

Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 29 January 2026

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Language that Cares

Purpose: To present the work undertaken to review the way professionals describe children in our care, highlighting key developments and future plans to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the changes and updates to the Care Service.

1. Background

1.1 Following a review of The Looked After Children service, the term Looked After Children (LAC) has been updated to the Children We Care For service. The new name reflects East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) continued commitment to listening to and valuing the voices of our children and young people across East Sussex.

1.2 The change follows a national move away from the term Looked After Children and the acronym LAC, due to the negative connotations often associated with them.

2. Supporting information

2.1 A dedicated working group and staff consultation was established in Spring 2025 to review the service and team names.

2.2 Following the staff consultation and review, the new terminology was introduced in September 2025.

2.3 The working group are now reviewing more general use of language and will be producing a language and recording policy.

2.4 A service development day is planned. This will provide an opportunity for the Children We Care For service to explore caring and respectful language, recognising the vital role words play in building trust, dignity, and positive experiences in social care."

2.5 Partner agencies, including health, Police, education and the voluntary an community sector to be advised of the changes.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The change in terminology used by ESCC and partner agencies reflects a shift in language that better represents the care, respect, and support we strive to provide.

3.2 It is a positive step forward for the Council, in ensuring our services are shaped by the experiences and perspectives of those who use them.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Language that Cares Power point presentation

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.