

Report of the Assistant Director (Children's Specialist Services) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 14th January 2014.

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Subject:

Report on Education, Training, Apprenticeships & Higher Education (University)

Summary statement:

Councillor involvement and leadership in their Corporate Parenting role is a key responsibility with regard to Looked After Children. This report identifies current issues and developments including the progress made on Education, Training, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (University).

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1. SUMMARY

Councillor involvement and leadership in their Corporate Parenting role is a key responsibility with regard to Looked After Children. This report identifies current issues and developments including the progress made on Education, Training, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (University).

2. BACKGROUND

The Care Matters White Paper (2007) emphasises the need for Local Authorities to improve their Corporate Parenting arrangements and offer everything that a good parent would. This means ensuring children in care receive the highest quality services so that they can achieve the best possible outcomes as set out in Every Child Matters (2004). The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 replaces the guidance issued when the provisions of The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 amended the Children Act 1989; the guidance (Vol.3 – ‘Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers’ provides information for Local Authorities to meet the requirements of the 2010 regulations.

3. REPORT ISSUES

Employment, Training and Accommodation for Care Leavers

- 3.1.1 Learning, Employment, Advice, Preparation (LEAP) continues to be acknowledged and supported by Children’s Services to engage Children in Need (CIN), Looked After Children (LAC), care leavers and Youth Offending Team (YOT) young people under the Corporate Parenting Agenda.
- 3.1.2 LEAP was initiated through identified gaps in Employment, Education and Training (EET) provision for young people in the Social Care System. LEAP was developed and is sustained by the voices of care leavers in the Service who have consistently told us, individually and through the CICC, that they;
- Want easily accessible EET provision
 - To learn in a non judgemental environment.
 - Want to be around other young people from similar backgrounds (i.e. Care)
 - Want to be around staff who understand them and feel comfortable
 - Want to learn in small groups
- 3.1.3 LEAP provides support to vulnerable groups in the context of the following;
- Mainstream education funding being narrow (i.e. 16-18).
 - Providing clear EET pathways for care leavers.
 - The raising of the statutory school age (RPA) from 16 (to currently 17) and 18 in 2015; and the impact that this will have on care leavers and the provision of future resources.
 - Southwark cases (Youth Homelessness 16 and 17 year olds)
 - Need for easily accessible EET options for vulnerable groups, which are unrestrained by age and financial restrictions.
 - The Benefits system, i.e. Universal Credits, Work Programmes and potential impact upon care leaver’s life chances.

3.1.4 High NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) figures for Looked After Children, Leaving Care Service and Youth Offending Team; compared to the district wide figures of 5.0% NEET (Connexions data October 2014 16-18):

Connexions Figures at October 2014 for vulnerable groups (16-18 year olds):

	NEET
Looked After Children	11.6%
Leaving Care Service	21.3%
Youth Offending Team	41.0%

3.1.5 NEET figures for 19 plus care leavers is 22.8 % (Figures from the Integrated Children's System)

3.4 Through the Looked After Strategy Group, an Economic Wellbeing Action Plan has been established (co-ordinated by the Leaving Care Service) to explore accountability from other agencies to best support and improve the life chances of Looked After Children, Care Leavers, YOT young people and Children in Need in Bradford. The LAC Strategy group terms of reference are to be reviewed and redrafted in January 2015.

3.5 The Leaving Care Service has also initiated CLIO (Care Leavers Improved Outcomes) in partnership with the Education, Employment & Enterprise Team. CLIO promotes transparency and accountability to other EET providers in Bradford and their engagement with Care Leavers, around areas such as attendance, progression plans and qualifications.

3.6 A piece of work is currently being undertaken by Youth Workers to map and challenge EET providers in Bradford.

3.7 The Leaving Care Service currently has secured a temporary single point of contact, via the Youth Service, for Information, Advice & Guidance in the Service. This is proving to be extremely beneficial in regard to consistent approaches to engaging NEET young people and co-ordinating care planning arrangements. However, unfortunately, this role is likely to end in January 2015.

3.8 Breakdown of LEAP (Learning, Education, Advice, Preparation) provision includes;

3.8.1 **Higher Education**

- Dedicated Higher Education (HE) support for care leavers who have aspirations of HE or are engaging with HE. There are 24 care leavers are currently in HE
- Total number of care leavers attending HE:
 - 2010 – 10
 - 2011 – 11
 - 2012 – 12
 - 2013 – 8
 - 2014 – 8
- The service has provided additional staff (0.5 post) to support demand for care leavers planning to / and attending Higher Education (HE).

- Dedicated HE support has proven to be essential to address potential barriers to engaging HE: This support provides knowledge on HE to those young people who may have a poor view of the statutory education, including financial and budgeting help. Support is given to choose the correct course and to apply for University through UCAS.
- 29 care leavers have graduated from HE since 2004
- 10 care leavers graduated Summer 2014
- Since 2008, 10 care leavers have dropped out of HE provision
- 11 care leavers have already expressed an interest in HE for September 2015.
- Continue to provide support and education to foster carers to enable them to raise aspirations to care leavers to engage HE.
- Secured positive relationships with local and national HE establishments to ensure, where appropriate, care leavers are supported and receive their full entitlements.
- A young person (DC), who is an ex care leaver and graduate from HE made a presentation at the recent Education Awards.

Future Plans

- Looking to establish a preparation course for care leavers about to embark in HE. This will be in partnership with local HE establishments.
- Looking to establish a mentoring scheme to support care leavers thinking about engaging HE or in HE.
- The projected future year on year increase in HE numbers of care leavers attending HE will be an additional cost and challenge to limited budgets and will require an identification of additional resources. The Service is currently funded for 25 care leavers attending HE and only one full-time HE support worker, which has now been exceeded with staffing support and will be, by HE students, in the next intake.

3.8.2 **Employability**

- There is dedicated Employability Support to care leavers, Looked After Children, Children in Need and Young Offenders engaged with Youth Offending Team (YOT). In total, since 2010 we have placed 169 care leavers and Young Offenders (via YOT) through work experience, Traineeships and Apprenticeships.
- Over the last 12 months we have achieved 3 young people into Bradford Metropolitan District Council Apprenticeships following the successful completion of Traineeships. We now have an apprenticeship in Participation within the Leaving Care Service, with a further young person offered full-time employment. Following the successful completion of Traineeships, 2 young people have been offered part-time paid employment contracts with Bradford Works (1 permanent and 1 fixed term contract). 2 young people have been offered full time placements with Marriott Hotels (1 apprenticeship and one full time employed). We have also supported a young person to complete the LEAP "Get Motivated" course and sourced an apprenticeship in Mechanical Engineering and offered 40 work experience opportunities this year.
- 5 care leavers are currently engaged in Traineeship placements. 2 will complete at the end of December 2014 and 3 will complete their placements in March 2015.

- 3 care leavers are currently engaging in ongoing work experience placements to improve prospects and gain experience.
- All care leavers entering employability must complete a functional skills initial assessment and diagnostic to better understand their academic ability (unless they can evidence existing qualifications), which ensures that any employability options provided are appropriate.
- Despite the current employment restrictions due to budget reductions, the service has built a solid and enduring relationship with Council departments to ensure consistent work placements are available wherever possible; i.e. Building Services and Family Centres. This is further reinforced by a solid relationship with Education Services, enabling us to access the work experience database to source placements from local employers. The service works in partnership with Human Resources department to co-ordinate this provision.
- LEAP is looking to establish a 10 week Employability Course to support young people into employability pathways.
- It has proven to be a very effective resource to have a single point of contact in the Service to co-ordinate and support placements for care leavers and to prepare and support them to access employability options in the Council and privately (Marriot Hotel) under the Corporate Parenting Agenda. This is specifically relevant in the context of a retraction of dedicated Connexions support within the Service.
- Employability options within the Council for care leavers has been recognised by Catch 22 and consequently the Leaving Care Service (LEAP Team) have been awarded a “Quality Mark” under the Care2Work agenda in recognition of the bespoke employability opportunities and support we offer care leavers under our Corporate Parenting Agenda.

3.8.3 **Intensive Education Support (Get Motivated)**

Since 2008 we have engaged 202 care leavers under this provision and 57 care leavers under one to one provision. 19 care leavers are currently on a 22 GET MOTIVATED programme covering Personal and Social Development, Employability skills and Functional skills. The service can also offer one to one support to care leavers and non-school attendees who cannot cope in a group environment, or simply need to gain better functional skills qualifications to assist in College entry. Other services and agencies support learning i.e. Drug and Alcohol Service, Looked After Children Nurse, Jamie Oliver’s Ministry of Food, Blast, Turnaround, sexual health, MESMAC, All Stars Music, Community Fire Safety team and housing support.

- 3.8.4 There is a focus on offering care leavers a seamless and holistic service to merge Social Care and Education Support, which has proven to be very successful. Many care leavers in this provision have been NEET for considerable lengths of time; for periods of several months and even up to 4 years. This provision (as other LEAP provision in the service) is easily accessible and bespoke to the needs of the young person. Since 2011 the Leaving Care Service (through the LEAP Team) has an established partnership with Shipley College, which allows our learners to gain nationally recognised qualifications, in addition to allowing our staff access to Shipley College teaching resources.

4. OPTIONS

There are none for consideration.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The service contributes to two Council priorities, raising educational achievement and supporting vulnerable children.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That the bespoke work to support young people in care is commended.

6.2 That all Councillors are urged to consider apprenticeships or work placements that they could make available for children in care.

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. APPENDICES

None.