

**OUR PLEDGE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN AND ON THE EDGE OF CARE AND THOSE LEAVING CARE BY:**

**1. PRE-CARE**  
 Supporting families at an early stage; providing targeted intensive support for children, young people and their families where the risk of entry into care is high; and ensuring that decisions about taking children into care are made without unnecessary delay and always in their best interests.

**2. IN-CARE**  
 Securing earlier permanence and stability for children and young people in care and enabling them to build positive and supportive relationships; extending placement options; strengthening support for care givers; providing more effective regional specialist services; reconfiguring the skill-mix in residential care; providing effective interventions to deal with particular challenges including: substance misuse, poor mental health and emotional wellbeing outcomes, criminalisation and poor educational outcomes.

**3. AFTER-CARE**  
 Supporting children and young people returning home from care and their families; extending support for children and young people after-care, including care leavers, to help them make a successful transition into independent living as adults.



**Economic and Environmental Wellbeing**

**Physical and mental Health**

**Positive Contribution to Society**

**Play and Leisure**

**Living in a Society which respects their rights**

**Learning and Achieving**

**Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations**

**Living in Safety and Stability**

**OUTCOMES**

Effective Partnership Working

Co-design/Co-production Approaches

Robust Legislative Framework

A Skilled Workforce

**ENABLERS**

## **STRATEGY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The Looked After Children Strategy has been developed in support of the wider Strategy for Children and Young People, which aims to *deliver improved well-being of all children and young people in Northern Ireland*, in keeping with the requirements of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015. Under the wider Strategy, the well-being of children and young people is measured in terms of 8 outcomes. The Looked After Children Strategy, likewise, aims to *deliver improvements in the well-being of looked after children*, again measured in terms of 8 outcomes. The Looked After Children Strategy acknowledges that specific actions are required to improve the well-being of looked after children and actions proposed under the Strategy are listed against the outcome area to which they relate as reflected below. Some actions have the potential to lead to improvements across more than one or all outcome areas.

Pending the outcome of the formal consultation, it should be noted that it is intended to test new ways of working, which will involve piloting new approaches, for example, the introduction of a new Family Drug and Alcohol Court. Some will require new investment to support the introduction of extended services, for example, after care services for longer or for greater numbers of care leavers. Some will require us to facilitate the movement of existing investment to, for example, support preventative and earlier interventions. Some will necessitate the introduction of new legislation. Therefore the availability of resources may impact on the pace of change to services.

It is also important to note that some actions will deliver on a number of or on all outcomes but for the purpose of creating report cards, actions have been linked to the primary outcome area.

## ACTIONS RELEVANT TO ALL OUTCOMES

ACTION No.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES								
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y	
A1	<p>Bring forward an Adoption and Children Bill which (subject to consultation) will include provision to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote and support the use of concurrent dually approved care placements</li> <li>2. Strengthen and extend permanence options through the introduction of a Special Guardianship Order and automatic extension of Residence Orders to age 18</li> <li>3. Place care planning on a statutory basis</li> <li>4. Strengthen support for kinship care arrangements</li> <li>5. Strengthen panel assessment and decision making for foster carers</li> <li>6. Introduce a duty to promote educational achievement and ensure the child's education or training will not be disrupted, where practicable</li> <li>7. Place the Going the Extra Mile Scheme on a statutory basis</li> </ol> <p><b>Other related actions are referenced throughout the Implementation Plan</b></p>				DoH	HSC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A2	Develop and introduce a recognised definition for 'edge of care'				HSCB (W1)	HSC/EA/VOL&COMM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A3	Develop and implement a Family and Parenting Support Strategy on a cross-departmental basis				DoH	OGDs/HSC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A4	Implement the findings of the Care Proceedings Pilot				DoH/DoJ	HSC/NICTS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A5	In partnership with the Department of Justice implement the findings of the Review of Specialist Children's Services				DoH/DoJ	HSC/YJA/JJC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A6	In partnership with the Department of Justice, trial a Family Drug and Alcohol Court				DoJ/DoH	OLCJ/HSC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

A7	Implement a Service Review Programme which considers the effectiveness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Support Services</li> <li>• Edge of Care Services</li> <li>• Services provided to children with a disability</li> <li>• Foster Care Services</li> <li>• Residential Care Provision</li> </ul> The Review Programme will take account of the changing needs of children, foster carers and staff, in particular, those living and working in children's homes. It will also inform ongoing work to develop alternative placement options for children in care	HSCB (W1, 2)	HSC/VOL&COM/ CARERS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A8	In partnership with the Departments of Justice and Finance consider the findings of the Review of Civil and Family Justice	DoJ/DoH/DoF	NICTS/HSC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>OUTCOME 1</b> <b>LIVING IN A SOCIETY WHICH RESPECTS THEIR RIGHTS</b> <b>[ARTICLE 42, UNCRC]</b>											
ACTION No.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES				
							1 R I G H T S	2 R E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G
R1	Review the looked after children review process (to ensure it is achieving best outcomes)	DoH HSCB(W2)	HSC DFC VOL&COMM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R2	Development of an integrated care pathway for looked after children and young people with disabilities which enhances transition to adult services	DoH HSCB(W2)	HSC DFC VOL&COMM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

R3	Establish formal mechanisms, including a biennial survey, to enable looked after children and care-experienced young people, those on the edges of care and those responsible for their care to be involved in policy, service and practice development on a co-design/co-production basis	DoH HSCB(W2&3)	HSC VOL&COMM CARERS	✓	✓								
R4	<b>Adoption &amp; Children Bill:</b> Place advocacy services on a statutory basis for all looked after children, former looked after children or adopted children who wish to make representations including complaints about the discharge of any of the HSC Trust's functions	DoH HSCB(W2&3)	HSC VOL&COMM CARERS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## OUTCOME 2

**LIVING IN A SOCIETY IN WHICH EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND GOOD RELATIONS ARE PROMOTED BETWEEN PERSONS WHO SHARE A RELEVANT CHARACTERISTIC AND PERSONS WHO DO NOT SHARE THAT CHARACTERISTIC  
[ARTICLE 2, UNCRC]**

ACTION No.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES							
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y

This outcome is intrinsically linked to the other 7 outcomes and consequently, no separate actions are outlined.

## OUTCOME 3 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH [ARTICLE 24, UNCRC]

ACTION NO.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES									
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 P E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y		
H1	<b>Adoption &amp; Children Bill:</b> Review the practice (and legislation), which requires a child with a disability provided with short breaks to become looked after, <u>solely</u> on the ground that he/she is provided with short breaks				DoH HSCB(W2)	HSC VOL&COMM		✓	✓							
H2	Explore options for early interventions and support within the school environment to promote the wellbeing of looked after children				DE EA	SCHOOLS VOL&COMM		✓			✓					
H3	Introduce an annual holistic health assessment in place of current medical examination arrangements which enables competent looked after children to decline the assessment and, instead, enable him or her to access advice, information, support and the services of a clinician/doctor when required or on request				DoH PHA HSCB(W1&2)	GPs FNPs SCHOOL NURSES		✓	✓							
H4	As part of the Integrated Care Pathway for CAMHS, develop an effective pathway (incorporating transition planning to adult services) to specifically address the mental health needs of looked after children				HSCB(W2)	HSC		✓	✓							

**OUTCOME 4  
LIVING IN SAFETY AND WITH STABILITY  
[ARTICLE 19, UNCRC]**

ACTION NO.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES									
							1 R I G H T	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y		
S1	Implement outstanding recommendations of the Marshall Inquiry and SBNI Thematic Review (child sexual exploitation)				DoH HSCB(W2)	HSC/VOL&COMM/ DoJ/DE/PSNI/YJA		✓		✓						
S2	Develop a regional social work assessment, reception and advisory service for Separated, Trafficked and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children				HSCB(W2)	HSC/VOL&COMM/ DoJ/PSNI		✓								
S3	<b>Adoption &amp; Children Bill:</b> Develop proposals to extend the support available to children leaving care, including living arrangements				DoH HSCB(W4)	HSC/VOL&COMM/ DFC/DFE				✓						

**OUTCOME 5  
LEARNING AND ACHIEVING  
[ARTICLES 28 & 29, UNCRC]**

ACTION NO.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES							
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y

L1	Enhance access to support, resources and training for schools to help them become attachment aware. This will include helping them understand their role linked to that of the other education and health professionals and the difficulties that a looked after child faces	DE	EA		✓			✓			
L2	Develop a framework to outline quality provision for Looked After Children in schools	DE	ETI		✓			✓			
L3	Building on the EITP Looked After Children Education project consider the impact of the Looked After Children Champion and determine the future of such a role for all looked after children in education	DE	EA Schools HSCTS Parents Foster Carers		✓			✓			
L4	Implement a series of reviews to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the primary causes of the educational attainment gap for looked after children and develop an effective multi-agency approach to close the gap</li> <li>Consider options for a future Nurture Programme to include a whole school nurture approach</li> <li>Assess the adequacy of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process to ensure the PEP contributes to the child's Care and/or Pathway Plan and PEPs will be placed on a statutory basis through Regulations arising from the Adoption and Children Bill</li> <li>Review the effectiveness of looked after children-targeted funding provided through the common funding formula to schools and if effective consider extending to other groups</li> </ul>	DE	EA Schools		✓			✓			
L5	As the new Personal Learning Plans for Special Education Needs (SEN) children are developed, ensure that they co-ordinate with PEPs for children who are also looked after	DE	EA		✓			✓			
L6	Support looked after children and young people to take part in after school programmes and out-of-school activities	DE/DH	EA		✓			✓			
L7	Create opportunities for second-chance learning for looked after children when they have attained greater stability in their lives	DE/DoH/DfE/ DfC	EA SCHOOLS HSCTS FURTHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS		✓			✓			



**OUTCOME 6  
PLAY AND LEISURE  
[ARTICLE 31, UNCRC]**

ACTION No.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES							
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y
P1	With other government departments, relevant agencies, local government, social workers, teachers, advocates, peer mentors, carers and former looked after children, actively promote, encourage, support and facilitate access to play, leisure and educational opportunities by looked after children and access to internet in children's homes where possible				DoH/OGDs HSCB(W3)	DE/EA/SCHOOLS/ PHA/DfC/DAERA/ VOL/COMM/ COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
P2	Working with DAERA, maximise the use of educational and recreational facilities at Nature Reserves and Country parks by looked after children and care leavers				DAERA/DoH	HSC/VOL&COMM/ COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS		✓			✓	✓		

**OUTCOME 7  
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING**

**[ARTICLES 24 & 27, UNCRC]**

ACTION NO.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES								
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 E C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y	
EE1	Work with young people to review current arrangements for providing them with advice, guidance and representation (including personal advisers advocates, mentors, peer mentors and independent visitors) to determine that the most effective and consistent model is in place				HSCB(W3)	HSC/VOL&COMM		✓		✓				✓	✓
EE2	Work with other government Departments and the voluntary sector to build on and enhance measures currently available to children and young people leaving care (particularly in relation to housing; further and higher education; employment; apprenticeship and training opportunities; and ease of access to financial, careers and benefits advice and information)				DoH/OGDs HSCB(W3)	HSC/VOL&COMM/ DFC/NIHE/OGDS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS CARERS	✓	✓						✓	✓
EE3	Promote the use of social clauses in public sector contracts targeted at looked after children (in accordance with the DoF Buy Social Strategy)				DoH/DoF/ HSCB(W3)	OGDs	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓

**OUTCOME 8  
CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TO COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY**

**[ARTICLE 12, UNCRC]**

ACTION NO.	ACTION DESCRIPTOR	PRE CARE	IN CARE	AFTER CARE	LEAD ORGANISATION	MAIN PARTNERS	CSCA OUTCOMES							
							1 R I G H T S	2 E Q U A L I T Y	3 H E A L T H	4 S A F E T Y	5 L E A R N I N G	6 P L A Y	7 C O N O M I C	8 S O C I E T Y
CS1	Establish mechanisms to promote a positive image of looked after children and to help the general public understand who looked after children are, what it means to be looked after and to appreciate the contribution that looked after children have to make to their communities and wider society				DoH/OGDs HSCB(W2)	COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS	✓	✓						✓
CS2	Working with other Departments and other bodies, promote and support the participation of all looked after children in activities and fora which offer them the opportunity to contribute to their communities and society and build their confidence, self-belief and general sense of self-worth				DoH/OGDs HSCB(W2)	COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS	✓	✓						✓

## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY – DRAFT REPORT CARDS

Programme for Government, and its delivery plans have committed to plan, deliver and monitor using **Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)**. OBA concentrates on impact, not quantity.

The impact of the Looked After Children Implementation Plan will be monitored via a short report card that focuses on a small number of performance accountability measures i.e. how much do we do; how well do we do it; and most significantly 'is anyone better off' as a result of the actions taken forward via the Implementation Plan. Actions should have a direct, measurable impact on people, in this case looked after children, care leavers, foster carers and parents.

We have identified a number of performance accountability measures (indicators) for each Outcome. In order to consider which of these best demonstrate a direct measurable impact on looked after children, care leavers, foster carers and parents, we are asking consultees to select their top 3 'Is anyone better off' indicators for each Outcome. These are detailed in the following pages.

In each of the 'Is anyone better off' indicators, level can be expressed as a percentage or a number whichever is most appropriate.

**OUTCOME: LIVING IN A SOCIETY WHICH RESPECTS THEIR RIGHTS**

**IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

An increase in the level who feel that life story work helped them understand their identify

An increase in the level who feel they have a chance to give their views about the issues that affect them

An increase in the level of i) under 12s ii) 13-16 who agree that the care plan process made them feel empowered

An increase in the level of over 16s who agree that the pathway plan process made them feel empowered

**OUTCOME: HAVING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND GOOD RELATIONS**

**PERFORMANCE FOR ALL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY OUTCOMES WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IS BEING ACHIEVED**

## **OUTCOME: ENJOYING GOOD PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

### **IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

An increase in the level with improved GHQ score after CAMHS

An increase in the level expressing satisfaction with their health

An increase in the level expressing satisfaction with volume and quality of short break services

An increase in the level with improved emotional health and wellbeing following engagement Education Counselling Services

Level of school children expressing satisfaction with their emotional health and well-being by age

## **OUTCOME: LIVING IN SAFETY AND WITH STABILITY**

### **IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

Number of weeks for care orders proceedings to conclude.

Level consulted and made aware of, decisions in their care plans and pathway plans.

An increase in the level of satisfaction of relationships with social worker, foster carer, personal advisor, residential care staff

Level who accepted intervention who did not have a substance abuse problem the following year

Level of satisfaction with the support, information and advice available to them – for CYP; and Foster Carers (by type)

Level of Care leaver's satisfaction as to how to access relevant services and support

Level who feel safe/protected

## **OUTCOME: LEARNING AND ACHIEVING**

### **IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

An increase in the level who have achieved their predefined objectives in PEPs (and PLPs where relevant)

A decrease in the level of difference between Looked After Children and the general school population attaining A\* - C in English and Maths

An increase in the level attaining 5 or more A\* - C or equivalent GCSEs

A decrease in the level of difference between attainment at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3

Measurement re outcomes relating to Looked After Children factor

Measurement re Outcomes from nurture units

## **OUTCOME: ENJOYING PLAY AND LEISURE**

### **IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

Level of satisfaction with approved Schemes

Level of satisfaction with access to play and leisure

Level of satisfaction with the support and access to after school and out of school activities

## **OUTCOME: HAVING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING**

### **IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

An increase in the level attaining 5 or more A\* - C or equivalent GCSEs

An increase in the level attending HE/FE education

An increase in the level in Education, Employment and Training by age and category including HE/FE

An increase in the level completing apprenticeships

Level of difference between young parents who are care leavers and the general population (by age)

## **OUTCOME: CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TO COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY**

### **IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?**

An increase in the level in Education, Employment and Training at age 19 by category including HE/FE

An increase in the level of participation in voluntary and community work

An increase in the level that feel there are contributing positively to their community or neighbourhood

A decrease in the level of over 10s not cautioned or convicted of an offence

An increase in the level of i) 10 - 16s; and ii) over 16s who do not have a substance misuse problem