

ONESTOCKPORT

Stockport Corporate Parenting Strategy

2020-2023



Forward

In Stockport, as corporate parents we are committed to children in care and care leavers having the love, care and opportunities we want for our own children. We want our children to develop and maintain positive relationships with their family, friends, professionals and other trusted adults. We want our children to enjoy good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, and make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests. We want them to grow in confidence and to be able to express their hopes, fears and experiences. We want them to have good quality care in stable placements, that will support them as they make their way through childhood into adulthood and beyond.

This strategy describes Stockport's approach to improving the lives of children in our care and care leavers. It outlines our vision and objectives, reports on some of our recent achievements and developments and sets out how we intend to achieve our goals. We will also outline the context in which this strategy sits, and the governance structure in place to ensure that our vision is achieved. This strategy sits alongside our pledge to children in care and care leavers which outlines our commitments to them, and the support they can expect from us.

Cllr Colin Foster, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Chris McLoughlin, Director of Children's Services

What is corporate parenting?

Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the collective responsibility of elected members and officers to ensure the best outcomes for children in the care of Stockport Council and those young people who have left our care.

Our children in care and care leavers are amongst the most vulnerable children and young people in our community. As corporate parents, it is our responsibility to ensure that they are safe, happy, and given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

This strategy sets out our intention to ensure all our looked after children and young people are provided with the best possible care and support, in placements that are in or as close as possible to Stockport when this is in their best interests. It confirms our commitment to work in partnership with children and young people, their parents, carers, families and partner agencies. Our aim is to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and their families by delivering the services they need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

Corporate parenting Vision

Stockport is committed to being an effective, caring and ambitious corporate parent. Children and young people are the future of Stockport, so it makes sense that they are at the heart of everything we do.

Purpose of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023

Stockport is committed to being an effective, caring and ambitious corporate parent. We will do everything we can to equip the children in our care and care leavers with the skills needed to live a fulfilling, successful and rewarding life: -

- We want to make sure all our looked after children and care leavers enjoy the same standard of care that they would get from any good parent.
- We want to do everything we can to equip the children and young people in our care and care leavers with the skills needed to live a fulfilling, successful, and rewarding life.
- We want our children to develop and maintain positive relationships with their family, friends, professionals and other trusted adults
- We want our children to be supported in good quality homes (also called placements) as close as possible to Stockport when this is in their best interests
- We want all Stockport Council services to be clear about their corporate parenting responsibilities and reflect this in their business planning and delivery
- We want to make sure elected members have opportunities to understand their corporate parenting responsibilities and to meet with children in care and care leavers;
- We want to ensure commissioned partners understand and support the council's corporate parenting commitments
- We want to ensure that all children in care and care leavers know about our corporate parenting commitment and strategy.

Our strategy sets out the values, principles, ways of working and priorities which will enable us to achieve our aims for looked after children and care leavers in Stockport.



Stockport's vision and ambition for children and young people*

Our vision is for all children and young people to have the best start in life, be happy, safe, to be able to build and maintain healthy relationships, attend school and learn, be prepared for adulthood and able to achieve their goals. We want families to feel supported, confident, resilient and connected to their community.

Our ambition is for Stockport to be the best place for all children to grow up happily, healthily, with a good education, confidence, ambition and surrounded by love, care and kindness. We seek to support our children and families to thrive through working together to build nurturing and trusting relationships.

Inclusion is at the heart of our work with children and young people. Our practice is founded on the belief that every child and young person matters and matters equally. We will nurture, sustain and further develop connections, relationships and mutual support between ourselves and within our communities in Stockport to build a better future, where all children and young people can thrive and no one is left behind.

*From Stockport Children and Young People's Plan 2020-2023

Our outcomes for children and young people

We want children and young people to be able to say...

- ✓ I feel safe
- ✓ I feel part of my community
- ✓ My voice is heard
- ✓ I enjoy good health and wellbeing
- ✓ I am happy and have people I can trust
- ✓ I am confident and able to reach my goals
- ✓ The people who love and care for me are enabled to do this

(Adopted from the SEND Outcomes through the voice of young people)



Children in care and care leavers – the Stockport picture

- The number of children in care in Stockport fluctuates daily as new children come into care and children leave care.
- Stockport has the lowest percentage of children in care in the North West but as with most local authorities our looked after population has grown over the years and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- At the end February 2021, Stockport had 414 looked after children. In addition, 330 other local authority children were living in Stockport.
- At the end of February 2021, Stockport had 247 care leavers, aged 18 – 25, supported by the leaving care team..
- Children come into care for many reasons, but the most common reason is because their parents or carers are struggling to provide safe care for them.
- We are in touch with 98% of our care leavers aged 18-21.
- 96% of our care leavers, aged 18-21, are in suitable accommodation. This rises to 100% when we look at 21 year olds. Of those not in suitable accommodation, one is in custody and one is in temporary accommodation

*This data will be updated at year end 2020/2021



Impact of COVID-19

'All communities and every aspect of children's services have been affected by COVID-19, however the experiences of children and families have varied greatly' (ADCS 2020)

The pandemic has reinforced inequalities with many children living in some of our communities having...

- limited access to technology
- fewer opportunities to learn at home
- lack of safe spaces to play
- lack of food

The pandemic has also placed further pressure on families: -

- with children with special educational needs;
- those effected by domestic abuse;
- People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities have been disproportionately affected



Seven principles of Corporate Parenting

We are committed to the principles of corporate parenting set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 :-

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people;
2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
3. To take account of their views, wishes and feelings;
4. To help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
7. To prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood and independent living

Our promise to looked after children and care leavers

We will do everything we can to equip the children and young people in our care and care leavers with the skills needed to live a fulfilling, successful, and rewarding life. We will ensure they enjoy the same standard of care that they would get from any good parent.

This strategy is part of a wide range of activity to improve provision for our children in care and care leavers including:

- Our pledge to children in care and care leavers;
- [Children in Care Council](#) and Care Leaver Forum ensure that the voices of children in care and care leavers remain central to our work. All looked after children and care leavers are welcome to join;
- Our [local offer for care leavers](#), informed by the views of our care leavers;
- Our Corporate Parenting Working Party chaired by an elected member of Stockport Council;
- A [Virtual School](#) working with schools to improve educational outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
- Our [Placement Sufficiency Plan](#) that sets out how we will deliver the range and number of high quality placements needed by children in care and care leavers.
- [Greater Manchester Guarantee and Core Offer](#) to improve employment and training outcomes for care leavers across Greater Manchester

PLEDGE 4 STOCKPORT

To all children and young people in care

This is a list of our promises to all children and young people in care and to young people moving on from care to adult life

Private Life "We will never give up on young people, no matter how difficult the challenge will be."	Friends "Where we have expectations on young people, we will make sure they clearly understand what they are."
"We will make sure that children and young people are treated as individuals, and each young person will have a care plan which reflects this."	My Life "We will help children and young people enjoy their lives."
"I want a permanent home, a place of my own."	Love Affection "We will inform all children and young people of their rights and entitlements as set out in legislation, guidance and the UN convention on the Rights of the Child."
"We will ensure that all children and young people have regular and frequent contact with their social worker."	Sleep Overz "We will involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives, and maximise the opportunity to make choices."
Choice!	Pocket Money "We want to make a positive contribution to their community and be prepared for a stable and secure adult life."
Get treated well.	Family Contact "We want children and young people to be healthy and safe; receive a good standard of education."

STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

www.stockport.gov.uk/cicc email: cicc@stockport.gov.uk

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Care leavers and children in care have told their priorities

- Don't use jargon about me. Don't use jargon in front of me.
- Don't feel sorry for me. Get to know me, not what is in the file.
- Remember things about me like my birthday, my interests, what I like, my favourite music, etc.
- Call me just to say hello.
- Meet me at times that don't draw attention to me being looked-after.

- Look for the good things about me.
- Praise my work at school.
- Help me to succeed at school.
- Make sure I get the help I need to have the career I want.

Not being made to feel different.

Being safe & not being bullied.

Being involved in all the decisions made about me.

Getting help with my education, mental health & life skills.

Having time to get to know and trust the Social Workers & other adults who work with me.
Knowing in plenty of time if my Social Worker is going to change
AND it should be the Social Worker who explains it to me.

- Help me understand why I am in care.
- If I am getting into trouble or going missing or I am not happy where I live or at school – do something about it quickly.

- Help me be independent and make my own choices and decisions.
- Make meetings the sort that I want to be part of (pizza is good).

- Make time to get to know me.
- Do what you say you are going to do and arrive when you say you are going to.
- Say sorry when you get something wrong.
- Forgive me when I am horrible to you and don't take it personally.
- Smile.

OUR PRIORITIES

1

Improve engagement and participation of children in care with service improvements

Why

So that the voice of children and young people in care influences the ways services are developed and commissioned.

What

Further develop the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers' Forum to enable maximum opportunities to be heard.

How

Appoint a Participation Apprentice. Raise further awareness of the opportunities to be heard.

2

Further develop personal, relationship based practice for all looked after children to ensure that they are at the centre of all decisions that affect their lives

Why

You have told us that it is important for you to understand why you are in care and be involved with all decisions made about you.

What

Ensure that relationship based practice is embedded throughout all our frontline services and education settings.

How

- Continue to embed restorative training with all our services and education settings.
- Roll out of systemic training to Stockport Family teams.

3

Support children to achieve permanence with their families / or with an alternative family.

Why

We know that children and young people are more likely to thrive in stable family situation whether with their own family or a family who choose to care for them.

What

- Work hard with our families to make it safe for children and young people to return home.
- Ensure we have high quality foster carers for those who cannot remain with their family.

How

- Continue to develop and deliver innovative programmes such as New Beginnings.
- Continue to recruit high quality foster carers.

4

To support children in care to be safe and enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing

Why

Having good health and emotional wellbeing is fundamental for children and young people to achieve their aspirations.

What

Support front line professionals to identify health and emotional wellbeing support needs within our children and young people.

How

Through a review of training needs across Stockport Family, Health and Education settings.

OUR PRIORITIES

5

To ensure children in care are confident learners and achieve their educational goals

Why

So that children and young people can achieve their aspirations as they transition to adulthood.

What

Ensure that there is a clear one training offer for schools in Stockport so that teachers can support students appropriately.

How

Through the Dedicated Schools Grant Review.

6

We will support carers and our workforce to have specific knowledge and skills to care for and prepare young people with SEND for independence

Why

To ensure our workforce has a strong understanding of the needs of our SEND community and how to meet them.

What

- Provide information at an appropriate level within our induction training for each new employee.
- Provide ongoing training to maintain skills and expertise.

How

- e-Learning
- Videos
- Two minute guides

Priorities – designed by care leavers

1. Understanding why you were in care.
2. Do you have a really good friend? Having trusted relationships in the community.
3. Housing – being in stable and suitable accommodation.
4. Loneliness and Wellbeing – knowing where to seek support and maintain a health lifestyle.
5. Finances – being able to manage money and meet outgoings.
6. Aspirations and Plans for the Future - Including - Education, Employment and Training opportunities.



Priority	You said	We will
Understanding why you were in care	<p>You said</p> <p>Nearly one fifth (18%) of care leavers felt that either nobody had explained to them why they had been in care, or although given an explanation, they had wanted to know more.</p>	<p>We will</p> <p>To Support you to understand your life story and feel secure in your identity and maintain your family relationships, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand your life story, history, care experience • Talk to you about your understanding of your life story regularly and when you become a care leaver • Work with young people and the care leaver forum about the tools, materials and storage options that's right for you • Support you to repair any family or key relationships important to you
Do you have a really good friend?	<p>You said</p> <p>88% of care leavers reported having a really good friend, However a little more than one in ten (12%) care leavers did not have a good friend. Four times that reported by peers (3%) in the general population.</p>	<p>We will</p> <p>To Support you to make and sustain safe, healthy and trusted relationships with your friends/ peers, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore with Pure Insight Mentoring scheme automatic access for you at 16 years as part of your pathway plan (unless you don't want this) • Develop community hubs within each Stockport neighbourhood to support you better and help you make friends and feel supported • Promote involvement with the care leaver forum and pure insight activities you to have fun and make relationships • Promote becoming peer mentors eg Pure Insight / MOSAIC

Priority	You said	We will
Housing	<p>You said</p> <p>Just over a third (36%) of care leavers reported not 'always' feeling safe at home. An exception was those living with foster carers (staying put), where 100% reported 'always' feeling safe at home.</p> <p>Nearly half (47%) reported not 'always' feeling settled at home</p> <p>A higher proportion of care leavers in Stockport (52%) were living in their own rented accommodation, than were care leavers (37%) in other LAs.</p>	<p>We will</p> <p>To Support you to feel safe, supported and secure in their home, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to you about your accommodation plans for your future • Support you to be involved in the decision-making and offer you choice of accommodation options suitable to your needs • Improving safe and supported housing options for you so you can have more choice about where you want to live. • Develop community hubs so you can feel safe and supported within your home and in your community • Promote staying put with former foster carers and supported lodgings

Priority	You said	We will
Loneliness and Wellbeing	<p>You said</p> <p>Care leavers in Stockport (20%) more frequently reported feeling lonely 'often or always' than did peers (10%) in general population (ONS, 2018b).</p> <p>A minority of care leavers were doing well: 15% reported very high life satisfaction, 30% Stockport care leavers reported low overall well-being.</p> <p>In Stockport, those young people living in their own rented accommodation were statistically more likely than those living elsewhere to report feeling lonely 'often or always' (26% vs. 12%).</p>	<p>We will</p> <p>To support young people to have good emotional health and reduce isolation, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to you and help you to feel positive and good about yourself – including exploring options with the local colleges and businesses for self-care and confidence offers/ vouchers and/or options for group pamper days. • Listen to you if you're feeling sad and help you to access the right support at the right time. • Promote Kooth.com virtual online emotional support • Help you to feel connected to people you care about with support with technology and Wi-Fi. • Promote your emotional health and wellbeing and encouraging you to be more active in your community, including free Life Leisure pass, Pure Insight activities and the care leaver forum and community events. • Develop community hubs so you can feel safe and supported within your home and in your community

Priority	You said	We will
Finances	<p>You said</p> <p>17% of Stockport care leavers were finding things 'quite' difficult financially. Compared to young people in the general population (7%)</p>	<p>We will</p> <p>To support you to manage your money and make it stretch for the things you want to do, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help you (and your carers) with advice and information about managing money, opening a bank account, saving and how to access any specialist advice or support you may need. • Talk with you about your SKILLS for adulthood and help you to better manage your money • Talk with you about your future and advice about savings that can help you to achieve your goals • Provide your financial entitlements and review the personal budget up to 25yrs. • Pilot support for weekly food shopping at the local pantry for care leavers living independently in Stockport. If successful explore opportunities for extending across other areas. • Provide Greater Manchester free bus pass, personal budget, free leisure membership and free prescriptions and review Setting up Home Grant allowance for young people living outside Stockport. • Explore with Greater Manchester options for budget apps and support from the Care Leaver Covenant.

Priority	You said	We will
Aspirations and Plans for the Future	<p>You said</p> <p>23% reported feeling very positive about the future. About one in five (22%) reported low life satisfaction, and a similar proportion (19%) were pessimistic about the future. One in six (16%) did not have goals and plans for their future.</p>	<p>We will</p> <p>To support young people to transition to adulthood and have goals and aspirations for the future, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to you about your aspirations and future goals and support you with a pathway for how to get there • Help you to be involved in key decisions and your pathway planning about your life, what happens and any support you need • Helping you to access education, employment and training opportunities that can build your confidence, meet new people and work towards your career goals and aspirations • Develop more opportunities for volunteering, work trials/ work placements within the council and wider community • Provide financial entitlements to support you with education, employment and training. • Offer you named worker to support you with goals and career aspirations and advocacy if needed • Being there for you when you need us (when you no longer need leaving care services post 25 years but might want some advice, see us or share some news) • A Care Leaver Apprentice is being recruited to support the Care leaver forum and your voice, to help us to improve our local offer and services with you



Governance and review

This strategy is a working document and will be reviewed each year with partners.

The strategy is overseen by the Integrated Looked after Children Board, reporting to the Stockport Family Partnership Board

Please see the diagram below for our governance routes and ownership of our delivery plans.

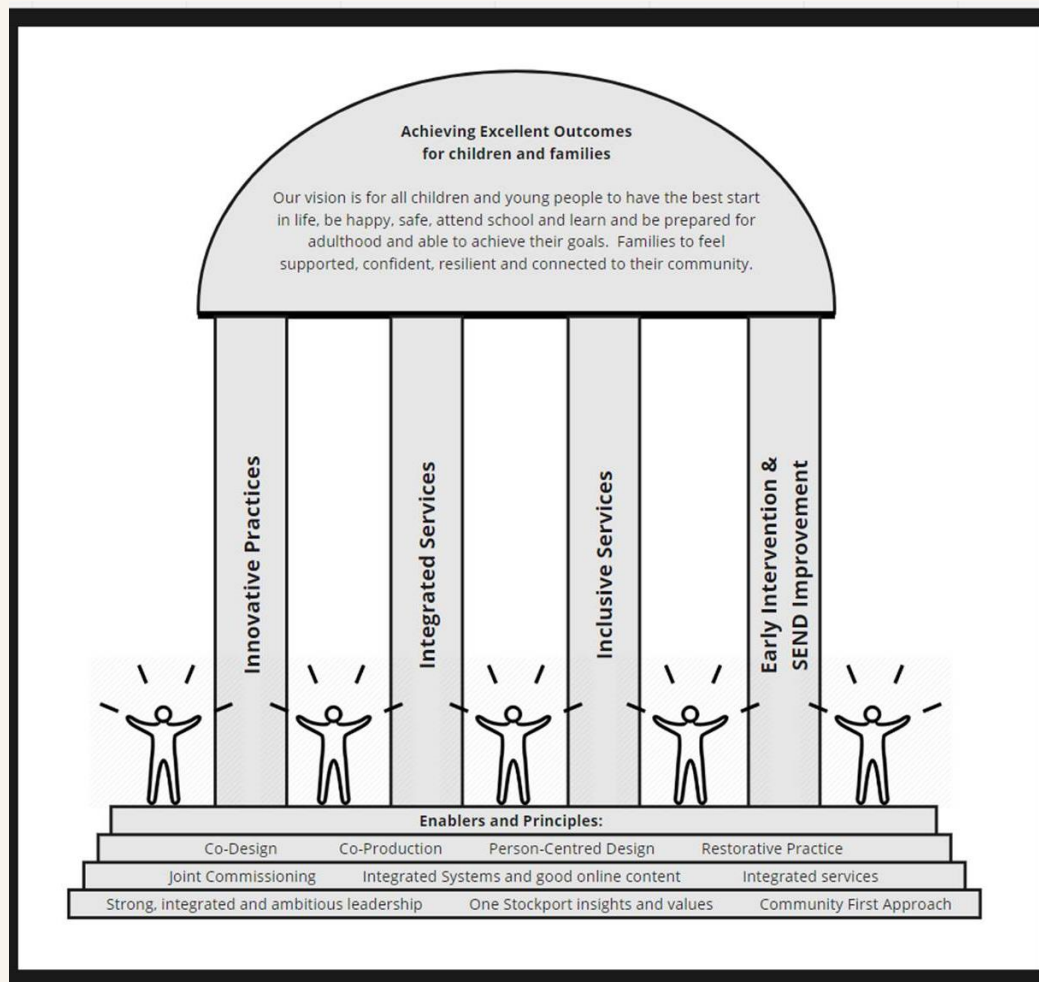
In Stockport we also have a Corporate Parenting Working Party to oversee the performance and quality of the local authority's services for children in care and care leavers. The Group brings together councillors, council officers and partner agencies who work with children in care and care leavers.

Stockport's way of working – principles and approach

Our approach is based upon: -

- Innovative practice
- Integrated services
- Inclusive services
- Early intervention

This diagram shows our principles and approach to achieving our vision for children and young people



Our values

Stockport is committed to co-production in all of our work and has agreed a coproduction charter which can be found [here](#)

We are committed to: -

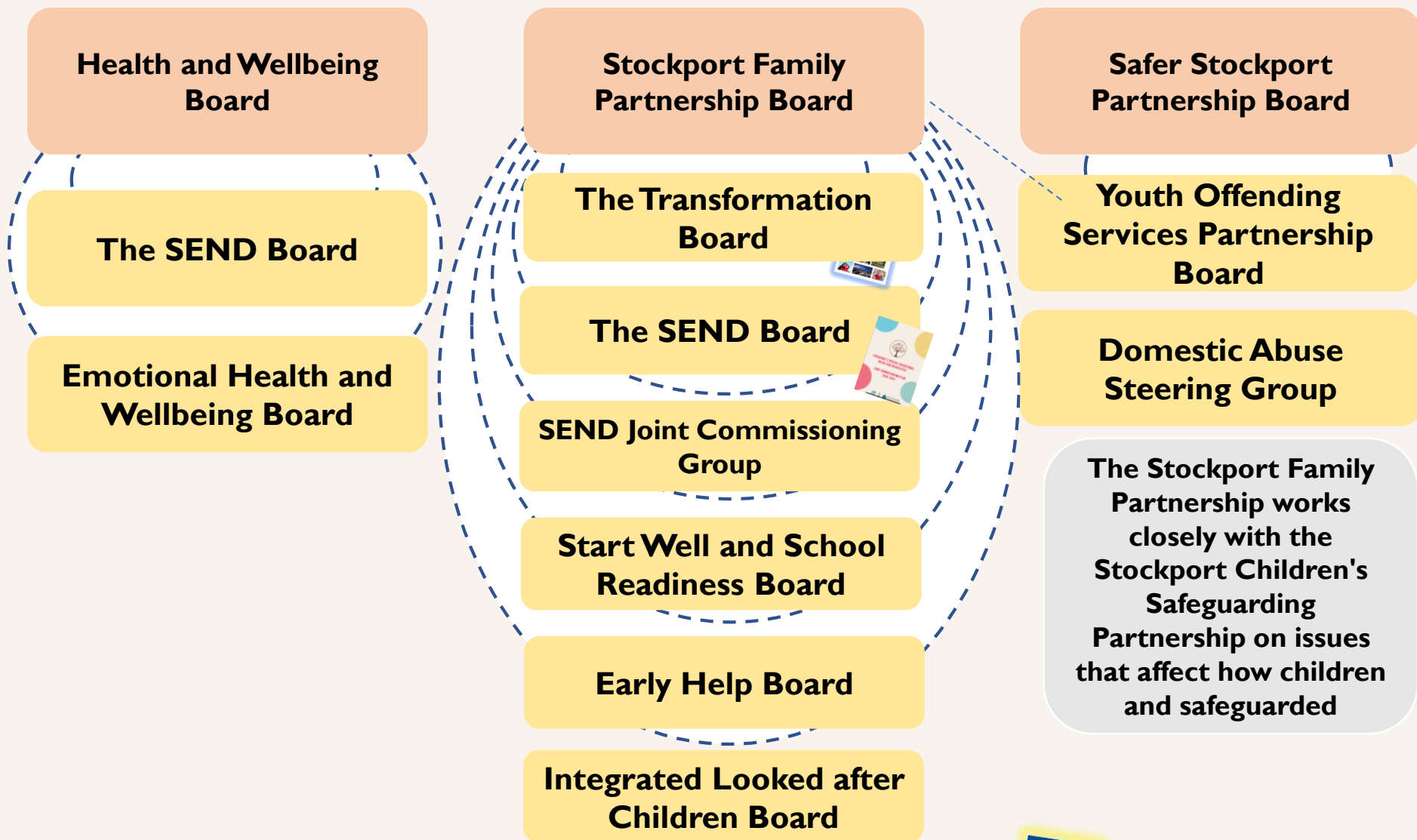
- Open and honest communication
- Actively listening
- Valuing real life experiences
- What matters – tailored approaches to individual needs
- Evaluation and review
- Working together
- Trust and respect

Stockport Co-production Charter

The charter has been co-produced with families, children, young people and health, care and education colleagues.

The co-production charter is about the way we will all work together to create a culture where we will all:





Co-Production Charter



All of our work is co-produced with parents/carers and children.

Working with other Strategic Boards in Stockport

