

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	24 March 2021
Executive Member:	Councillor Bill Fairfoull – Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families)
Reporting Officer:	Richard Hancock – Director of Children's Services
Subject:	CARED FOR CHILDREN FORMALISATION
Report Summary:	Language used regarding our Cared for Children to be updated in line with the views of young people.
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to approve the change language relating to Cared for Children. This will enable an implementation plan to be progressed.
Corporate Plan:	Consultations with young people are documented in the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The requested changes were approved at Corporate Parenting Board on 13 October 2020.
Policy Implications:	Feedback to be shared with Service leads for incorporating into service development and recovery planning.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	The change in language proposed may result in some costs arising from the mapping exercise outlined in section 3. Once this exercise has been carried out then financial implications can be quantified. It is expected that any additional cost will need to be found from existing budgets.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	The reasons for the requested change are set out in the main body of the report. However, it should be noted that this doesn't change the law, which is set out in the Children Act 1989 or the way described therein and to note that there may be requirements to refer to both to remove any confusion as to the categorisation. That said recognising equality issues and addressing inequalities caused as a consequence is a positive statutory duty on the local authority particularly given additional duties as statutory corporate parents.
Background Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Gill Guy-Edwards, Head of Cared for Children by: email: gill.guy-edwards@tameside.gov.uk phone: 07562171625

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Over the past two years young people have shared their views at the Children in Care Council (CICC) and during other consultation opportunities with regards to the language that is used by professionals. They do not like the language or acronyms relating to Cared for Children. They do not want to be referred to as Looked after Children (LAC), or have LAC reviews or LAC medicals. They have co-produced the Coming into Care pack and the new pledge. This has used the language they want to see going forward.

2. LANGUAGE USED BY PROFESSIONALS

- 2.1 Children and young people have voiced their views in relation to language including terminology used by professionals and carers when discussing and documenting their lives.
- 2.2 The TACT Language that Cares report 2019 https://www.tactcare.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/TACT-Language-that-cares-2019_online.pdf was shared with young people and they discussed their views in relation to the following terms:
- Contact to change to Family Time.
 - Looked after Child (LAC) to change to Cared for Child / Children.
 - Placement to change to Your Home/ Where You Live
 - Respite to change to My Other House / Home
- 2.3 A video was developed by young people in Northern Ireland which has been shared with the Children in Care Council and the Corporate Parenting Board to bring to life the impact of language on our Cared for Children: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-northern-ireland-48466031>
- 2.4 The Children in Care Council are aware that changing the language relating to Cared for Children can take some time. They understand that there are some national documents that will still have the terminology 'Looked after Child'. They are hoping that this national approach will change over time but TMBC have an opportunity to change the language in line with our commitment to LISTENing in Tameside and the Voice of the Child Strategy which gives a commitment to co-production, inclusivity and Cared for Children's views carrying the same weight as that of adults. We must place this at the heart of everything we do.
- 2.5 We have already implemented some changes to demonstrate our commitment to changing language across services:
- The LAC Team is now known as the Cared for Children's Team
 - LAC Nurses are now known as Cared for Children Nurses
 - Aisling Bouketta (Participation Officer) has developed staff inductions with Catherine Davis (Signs of Safety Lead) to share the change of language with all new staff
 - The Children in Care Council and Care Leavers have co-lectured sessions at Manchester Metropolitan University for BA and MA students regarding the importance of language when working with Cared for Children
 - The Children in Care Council have participated in Skills to Foster, foster care preparation training to talk about the changes to language

3. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 3.1 As stated above, we have made some changes to the names of staff and teams in line with the voices of our Cared for Children. However, in order to fully implement changes to language we will have to carry out a mapping exercise across systems, LCS, forms, policies

/ procedures, HR, health, education, etc. Once processes are mapped out we will identify areas that require changes / redesign.

- 3.2 A communication and training plan will have to run in parallel to ensure that all staff understand that this is more than a simple change of language. Terminology we use relating to our Cared for Children can have a significant impact on their wellbeing, sense of belonging and self-esteem.
- 3.3 Partner agencies must replicate these changes to ensure our Cared for Children have a consistent language that we all commit to use. They will be included in the implementation plan.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Language is a powerful tool for communication but as TACT highlighted in the report Language that Cares (March 2019), *"sometimes the way that it is used in social care creates stigma and barriers for understanding. Language is power, and we want children and young people to feel empowered in their care experience"*.
- 4.2 We have asked our Cared for Children about their wishes and feelings on the day to day language used with, or to talk about, or to record details of their life experiences. They have told us about how they want us to change the language that we use. It is fundamental that we demonstrate that not only do their views matter, but that they can be empowered to improve and change the services that we deliver.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.