

# Blaenau Gwent Multi-Agency Corporate Parenting Strategy (2025-2030)



**A promise from Blaenau Gwent**





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**Councillor Steve Thomas**  
Leader of the Council and Cabinet  
Member for Corporate Resources



**Stephen Vickers** Chief Executive  
Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen  
County Borough Councils.

# Introduction

## Foreword

*by Councillor Steve Thomas and CEO Stephen Vickers.*

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is dedicated to ensuring that all children and young people in our care receive the highest standard of support and opportunities to thrive. As corporate parents, we have a collective responsibility to champion the needs and aspirations of our children and young people, providing them with the care and support they need to achieve their full potential.

Our vision for corporate parenting in Blaenau Gwent is to create a safe, strong, nurturing and supportive environment where every child and young person feels able to achieve their aspirations throughout their childhood and transition smoothly into adulthood.

By ensuring we work together interdepartmentally and with other public services, the voluntary sector, and the wider community in Blaenau Gwent to encourage their role as corporate parents, we can provide the seamless support and opportunities our children need to thrive.

In August 2024 Councillor Haydn Trollope signed the Welsh Governments Corporate Parenting Charter – a promise for Wales, at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale alongside our Chief Executive Stephen Vickers and senior officers of the Authority, and in doing so publicly declared Blaenau Gwent County Borough Councils commitment to the 9 promises and 11 principles within it. This ambitious, longer-term strategy and five year action plan outlines Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's promise to be an effective corporate parent, and our commitment to ensure that our children and young people are safe, happy, healthy, and achieving their full potential. In this plan we outline our ambition to support all children and young people in care at every stage of life from the early years until support is no longer needed.

We realise that care-experienced children and young people are individuals and as corporate parents we will remember this and will always endeavor to nurture their uniqueness with all the support they need.

As with all strategies an action plan must accompany it to outline the key steps we will undertake to ensure our ambition is realised and keep us on track to achieve our vision.

***I am very excited for the future for our children and young people in Blaenau Gwent and would encourage all our partner agencies and local organisations to sign the charter and commit to helping support our children and young people, if you haven't already done so, because it takes a village to raise a child.***

*- Councillor Steve Thomas.*



## 1. Background

### What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe the responsibility that local authorities, elected members, employees and partner agencies has to a child or young person in care if they are unable to live with their parents or guardians. It is our legal duty under the Children Act 1989 to act as corporate parents when children become cared for by the Authority.

Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of partners when a child enters care. This includes local authorities and their employees, elected members, and partners agencies. Every member and employee of the council has statutory responsibility to act in the interest of the child.

Being a corporate parent is about wanting the best for that child or young person and striving to achieve it for them.

### Who is Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board?

Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board is made up of elected members, officers of the authority, staff of our partner organisations, foster carers and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board is a group of people that ensure our children and young people in care are treated as well as possible. Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board is responsible for overseeing this strategy and action plan and championing the voice of our children and young people and ensuring the best possible outcomes for them.

The Board will continue to work throughout the life of this strategy to raise awareness of corporate parenting in Blaenau Gwent so that our children, young people and care leavers have the same life chances as those children not care-experienced.

## WE WANT **ALL OF OUR** CHILDREN TO





## The purpose of Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to set out our vision, values, and strategic priorities for supporting care-experienced children and young people in Blaenau Gwent. It provides a framework for action and outlines how we will work together to achieve positive outcomes for our care-experienced children and young people in Blaenau Gwent.

It is essential that we have all the relevant people and organisations working together towards common goals and ambitions for our children and young people. No individual, team, service, or organisation can do this alone which is why collaborative working, at both a strategic and operational level, is essential. This strategy is the first of its kind for Blaenau Gwent and is very ambitious with both short term and long-term goals. It will take time, energy, passion and commitment to deliver all of its promises but together we can achieve more. The strategy and action plan holds everyone responsible including professionals, services, partners and elected Members.

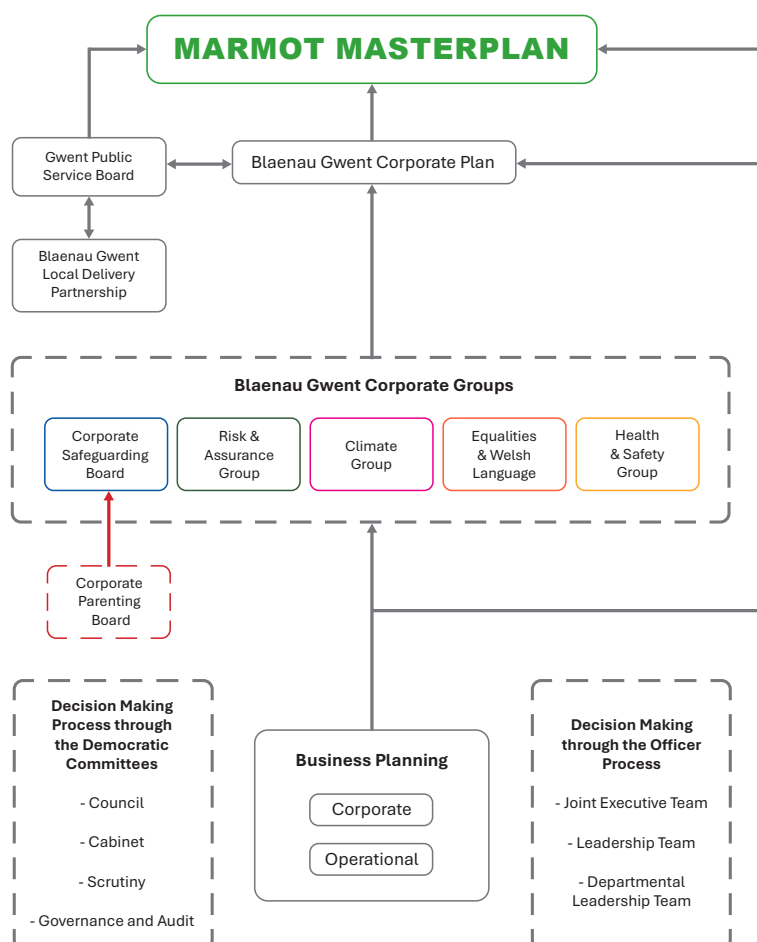
For that reason, we believe it is important that our strategy is a living document that is continually monitored and evolves. We will seek out new activity and identify new actions as we proceed and our consultation with our children and young people will continue each year.

Our children and young people in Blaenau Gwent are at the forefront of development of this strategy. They helped us design it, set the actions and told us their priorities which are embedded in the action plan. By us all working together we can make their world a better place.



# Blaenau Gwent Multi Agency Corporate Parenting Strategy (2025-2030)

In 2024, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council became a “Marmot Council” and committed to tackling health and social inequalities through coordinated evidence-based action on the social determinants of health such as housing, education, environment and discrimination that shape long-term health and wellbeing. This approach is grounded in the eight Marmot Principles championed by Professor Sir Michael Marmot and the Institute of Health Equity (IHE). For care experienced children and young people, this means their wellbeing, opportunities and future prospects will be grounded in the Marmot principles that emphasize fairness, prevention and empowerment and making sure that being “care experienced” does not determine life





## 2. Our Vision for care experienced children and young people.

Our vision for Corporate Parenting in Blaenau Gwent is to create a safe, strong, nurturing and supportive environment where every child and young person is safe, healthy, happy and achieving their full potential.

We want our care experienced children and young people to have the same opportunities as their peers and to be supported to lead fulfilling and independent lives and transition smoothly into adulthood.

Welsh Government's Charter sets out 11 Principles and 9 promises to support care - experienced children and young people. These principles and promises have now been adopted by our authority.

### THE PRINCIPLES

**EQUALITY**

**ERADICATING STIGMA**

**WORKING TOGETHER**

**INCLUSIVE SUPPORT**

**FULFILLING AMBITIONS**

**NURTURING**

**GOOD HEALTH**

**STABLE HOME**

**EDUCATION**

**THRIVING IN THE FUTURE**

**AFTER CARE SUPPORT**

Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter.

### THE PROMISES



We promise to always listen.



We promise to treat you with respect promise to treat you with respect.



We promise to include you in all decisions made about you.



We promise we will keep you informed about our involvement with you.



We promise we will use straight forward language when we communicate with you.



We promise we will show compassion when we consider your needs.



We promise we will work with you to help you achieve your goals.



We promise we will advise you how to make a complaint if you feel we are not adhering to this charter.



We promise we will help you to access independent advocacy to ensure your views, wishes and feelings are heard at any time.



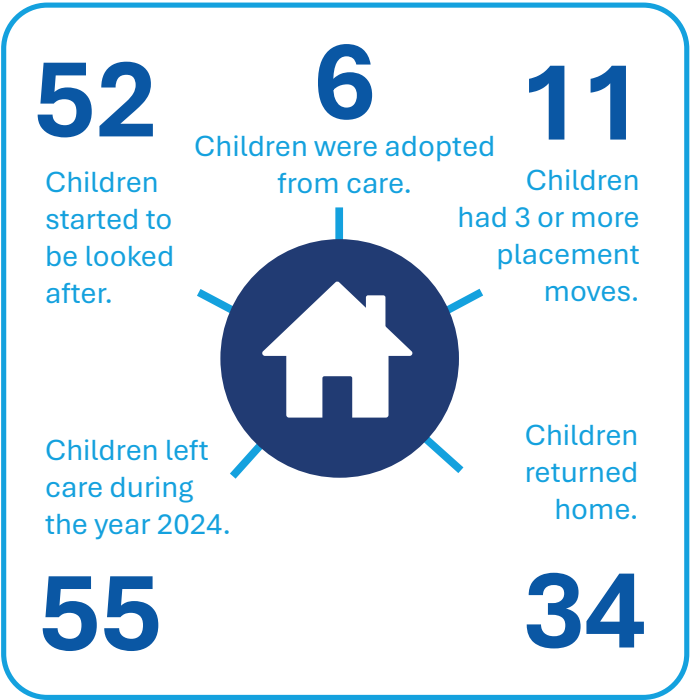
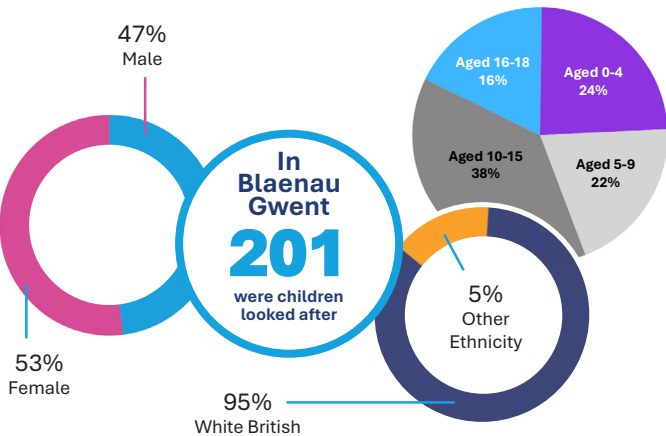


To enable us to consult effectively with the younger care experienced children one of our Blaenau Gwent officers wrote the story of The Promise Tree which we used to engage the younger children and their imagination. The story is about a big strong oak tree living in a beautiful woodland in Blaenau Gwent. The tree was very special and magical because the leaves grew from the promises made by the forest's guardians to the young animals living there. The guardians wanted to make sure every young animal living in the woods felt safe, happy, and cared for so, they decided to make 9 important promises that all animals living in the woods needed to keep to ensure all the younger animals had a safe and happy life.

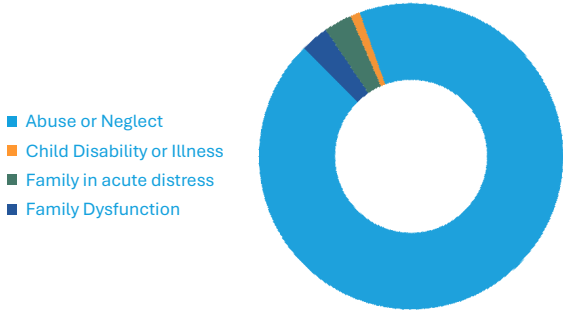
The Promise Tree story was so popular with the children and they seemed to relate to it so well that we decided to use it as our logo for Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board going forward as a reminder to us all to keep our promises. The story will also be used as an animated video to accompany this strategy and action plan.



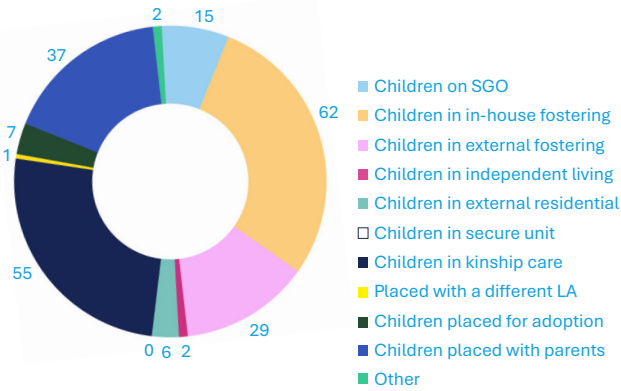
This was the picture of our children looked after in Blaenau Gwent as at 31st March



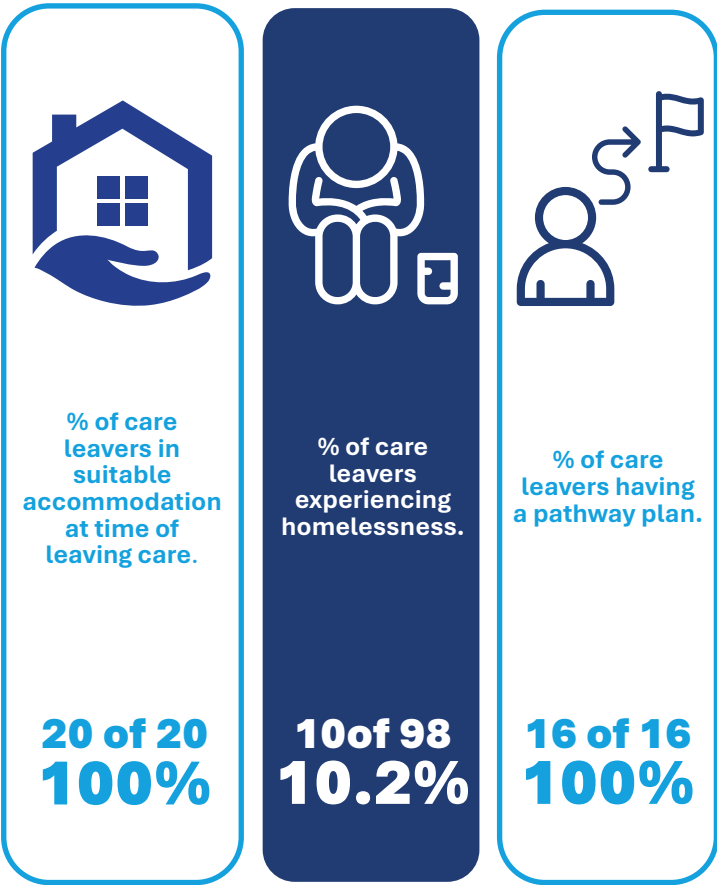
# REASON FOR CHILD LOOKED AFTER



## 2024/2025



# CARE LEAVERS



Throughout 2024 and beginning 2025 we consulted with our children and young people and they told us what was important to them;-

## What our children told us!

*"I need a warm, cosy bed"*

*"Holidays and daytrips are important to us"*

*"I would like to attend the Gym but cannot afford it"*

*"We need more support when we leave care, I worry about not having the 14plus Team"*

*"I am the strong horse in my family because I look after my brothers and sisters"*

*"We need a secure and safe home life with people who love us"*

*"We need the same leisure and support and hobby opportunities as others"*

*"I would love to go to a Music Festival like my friends do"*

*"We need good transport links to see our friends and family"*

*"I hope I can live near my family and friends when I have my own home"*





## Keeping our promises **MAKING THIS HAPPEN**

### Principle 1 - **EQUALITY**

**We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales.**

It is important that our children, young people and care leavers have equity to ensure they receive the same opportunities, respect and support as any other child, regardless of their background or circumstances allowing them to develop a healthy sense of self-worth and reach their full potential.

Services must be designed to ensure that no child and young person is disadvantaged because of their background, who they are, their needs or where they come from, and action must be taken to address inequality in all services.

### **OUR PROMISES:**

- We promise we will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- We promise we will take the time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, wishes, and feelings are heard.
- We promise we will involve all care-experienced children in the decisions that affect their lives and that they will be actively involved in shaping the services they receive.
- We promise we will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales.







## Principle 2 - ERADICATE STIGMA

**We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care.**

Stigma devalues, discriminates, and magnifies social inequalities. For children in care stigma can negatively affect others' perceptions, as well as the children's perceptions of themselves.

It is important that we eradicate stigma and address it on multiple levels in order to support the development of a healthy and positive sense of identity and self-esteem for children in care.

### OUR PROMISES:

- We promise we will recognise care experienced children and young people for the important individuals they are, not just by their experience of being in care.
- We promise we will work toward using changing the language of social care and not use labels or acronyms that make children feel different.
- We promise to recognise them when they do well, praise them and work with them to promote positive messages about care-experienced children and young people.





## Principle 3 **TOGETHERNESS**

**We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to influencing and informing the services they receive and the way they receive those services.**

Working together with our children and young people is crucial as it allows for holistic understanding of their needs, ensures their voices are heard, builds trusting relationships ultimately builds the best possible support by coordinating efforts across different professionals and agencies involved in their lives, leading to improved outcomes for their well-being and development. It puts the child at the centre of their plan and empowers them to participate in decisions affecting their life.

### **OUR PROMISES:**

- We promise we will work alongside our children to ensure their views are used to influence and inform the services they receive and to shape services going forward.
- We promise we will foster strong partnerships with partners, including housing, health, education, employment, further education, universities and voluntary sectors, to provide a continuum of support to, our children and young people.



## Principle 4 **SUPPORT**

**We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced children and young people understand their needs and have access to information and training.**

Many children in care have experienced abuse, neglect or other forms of trauma. It's important that care-experienced children and young people are provided with the care and support they need to be healthy and safe, have the same opportunities as their peers and move successfully into adulthood.

We should ensure those working in all of our organisations with care-experienced children and young people understand their needs and/or have access to information and training.

### **OUR PROMISES:**

- We promise to support our children through their personal journeys and will provide compassionate and consistent support to help them achieve their goals.
- We promise to support our children to become the best version of themselves.
- We promise we will keep our staff up to date with training, tools and information so that they can use these to support our children on their personal journey.







## Principle 5 - **AMBITION**

**We will ensure that every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and is able to enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities.**

Care-experienced children and young people share the same hopes and dreams as any other: they want to be supported to reach their aspirations in the same way as any other child.

Ambition can teach children to recover from setbacks and failures. It often fosters resilience by instilling the belief that setbacks are temporary and provide growth opportunities.

Nurturing ambition typically equips children with the determination to learn from failures, adapt, and persevere.

### **OUR PROMISES:**

- We promise to create nurturing and positive environments that support children's ambitions.
- We promise to encourage and support our children and young people to aim high and reach for their dreams.
- We promise to provide encouragement, praise their efforts, and celebrate their achievements so they become ambitious and determined.



## Principle 6 - NUTURE

**We will make sure all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved.**

Fulfilling a child's need to be loved and nurtured is essential to achieving long-term physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Children need to be safe and nurtured and to realise their potential. We understand that nurturing relationships are essential for children's growth and development.

### OUR PROMISES:

- We promise we will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.

- We promise we will develop calm and nurturing environments in which they feel safe, important, nurtured and loved.
- We promise we will support our children's emotional and mental wellbeing and provide access to mental health services and support to promote the emotional wellbeing of care experienced children and young people.







## Principle 7 **GOOD HEALTH**

**We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people.**

Many care-experienced children and young people have experienced abuse, neglect or other forms of trauma and often experience poor health and wellbeing. We know that children and young people who have experienced such adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are more likely to struggle with their emotions and this compounded with frequent placement moves, disruption of school and support networks, lack of consistent love and care giving all contribute to poorer health outcomes compared to their peers. It's important that care-experienced children and young people are provided with the care and support they need to be healthy and safe, have the same opportunities as their peers and move successfully into adulthood.

### **OUR PROMISES:**

- We promise our care-experienced children and young people have timely access to comprehensive health assessments and services, including dental, vision.
- We promise we will work to reduce any barriers our children have when trying to live a safe, healthy, happy life.
- We promise to understand their individual health and wellbeing needs and act on this to promote their good health.
- We promise we will promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging physical activity, healthy eating, and access to recreational activities.
- We promise we will make sure our children can access mental health support and services when they need them, so they can build emotional resilience through counselling and therapeutic services.



## Principle 8

### A STABLE HOME

**We will seek out and provide safe, stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people.**

Everyone needs a secure and stable home, especially children and young people. A place where they feel physically, socially, and emotionally safe is imperative for healthy development and a successful future. Children who feel connected to their caregivers and home exhibit fewer 'at risk' behaviours later in childhood.

Every care-experienced child and young person deserves a safe, loving home. They should receive the highest quality care, in a home that is well-matched to their individual needs, so that they can thrive.

### OUR PROMISES:

- We promise we will choose and match a home to our children and young peoples needs and wishes.
- We promise to involve and listen to our children and young people when looking for a home.
- We promise to provide a safe and stable home environment for care-experienced children and young people.
- We promise to help them prepare for independence when they are ready to leave care.
- We promise to strengthen systems with housing colleagues to ensure their needs are prioritised and they live where they feel safe and part of the community.







## Principle 9 - A GOOD EDUCATION

**We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to help them become who they want to be.**

A good education is important for our children and young people because it not only provides them with a sense of stability and trusted relationships, a good education unlocks access to a broader range of life choices and chances which is especially important for our children who can miss out on the opportunities and support enjoyed by their peers.

School and friends are often the only consistent part of our children's lives. Care-experienced children and young people generally have lower attainment at school than other children so it is vital to give them a good education.

### OUR PROMISES:

- We promise we will work with high quality childcare, preschools, schools, colleges, universities and other training providers to support the educational attainment of care-experienced children and young people.
- We promise to encourage all education settings to support our children in a way that works for them including if they have additional learning needs or disabilities.
- We promise we will support our children and young people to achieve their educational goals and aspirations.
- We promise we will support our care leavers to access training, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities that suit their abilities and dreams. This includes providing career advice, mentoring, and financial support.
- We promise to support our young people beyond the age of 16 so they stay in employment, training and education to ensure better life chances.



## Principle 10 - THRIVE

**We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood.**

The journey from childhood to adulthood is an important time for all care-experienced children and young people. It is vital that children receive the right support and guidance at the earliest opportunity to prepare them for becoming an adult, and to help them reach their full potential and lead a fulfilling life.

### OUR PROMISES:

- We promise we will provide support and training to help care leavers develop independent living skills this includes budgeting, cooking, and managing a household.

- We promise we will provide ongoing support to care leavers as they transition to adulthood. This includes access to housing, financial support, and emotional support.
- We promise to support care-experienced children and young people to thrive throughout their lives.







## **Principle 11 - LIFELONG**

**We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced children and young people continue to have the support and information available for them after they leave care.**

Children in care require lifelong support because they often face significant challenges due to their traumatic experiences. They need support to heal from trauma, build stability and security and develop their lives as adults.

We understand the importance of having a lifelong support network and strive to develop that for our children.

### **OUR PROMISES:**

- We promise we will work together with all departments and agencies to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available to care-experienced young people after leaving care.
- We promise to always be here for them.





## 4. Measures of success

This strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive 5 year action plan which has been developed through our consultation work with our children, young people, staff, members and partner organisations. To ensure the action plan is successfully delivered it will be monitored quarterly with full annual reviews which will be published on our website under the newly established Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Information Hub.

## 5. Conclusion

We at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are dedicated to fulfilling our role as corporate parents and ensuring that all care-experienced children and young people have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

By adhering to the principles of the Welsh Government's **"A Promise for Wales"** Corporate Parenting Charter and implementing our comprehensive strategy, we aim to create a brighter future for our care-experienced children and young people.