

SURREY'S CHILDREN

Our care. Your future

Our pledge, to our children and young people.

1. Placements

We will do the best we can to make sure where you live is right for you.



2. Contact

We will help you keep in touch safely with the important people in your life.

3. Choices

We will tell you about options and involve you fully in making plans about your life.

4. Skills for life

We will support you with your education and help you grow up with good skills for life.

5. Safe

To keep you safe and ensure that you feel safe.

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on tape or in another language please contact us on:

Email: csfcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk

Tel: 03456 009 009

Minicom: 0208 541 9698

SMS: 07527 182861

CARE COUNCIL



CHANGE IS ON THE HORIZON

SURREY'S CHILDREN

Our care. Your future

Confident in care. Confident in my future.

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015 - 2018

Purpose

We are the corporate parents to our children and young people in care. We seek to ensure that the young people we look after grow up with the same opportunities as other young people and go on to live successful and fulfilling lives.

Vision

As corporate parents we want every child to feel safe and confident about their future.

Values

We are committed to:

- **Listening** to our young people and involving them fully in plans about their lives.
- Being **responsible** for looking after our young people and doing what we promise in our pledge.
- Building **trust** in our young people and our staff.
- **Respecting** the needs and wishes of our young people.

Context

In Surrey, there are around 750-780 children and young people who are living in our care at any one time, and 420 careleavers who are moving to become more independent. There are around 120 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in care (UASC) who have often had a traumatic journey into care.

The majority of our young people are placed in foster care and the remaining children are in residential homes, or placed for adoption or in independent living.

Where we live, who we live with and how safe and happy we feel are important factors which contribute to everyone's wellbeing. We agree with young people who tell us that if you can't live in the home you'd choose, it is especially important to get the next best option right.

We know we don't have enough placement choice, not enough foster carers who live in Surrey and that too many children have to live elsewhere.

Therefore our focus in 2015/2016 is placement choice and stability: Young people know who they will live with and experience stable placements. They will have good relationships with those involved in their care. See our summary **Being in Care (2015)** for more information.

Our goal is that Surrey children and young people...

are happy where they live

Young people know who they will live with and experience stable placements. They have good relationships with those involved in their care.

↓ Fewer children have to move places three or more times a year.

We know that:

We have made good improvements in placement stability but a small number of young people have to move places three or more times a year. Too many changes make it hard for young people to feel they belong. We don't have enough foster carers who live in Surrey and too many young people have to live elsewhere.

In 2015/16 we will:

- reduce the impact of change between placements, ensuring children are informed and involved in any changes to their placement
- train carers and staff in social pedagogy to offer children emotional support with practical hands-on action
- recruit more foster carers, particularly for teenagers or for children with disabilities appropriate.

are healthy and aware of their choices

Young people are supported to have improved health and wellbeing.

↑ More children in care will have up to date health checks that include a wellbeing health check.

We know that:

Young people would like more choice about where and when to have their health assessments. Some young people would like more support with their healthcare if English is not their first language. Others have said they would like more advice and guidance about healthy eating and keeping active.

In 2015/16 we will:

- ensure we deliver an effective health check service that includes health promotion and emotional wellbeing
- ensure there are opportunities for young people to participate in fun activities including: the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, clubs, music lessons, sport and leisure, and physical activity
- help young people understand events and feelings through life story work.

are and feel safe

Young people are safe and feel safe. If they go missing they are listened to, trusted and given a say when they return.

↓ Fewer children in care go missing

We know that:

Sometimes children go missing from their placement because they're not happy with their plans or because they're missing friends and family. Being missing means that they're at risk and not safe. It is really important that young people living independently feel safe at home.

In 2015/16 we will:

- actively work with young people to understand why they go missing, including having return interviews, and to support prevention
- offer a restorative approach to children in care who offend
- ensure children feel safe from bullying.

are making progress

Young people have the confidence and skills to live successful and fulfilling lives.

↑ Children in care achieve more, especially at Key Stages 1 and 2 results.

We know that:

Young people feel supported in education by those around them such as their carers, social workers and school staff. It is important that young people have the right support, including financial support, to do the best they can. We need to make sure young people and their carers are aware of opportunities available to them.

In 2015/16 we will:

- manage change between school settings and make timely decisions on personal education plans
- provide extra support for children in Key Stage 2
- ensure that our youngest children have access to early years opportunities
- increase the number of apprenticeships available for young people who are not in education, training or employment.



feel confident about becoming an adult

Young people are equipped for a successful and fulfilling future.

↓ Fewer care leavers are living in unsuitable accommodation

We know that:

Only a small number of young people live in unsuitable accommodation. Some young people require more support to live independently. Having a job, somewhere good to live and strong relationships are key to confidence.

In 2015/16 we will:

- strengthen the choices of accommodation we have for young people as they move into independence at 18
- offer every young person aged 14-21 a work sponsor to help them get ready for work
- work to improve young people's experiences when moving into independent living, including providing good information about the choices they have and their support network.