

Waltham Forest Corporate Parenting

What we promise to do for you

Our Strategy

September 2023 – 2024



CONTENTS

[A message from Kizzy and Brendan](#)

[Some of your thoughts as children in care and care experienced children](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Our promise](#)

[Our duty to you, children in care and care experienced children](#)

[A picture of our children and young people](#)

[How this fits in with everything else](#)

[How money fit into all this](#)

[Our priorities](#)

[PRIORITY 1: Feeling listened to and understood](#)

[PRIORITY 2: Feeling safe and being safe](#)

[PRIORITY 3: Somewhere to live that is suitable](#)

[PRIORITY 4: Being independent and achieving ambitions](#)

[PRIORITY 5: Keeping healthy and living a healthy lifestyle](#)



WALTHAM FOREST

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

A MESSAGE FROM KIZZY AND BRENDAN

I've been part of the Children in Care Council for xx time and this year I've joined Kizzy as the 'Co-Chair' (not a chair to sit on) of the Board (not bored!) It lets me as a young person be in charge (with Kizzy) of some of the things all the professionals are talking about that's about us and what other youth might have to say about it. I think this is just one thing that can make a difference.

The information in these pages is a promise from all the professionals around us about what they'll do, how they'll care for us, speak to us, love us, and all the rest! **Brendon, Co-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board**



I feel very proud of my role as a Corporate Parent and I'm really happy that I can help to improve the things that we do for you. This happens through something called the Corporate Parenting Board which I'm responsible for.

The Board is a small group of local councillors, professionals, young people and carers who meet throughout the year to find out what's working well and what's not working well. Where things aren't working well we ask lots of questions to try to understand what's going on and why, and what can or needs to be done differently.

I'm delighted that Brendan has joined me to help lead this work. This will make sure you are always at the front of our minds and that we think of you as we do our own children. **Kizzy, Co-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board and Lead Member for Children and Families**

WALTHAM FOREST

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

SOME OF YOUR THOUGHTS AS OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

“He has a genuine nature when it comes to working with young people. He truly wants the best for me. Many times I’ve called him just for a chat as life can be hard for any young person..... I’ve come into contact with many professionals over the years and sadly, it’s very rare to see the commitment and genuine care that he has not just for me, but young people in general.”

“The best coach”

“Too many things, important one he helped me about my housing however he ordered my college kit stuff”

“Caring, she wants to listen to me and do the best for me”

WALTHAM FOREST

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

INTRODUCTION

This document is a promise of what we'll do for you in the coming year. It's also known as a strategy. This has been put together using what you have told us and also using the information from our Corporate Parenting Services annual report from 2022-23 which describes all of the work we did in that year. You can look at the annual report alongside this document.

Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe the responsibility every member of staff in a council has, to: care for you and all of our children in care and care experienced children; ensure you all have every opportunity to reach your full potential as you grow up in our family.

This strategy document is about working in partnership with you, our children and young people. We understand you have the right and responsibility to have a say in how services work for you and this document describes how we will work with you to improve the experiences you, and other children in and leaving our care have.

This document is written for you. Because of this, it is addressed to you. We will use words 'child in care' and 'care-experienced children', and we'll also speak about you as 'our children'. This is what you, our children and young people, have told us you prefer.

OUR PROMISE

We are loving parents who care about you and we are interested in you as a person. We care for you as if you are our own child. We want the best for you and we will be there for you whenever you need. We'll also back you up and fight for you when that's needed. We will do everything we can to give you the skills you need to live a fulfilling, successful, and rewarding life that is full of love and happiness. We'll also do all we can to make sure you are healthy and well, both physically and emotionally.

We will take bold and innovative steps to ensure that the people who are privileged to parent you have the right training, support, knowledge and skills that you need and deserve.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest is committed to being a caring and ambitious corporate parent and we will show this through the ways we support you, the ways we talk to you and about you and the way we work in partnership with you. We will do everything we can to make sure that you are set up for life. You are part of your neighbourhood in Waltham Forest and you will always be a part of that.



OUR DUTY TO YOU, CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN

In 2017, a law was passed, the Children and Social Work Act, which meant that Waltham Forest Council and partners had to promise to provide you with the best care they could. These promises are called [Corporate Parenting Principles](#) and there are seven of them which sum up our hopes and goals for our work with you, your carers and your families and how we will help you thrive. In order to carry out our duty for children and young people who are looked after, we need:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

A PICTURE OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This table shows the numbers of our young people we currently support in our Corporate Parenting Services

AT A GLANCE	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No. of children in our care as at 31 March of each year	317	329	343
No. of children (0-17 years old) per 10,000 in our care as at 31 March of each year	47	49	55
% of our children in care living with foster families (both in and out of the borough) as at 31 March of each year	74%	73%	67%
% of our children as at 31 March of each year placed:	36%	36%	34%
• within local authority area, within 20 miles from home	33%	34%	36%
• outside the local authority area, within 20 miles from home	17%	14%	12%
• outside the local authority area, over 20 miles from home			
Care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 who were looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday	209	213	197
Percentage of our Care Leavers in education employment and training 1st April on 31st March of each year	53% (17-18yrs) 55% (19-21yrs)	75% (17-18yrs) 65% (19-21yrs)	65% (17-18yrs) 64% (19-21yrs)
New starters in care during 1st April - 31st March of each year	138	149	176

HOW THIS FITS IN WITH EVERYTHING ELSE

This document is only one piece of work out of many others that helps us to support you. Some of the other areas of work that help us to do this fully are:

- Our Pledge to Children in Care and Leaving Care
- Our Corporate Parenting Board meetings that some of you are involved in, with your views at the heart of what we do
- Our regular Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Champions meetings to ensure that your life experiences, voices and opinions are at the centre of the work we do
- Our excellent Virtual School works with schools, colleges, training providers, other places of education and children's social care to support you to achieve all that you can during your time in education.
- Improving Life Chances work and the [Big Youth Conversation](#) which is an annual survey designed and developed by the Life Chances Youth Taskforce, to improve services for young people throughout the borough.
- [15 Minute Neighbourhood](#) which means everyone who lives in Waltham Forest should be able to meet most, if not all of their needs within a short walk, using public transport or a short bike ride from their home to help them live a fulfilling and healthy life.
- [Families at the Heart of Our Place](#) working with residents to make sure that Waltham Forest remains a safe and healthy place to live, study, work and play and to grow up and grow older.
- [The Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#) will bring about a lot of changes for us all in the future so we are thinking about this now as we plan and develop our services

HOW MONEY FITS IN TO ALL THIS

Covering the costs of any type of service is complicated and since the pandemic and with the rising cost of living this has become much harder for everyone, everywhere.

So, over the next few years our job to cover the costs of everything will become even more challenging than normal but this won't stop us making sure we get the best and most effective services possible for you. We are promising to treat you as our own child and this means that we'll make sure you have everything you need to live a happy and independent life when you leave our care.



WALTHAM FOREST

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

OUR PRIORITIES

For us to be good parents to you while you are in our care, we focus on the five priorities below that you have told us and the trusted adults in your lives are important to you.



**Feeling listened to
and understood**



**Feeling safe and
being safe**



**Somewhere to live
that is suitable**



**Being independent
and achieving
ambitions**



**Keeping healthy and
living a healthy lifestyle**

FEELING LISTENED TO AND UNDERSTOOD

Your experiences are the most important part of how we design services, how we work with you and how we check if they're working well. You, as well as your families and carers, are the experts.

We will:

- Make sure you can make it to important meetings and you have a choice about how you take part
- Encourage you to get involved with the Voice & Influence Service activities and events
- Make sure you have access to those making decisions about you
- Make sure you are part of the decisions and choices we make and if you can't be, then we tell you about those decisions and why we made them
- Tell you straight away about any important changes that need to be made and why
- Support you to see your family if that's what you want

"I would describe her as an excellent communicator. She supports me with my needs, and she listens to everything I say."



"He always listens carefully and gives advice as he would to a friend...His levels of communication are outstanding, I've never had an issue with contacting him. If he is busy, he gets back to me within a short amount of time. If he's off work he makes me aware of this and gives me contact details of who to contact should I need anything. He speaks with warmth and never rushes me. I truly enjoy having him as my PA"

WALTHAM FOREST

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD



FEELING SAFE AND BEING SAFE



You should always feel valued, connected and safe and that you belong. It's important to us that we build trusted and safe relationships with you and your family while you are in care and leaving care. We also know how important it is that we help you to make informed choices about the people you go on to form friendships and connections with. We want to reduce the number of times the professionals in your life change and the number of times you change where you live and where you go to school so that you can keep your friendships and trusted relationships.

We will:

- Do everything to keep you safe from harm
- Make sure there is always someone you can speak to about how safe you are feeling
- Always tell you when we are worried and think you are in an unsafe situation
- Share information with you to help you make confident decisions about your own safety

“People in charge need to know about our trauma and think about what a home means to us or we hold it in and one day we will explode and someone will hurt themselves. This is a big deal”

WALTHAM FOREST

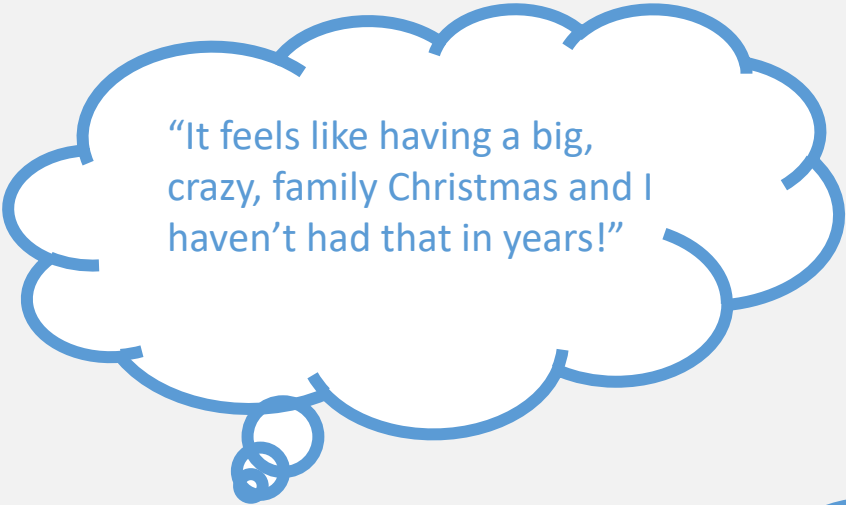
MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

SOMEWHERE TO LIVE THAT IS SUITABLE


We want to make sure you can live in high-quality housing that has everything you need to be safe and happy as you move onto living in your own home. This will give you stability and the chance to maintain relationships that are important to you, near to your school and community where possible.

We will:

- Ask you what's important to you before finding you somewhere to live
- Explain the reasons why somewhere was chosen for you to live
- Do our best to find you somewhere to live near your friends & family
- Tell you where / who you are going to live with before you move there
- Work hard to make sure you to feel like you belong
- Help you to prepare for being an adult and living on your own



“It feels like having a big, crazy, family Christmas and I haven’t had that in years!”



“She’s making sure that our social worker is sorting the permanent placement out. We love that we have a permanent placement!”



WALTHAM FOREST


MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

BEING INDEPENDENT AND ACHIEVING ABITIONS

We want you to have the same or better opportunities as children who are not looked after. We believe in you and we are ambitious about what you can achieve. We are committed to supporting you as you become an adult and gain independence and understand there are many different ways to learn and succeed.

We will:

- Make sure you have the things you need to help with your schoolwork
- Help you develop your skills and interests
- Celebrate your achievements and tell you when you're doing really well
- Support you to become the person you want to be
- Ensure you have access to important documents when you need them
- Work with education and training providers and employers to help you be more confident in yourself and be ready for your future.



“He went to Liverpool to submit my further submission”

“Good at his job, he made me feel proud of myself and people around me”

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MY NEIGHBOURHOOD



Waltham Forest

KEEPING HEALTHY AND LIVING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

You should be able to easily access all health services available, as well as making use of specialist services where necessary.

Difficult and traumatic experiences growing up can impact your mental health and wellbeing, now and in the future. We want to support you to develop positive mental health coping strategies and gain the skills to support your own mental health as you become an adult.

We will:

- Work to reduce any barriers you have with living a healthy life.
- Help you to access high quality services.
- Make sure that you can get support for your mental health when you want and/or need to. We are working hard to make well-being and mental health services more easily available, but not just for you - also for your whole family.
- Make sure health services and health information provided to you and your carers are high quality



“She helps me with advice on not being stressed and actually breathe when I’m frustrated.”

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MY NEIGHBOURHOOD