence.	<b>3/7/25</b> To be incorporated within the media production on what a health assessment is. The video will give details of child/young person's rights to decline a health assessment. On the day of assessment, the young person provides verbal consent to enable the assessment to take place. Declined RHA Assurance Document produced. <b>Sept 2025</b>	Julie Warren-Sykes		Complete
<b>4.2 Enable carers, children and young people to have a positive relationship with health services so that they are able to access services when needed.</b>					
4.2.1	Provide information that there are alternative options to access health care including the services provided by pharmacists and the GPs.	<b>3/7/25</b> A resource that has been developed around accessing the right healthcare from the right agency/ service provider at the right time (unwell/choose well). This will be entered onto health summaries. Exploration is underway around adding to initial health assessment letter for carers to access and to share with young people in their care. TRFT have a Rotherham Children's Public Health Nursing App, which has up to date details on services. Looked after children are encouraged to download this App. Decliner Pathway to be reviewed at the Regional South Yorkshire Meeting. Also to consider actions that are followed up. <b>26/9/25</b> The local offer for care leavers has been developed by Toni Trainer in conjunction with partners, and health information in relation to accessing health services has been added.	Julie Warren-Sykes	October 2025	Complete
4.2.2	Ensure children in care and care leavers can access public health messages.	<b>15/7/25</b> Promote the 0-19 TRFT App. Leaving Care Service - using WhatsApp as a method to share with care leavers. Due to update Local offer for care leavers September and can be an opportunity for public health messages. Consideration of how we have a compassionate and non-judgemental approach to public health messages, such as Vaping, sexual health etc. Now part of the Local Offer.	Julie Warren-Sykes	December 2025	Complete
<b>4.3 Monitor access to emotional well-being support for mental health and barriers to access (especially CAMHS).</b>					
4.3.1	Raise awareness re: community resources to Foster Carers, Social workers and PAs to access timely support for emotional wellbeing. Emotional wellbeing can be improved via healthy lifestyles, inclusive activity and non-statutory services.	<b>15/7/25</b> Potential to establish a cooking group for children in care to develop life skills, a volunteer has been identified who is keen to be involved. Jane Wood to liaise with Kim about this. Local Authority are providing training for foster carers (Trauma informed, Thera play, bonding through play, foundations for attachment, transitions, therapeutic life story work, non-violent resistance training etc). 0-19 Oral Health Lead continues to offer training to foster carers and is taking the lead on 'introduction to solid food'. In recognition about Foster Carers own wellbeing - a fostering transformation board to be established as a separate action (applies to fostering CPPB priority). <b>26/09/2025</b> A meeting has been arranged for health professionals to attend foster carers sessions. <b>Oct 2025 RMBC</b> Foster Carer Conference attended by Looked-after Children Nurses. Nurses invited to attend the training offer to carers by RMBC and Empower Team. 03/11/25 Relaunch of the Care Leaver Health drop-in sessions, including PAs.	Julie Warren-Sykes	October 2025	Complete

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
4.3.2	Raise awareness re: community resources to Foster Carers, Social workers and PAs to access timely support for emotional wellbeing. Emotional wellbeing can be improved via healthy lifestyles, inclusive activity and non-statutory services. Revise SDQ process to ensure consistent completion and learning.	<p><b>3/7/25</b> There will be a SDQ sub-group, first meeting 9th July. 15/7/25 - Meeting on the 9th hasn't gone ahead - to meet with Jane, Lynda, Sarah and Natalie and business support to look at this action again, meeting arranged for 30/7/25. 30/7/25 meeting for SDQ gone ahead, and we have mapped out our current position, another meeting set up for September to bring further information from each agency to assure ourselves we are capturing SDQ's for every child/young person, and to map out a process for what we do when a child or young person scores high or very high on SDQ - and how we capture this in reporting</p> <p>Meeting held on the <b>27/09/2025</b>, some issues identified with the SDQ process as above. Data would indicate that these are not being completed consistently. This issue needs addressing. It is also unclear what happens when the SDQs outcome scores high. Currently data sits at 67%. Full comprehensive plan made that includes a process map to be developed. Reminders to be set 6 weeks after first SDQ sent to chase a reminder, reminders also to be sent to team managers. A full list of actions to be recorded in September's Health and wellbeing meeting. Jane Wood to send out. <b>01.10.25</b> Training delivered to Looked-after Children's Nurses. Audit required Quarter 1 2026</p> <p><b>Jan-26:</b> To re-run the numbers on the SDQ (audit) to monitor impact from changes made (more tracking through IROs required). This to be progressed by next Corporate Parenting Board.</p> <p><b>Feb-26:</b> The SDQ process was revised. This change involved 6 weekly SDQ reminders to be sent to carers as opposed to the 3 monthly reminder timelines. High scoring results are now shared each month with relevant managers including the Empower team so that they can take appropriate action. In addition, outstanding SDQ details are escalated each month with the case holders / team managers so that they can support carers with completion of the form.</p> <p>In terms of the completed returns, we have had 208 to date which have been uploaded to LCS. We have completed the annual reminder for the outstanding SDQ forms with a deadline by the end of March for the annual DfE return. We expect to therefore have a better understanding of our position over the next month as returns are registered on the system.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	End of March 2026 (for DfE annual return)	Complete
4.3.3	Children in care have timely access to mental health services and where appropriate, referrals are expedited based on need. Monitor waiting lists for children in care who require this input or assessment and collate data.	<p>3/7/25 This is in place for neuro assessment, but not as yet for post diagnosis support, this is an aspiration to be explored. The neuro assessment current wait list has been explored, and children have been expedited where appropriate. Further exploration on other services within RDaSH CAMHS will be undertaken through the SEMH sub-group. Discussed at length within Health &amp; Wellbeing meetings. CAMHS representative to attend Dec CPPB.</p> <p>Children in care are now being prioritised on waiting lists as appropriate.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	Commence by 30th June 2025 Dec 2025 complete	Complete. (Review where further issues are raised).

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
4.3.4	There is currently no trauma pathway that children in care can access in Rotherham. As Corporate Parents we will promote accessibility to services where the experience of trauma is determined as the primary concern and encourage the development of a specific trauma pathway.	<p><b>3/7/25</b> There is a SEMH sub-group working on this. First Meeting has occurred, next meeting to concentrate on mapping out current pathways for social, emotional and mental health support.</p> <p><b>20/10/2025</b> Mapping of services carried out, to also incorporate the offers of any third sector organisations and empowers new remit. There still seems to be an identified gap around supporting social, emotional and mental health where the primary cause is determined to be trauma, particularly those that end up in crisis and might not be in the remit of empower. <b>ACTION 1</b> SEMH group to look at some cases and do a small thematic audit to gain any learning from cases where young people have been in crisis. <b>ACTION 2</b> Consideration of a small panel of professionals for children in care presenting with behaviours that challenge and having an impact upon their SEMH to consider systemic response.</p> <p><b>Feb-26:</b> Thematic multi-agency audit planned 17th March with Social care, Named Nurse and CAMHS, to evidence if there is a need for a trauma pathway or a vulnerability panel. As part of this deep dive, we are also looking at the current pathways to specialised commissioning through the joint resource panel, so if we are identifying that there is an unmet need (and there are no universal services to meet it) such as a trauma-based package of care, then we can commission specialist support.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	Ongoing Monitoring Required	In progress
4.3.5	<p><b>NEW ACTION</b> (follow on from 4.3.3):</p> <p>Quality Assurance and dip sampling with regard to the timely access of mental health support for children in care.</p>	Feb-26: Plans made for dip sampling between Kim Wilson and Lynda Briggs Named Nurse, this will coincide with the thematic audit in 4.3.2	Sarah Green and Kim Wilson	July 2026	In progress

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<b>4.4 Access to community-based health support and digital information. Interactive sessions (e.g. cooking)</b>					
4.4.1	South Yorkshire ICB are looking at how to provide free prescriptions to care leavers, paper is currently sitting with Executive Directors. Awaiting a decision.	<p><b>7/25</b> in process, plan to present to exec board of the ICB 23/7/25. Paper was provided for discussion, but additional information requested to enable a further discussion, same provided.</p> <p><b>Oct/Nov 2025. Currently with Execs and awaiting outcome.</b></p> <p>Government announcement in relation to care leavers set to receive free prescriptions, dental and eyecare services up to age 25, assurance received via Chief Nurse to present at the next Corporate Parenting Partnership Board with an update.</p> <p><b>Feb-26:</b> At this point the government has not yet published detailed operational guidance on how care leavers will claim the exemptions and when they will come into effect. NHS South Yorkshire executive chief nurse has been liaising with regional NHS England colleagues and NHSE have indicated that further guidance will arrive in the spring.</p> <p>Given this is a wider national approach, and we can see that progress is being made, Service Director agrees to the completion date moving to Spring 2026 from the initial date of Nov 2025.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	Oct/Nov 2025 Spring 2026	In progress
4.4.2	Launch the 'Pathway to Primary Care' to promote the needs of children in care and care leavers.	<p><b>3/7/25</b> in process, primary care pathway shared with Rawmarsh Health Centre, with a plan to extend out to all Rotherham GPs. read code available and the CIC team are using the flags (with consent). <b>26/09/2025</b> Training plan and PowerPoint developed. To send out PP to all safeguarding leads to share within practice and attend a protected learning time session to deliver this training. <b>20/10/25</b> pathway to primary care information sent to all practices and training session to be delivered at a GP Protected learning time event in January.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	January 2026	Complete
4.4.3	Ensure all children in care can access dentistry.	<p><b>15/7/25 903</b> results 91 % Flexible commissioning working well. Working closely with Leanne (oral health lead). There is a small concern that the practices offering flexible commissioning has decreased, so we will monitor and track impact.</p>	Julie Warren-Sykes	January 2026	Complete but ongoing monitoring required

## Priority 5 - Education, Employment and Training

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<p><b>Councillor Brent</b> - Vice Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission  <b>Councillor Sutton</b> - Maltby East  <b>Niall Devlin</b> - Assistant Director Education and Inclusion  <b>Kim Wilson</b> - Service Manager, Children in Care and Care Leavers  <b>Tina Hohn</b> - Virtual School Headteacher Primary  <b>Pete Douglas</b> - Virtual School Headteacher Secondary</p>					
<p><b>5.1 Full-Time Timetable and Within-Class Interventions</b>            To ensure Children in Care (CiC) follow a full-time timetable with minimal exceptions. This approach promotes within-class interventions and aims to improve overall attendance and outcomes.</p>					
5.1.1	Develop a Local Authority (LA) position statement regarding the withdrawal of children from lessons.	Presented at Corporate Parenting.	Pete Douglas/ Tina Hohn		Complete
5.1.2	Support schools with advice on how within-classroom interventions can be supported and developed.	Presented at Corporate Parenting.	Pete Douglas/ Tina Hohn		Complete
<p><b>5.2 Attendance and Suspensions</b>            Children in Care should have excellent attendance. It is crucial to ensure that CiC are attending full-time and decisions about attendance are focused on positive outcomes for children in care.</p>					
5.2.1	Understand the factors that increase the risk of suspension and exclusions, as well as the protective factors.	Analysis work completed and presented to performance board and SLT. Suspensions sample audit work to be completed Autumn term 2025. This will be completed Spring term 2026. Strategic leader task and finish group on suspensions of CiC to be completed end of spring term 2026 – on track will be organised after multiagency audit.	Pete Douglas/ Tina Hohn	End of spring term 2026	Complete
5.2.2	Develop a working protocol with social care on how to mitigate the causal factors and promote the protective factors.	This will be part of the task and finish group work completed by Spring 2026	Pete Douglas/ Tina Hohn/ Stuart Williams	End of spring term 2026	Complete
5.2.3	Provide advice to schools on the use of part-time timetables for Children in Care.	This is sent out annually from access to education. VSEA remind schools both in and OOA of our expectations around use, recording and reviewing of PTTT as required when being considered, or in place for a CiC.	Pete Douglas/ Tina Hohn/ Sarah Whitby		Complete

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
5.2.4	Provide training and advice to social workers on the legislative framework regarding part-time timetables.	Virtual School Heads to present at the All Service Managers' Event on 4th March 2026	Pete Douglas/ Tina Hohn	4th March 2026	In progress
<b>5.3 Post-16 Provision</b>					
Care Leavers need to be in education, employment, or training					
5.3.1	Improve attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, equipping students with the right skills to move forward.	This is covered within VSHT Annual report which should be through governance structures and to CPPB by Dec 25 or Jan 26. Calendared for CPPB on 24/03/26.	Pete Douglas/ (Tina Hohn)	January 2026	Complete
5.3.2	Promote Level Two apprenticeships and develop a post-18 pathway with a guaranteed offer to all Year 11 CiC.	We now have an offer from RNN that guarantees all Y11 CiC an offer of a place. There is a post-16 specialist within the virtual school team, who provides career advice and support with applications, CV writing, etc. This is offered as an extension to Post 18 care leavers at the fortnightly drop in at The Journey	Pete Douglas/ Christine Waugh		Complete
5.3.3	Improve the transition to post-16 education by providing post-16 settings with essential child-specific information.	Forms for Y11 CiC have gone out and returns are coming in. VSEA work closely to share appropriate information through the PP with post 16 settings to ensure high quality data is shared ahead of transition points.	Pete Douglas		Complete
5.3.4	Reconcile the data that family help and the virtual school hold about children who are NEET.	Data reconciliation has taken place.			Complete

## Priority 6 – Fostering – Family Based Care

Ref	Action	Progress Update	Lead Officer	By When	RAG Status
<p><b>Councillor Ismail</b> - Mayor  <b>Jane Wood</b> - Head of Children in Care  <b>Paul Stinson</b> - Head of Children's Commissioning  <b>Vicky Chew</b> - Service Manager, Fostering</p>					
6.1	Improve our accommodation and placement options in order to meet the needs of our children in care and care leavers.	<p>The recruitment and assessment of new foster carers is a significant priority. The local authority is working hard to ensure RMBC is the agency of choice for those considering fostering. In doing so, we have engaged with sector experts to support our digital marketing campaign.</p> <p>Improved governance in relation to data capture; and intelligence relating to the number of approvals as well as the placement capacity this has created. This is now presented to the Directors Assurance Board.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with commissioned providers within the region to ensure that there is a greater degree of placement option for children requiring foster care.</p> <p>Supported Accommodation development within the in-house estate to be an area of focus.</p>	<p>Vicky Chew – Service Manager Fostering</p> <p>Richard Fisher – Service Manager Residential Care Services.</p>	March 2026	In progress
6.2	Improve our sufficiency/ choice of placements in order to meet the demand for global majority children and asylum-seeking children.	<p>Improving sufficiency and choice of foster carers to meet the needs of children from the global majority and children seeking asylum remains a core priority for the service and an acknowledged ongoing challenge.</p> <p>The service has undertaken evidence-informed work to increase awareness of fostering among under-represented communities, including testing targeted digital approaches and refreshing fostering information in multiple languages. Alongside this, the service has begun strengthening links with local community and faith-based groups, recognising that meaningful engagement requires sustained relationship-building over time.</p> <p>While progress in increasing representation remains gradual, learning from this work is shaping future plans. Improving cultural representation within the foster carer cohort continues to be a long-term focus within the service's sufficiency strategy to better meet children's identity and belonging needs.</p>	Vicky Chew/Paul Stinson	December 2025	Complete – it has become BAU and will remain a focus as we go into any new arrangement post March 27.