



Agenda for a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on Wednesday, 13 September 2017 at 4.30 pm in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Members of the Committee – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT
D Smith	Thirkill Engel Tait	N Pollard

Alternates:

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT
M Pollard	Nazir Shaheen Shafiq	R Sunderland

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Chair of Children in Care Council

Ali Jan Haider

Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group

Inspector Kevin Taylor

West Yorkshire Police

Yasmin Umarji

Bradford Education

Notes:

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- For the item marked * Members will be asked to consider whether there is a need to exclude the public for any part of the item. Further information can be obtained from the relevant contact officer.

From:

Parveen Akhtar

City Solicitor

Agenda Contact: Sheila Farnhill

Phone: 01274 432268

E-Mail: sheila.farnhill@bradford.gov.uk

To:

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

The City Solicitor will report the names of alternate Members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed Members.

(Sheila Farnhill – 01274 432268)

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

(Members Code of Conduct - Part 4A of the Constitution)

To receive disclosures of interests from members and co-opted members on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

Notes:

- (1) Members may remain in the meeting and take part fully in discussion and voting unless the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or an interest which the Member feels would call into question their compliance with the wider principles set out in the Code of Conduct. Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.*
- (2) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*
- (3) Members are also welcome to disclose interests which are not disclosable pecuniary interests but which they consider should be made in the interest of clarity.*
- (4) Officers must disclose interests in accordance with Council Standing Order 44.*

(Sheila Farnhill – 01274 432268)

3. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

(Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 3B of the Constitution)

Reports and background papers for agenda items may be inspected by contacting the person shown after each agenda item. Certain reports and background papers may be restricted.

Any request to remove the restriction on a report or background paper should be made to the relevant Strategic Director or Assistant Director whose name is shown on the front page of the report.

If that request is refused, there is a right of appeal to this meeting.

Please contact the officer shown below in advance of the meeting if you wish to appeal.

(Sheila Farnhill - 01274 432268)

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

4. THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL 1 - 10

The Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) will present a report (**Document "D"**) which outlines the role of the Children in Care Council, the legislative background to its establishment, how it is supported by officers and the aims and outcomes for the young people involved, for Member's information.

Recommended –

That Document "D" be noted.

(Mick Nolan - 01274 436760)

5. IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE/CARE LEAVERS 11 - 44

Previous reference: Minute 28 (2016/17)

Members may recall that, at the meeting of the Panel held on 8 March 2017, a report was submitted by the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) which set out the findings and recommendations arising from a review of the support for young people in care/care leavers undertaken by members of Bradford Council's Future Leaders Programme (FLP) 2016.

Amongst other things, the Panel had resolved:

"(3) That the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) submit a progress report in six months time to allow the Panel to monitor the implementation of the recommendations."

The Deputy Director will therefore submit **Document "E"**, which summarises to activities undertaken to date and proposed future action, for Member's consideration.

Recommended –

That the proposals set out in Document "E" be endorsed.

(Sarah King – 01274 432259)

(Diane Cokewright – 01274 439236)

6. OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

45 - 52

A report will be presented by the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) (**Document "F"**) which provides the Panel with comprehensive information regarding the outcomes for looked after children in the Bradford district.

The report comprises a summary of the information known about looked after children in Bradford as at 31 March 2017 and draws on the same data used to provide statistical returns to the Department for Education (DfE) (all figures being provisional as the DfE will publish the final figures in March 2018). It draws comparisons with performance levels at 31 March 2016 and to the first National Statistical Release for 2015-16.

Recommended –

That Document "F" be noted.

(David Byrom – 01274 432986)

7. CARE LEAVERS AND COUNCIL TAX

53 - 58

The report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) (**Document "G"**) informs the Panel that, further to a report by the Children's Society, local authorities are being challenged by the Children's Commissioner for England to review and consider their corporate parenting duties and powers to consider exemptions for care leavers from Council Tax contributions.

The views of the Panel on the options set out in Document "G" are requested.

Recommended –

That the Executive be recommended to incorporate the proposal in the budget planning for 2018/19 with a view to implementing any exemption from 1 April 2018.

(Emma Collingwood – 01274 437123)

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Panel is asked to consider whether any part of the item relating to the Annual Report on Complaints should be considered in the absence of the public and, if so, approve the following recommendation:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of part of the item relating to the Annual Report on Complaints on the grounds that if they were present, exempt information within Paragraphs 1 (Information relating to an individual) and 2 (information identifying an individual) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed and it is considered that, in all the circumstances the public interest in applying these exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The Panel may need to consider the specific personal circumstances of any particular case and it is in the overriding public interest that a young person who has made a complaint should have a right to confidentiality of process.”

9. COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL REPORT

59 - 68

A report will be presented by the Deputy Director – Children’s Social Care (**Document “H”**) which summarises the issues raised by looked after children and young people who have used the statutory complaints procedures to seek redress for their concerns. The report relates to the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

Members are asked to note the contents of Document “H” and to consider whether they wish to seek further information in respect of any of the issues raised.

(Irina Arcas – 01274 435269)

10. WORKPLAN 2017/18

69 - 70

The Panel’s Work Plan for 2017/18 is submitted (**Document “I”**) for Member’s consideration.

(Jim Hopkinson – 01274 432904)

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**Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services
to the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel to be held
on 13 September 2017.**

D

Subject:

The Children in Care Council

Summary statement:

Report to explain the legislative background to Children in Care Councils.

Bradford's Children in Care Council Model: How it functions, how it is supported by Officers and the outcomes for children/young people involved.

Jim Hopkinson
Deputy Director
(Children's Social Care)

Report Contact: Mick Nolan,
Co-ordinator of Bradford's CICC and
Participation
Phone: (01274) 436760
E-mail: mick.nolan@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Children's Services

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report will explain the legislative background to Children in Care Councils and will look at Bradford's Children in Care Council Model; how it functions, how it is supported by Officers and the outcomes for children/young people involved.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Government's Care Matters Green and White papers (2006 and 2007 respectively) set out a range of proposals for local authorities to improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers, including a proposal for all local authorities to set up 'Children in Care Councils' (CiCC) to increase the voice of children and young people in care in order to influence and shape the services that they receive. The Government's 2007 Care Matters White Paper states: Whatever structures exist in a children's services authority, children's participation is an essential part of the process. We expect every local authority to establish a children in care council to ensure that every child has the opportunity to air their views. In making these arrangements, the local authority should consider in particular the needs of disabled children and very young children, and of those children who are not members of the council themselves. Through the children in care council, children and young people should be able to put their experiences of the care system directly to those responsible for corporate parenting including the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member, who should demonstrate how they will maintain contact with children and young people in care. Government subsequently requested, through statutory guidance, that directors of children's services and lead members for children's services attend children in care council meetings on a regular basis to identify how their services and support can be improved through directly communicating with children in care.
- 2.2 A review of legislation, policy and research identifies the foundations of CiCC's as an effective mechanism for promoting effective participation of children in care and care leavers in decision-making about their care.
- 2.3 This foundational structure of participation for children and young people in and leaving care combines the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper, including the Pledge for children in care and care leavers.
- 2.4 This framework recognises the importance of care children and young people exercising influence over decisions about services that affect them as involved local citizens.
- 2.5 Some decisions by local authorities impact on the lives of children in care and care leavers in a very distinct and particular way. This can be very different from those decisions that impact on non-looked after children. Therefore there is a very compelling case for these dedicated models of participation when decision-making for children in care and care leavers. These should reflect their unique interest in decisions about, for example, leaving care protocols, the commissioning of foster and residential placements or legal and policy developments in care.

- 2.6 The participation of children in care and care leavers reflects a broader public policy emphasis on public service providers facilitating increased local determination by local citizens, in decisions about their services and the personalisation agenda that has developed in adult social care and health.
- 2.7 There has been growing evidence that decisions about services produce better outcomes when made closer to the individuals and groups who are users of those services. Those outcomes are generally of a more positive experience of the service, but also a more effective result for the user, and consequently produce value for money in a reduced need for repeat use of services or, potentially, other services. In that respect, children in care councils provide an effective mechanism for children in care and care leavers as a distinct user group with niche needs to shape the services they receive.
- 2.8 CiCC's were seen as reflecting the local council in that members of the local CiCC acted as representatives for the wider care population.
- 2.9 The CiCC as representatives in a representative democracy model rely upon the input of the wider care population through a variety of mechanisms including viewpoint, Ofsted reports, the IRO annual report, complaints and direct representation/consultation from other care children/young people.
- 2.10 As a representative democracy model we have observed over the years that they act most effectively with a membership of around 10 sitting on the council at any time. Increases over that number (even up to 18) have resulted in a decreased effectiveness.
- 2.11 The secret to the participation of children/young people in the CiCC model is not to increase the attendance at the CiCC but to increase the hard data they receive from those children/young people in care and after care.
- 2.12 "Young people from the Children in Care Council should be able to attend and play a full part in Corporate Parenting Boards and other fora. This represents the most influential role that young people can take. It does, however, present enormous challenges if young people's presence and involvement is not to be tokenistic and led by an adult agenda. It is important to ensure that the structures and ways of working are appropriate to young people having their voice heard. Traditional adult meeting formats are probably not the best way of involving young people. There are many ways in which structures and ways of working have been designed to overcome the problems of young people's views being marginalised. In many local authorities young people have taken control of the whole or part of meetings, meetings have been held at venues more accessible to young people and corporate parents have become mentors to young people members of the Children in Care Council. Elected members may need training to understand the concerns of young people and to be able to communicate effectively. In some authorities elected members have received Total Respect or other equivalent training. Contact between young people and elected members and senior managers should not be limited to formal meetings. Corporate parents should be encouraged to attend full meetings of the Children in Care Council, attend consultation and activity days and visit young people where they live".

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The Bradford CiCC model:

- Bradford's CiCC has approximately 8 to 10 active regular members at this time. It meets weekly at Culture Fusion from 5pm to 7pm. Business is dealt with from 5.30pm to 6.45pm.
- The CiCC members receive refreshments and travel money.
- The CiCC has made its own policies and procedures for its day to day running and how it takes on individual pieces of work for the Local Authority and out side agencies.
- The CiCC is autonomous in its decision making apparatus. It decides its own rules and its own penalties for the infringement of those rules. These rules and the penalties have been negotiated with the Officer requested to coordinate the council to ensure they are fair and within legislative requirements.
- The CiCC vote on issues or decisions when appropriate. A clear majority is needed to pass any decision or take any action forward.
- All young people who attend can vote. The Officer/Co-ordinator has no vote but is often asked for further information, clarification or advice.

3.2 The role of the Officer/Co-ordinator is to collect and collate the information that the CiCC requires e.g. when in discussion about a specific issue with community homes he was requested to collect the community home regulations and then present them in a young person friendly format to the whole council.

It is also the Co-ordinators role to capture children/young people's voices through viewpoint, etc. and to explore new methods of collecting the voices of children and young people in the care arena.

The Co-ordinator is also required to arrange any consultations, training, information exchanges or interview panels etc., ensuring that venues are booked, young people are transported and available, and all research and preparation is completed.

The Co-ordinator acts as a organisational conduit between the children/young people and the professionals/agencies that require their services e.g. when an interview panel is requested the Co-ordinator organises the venue, obtains and explains the job spec, coordinates the panel's creation of questions and a scoring matrix, and sometimes presents a written report feeding back the panel's views to the managers/organisations that requested the panel.

3.3 At the moment the CiCC undertake a number of ongoing tasks including; interview panels, consultations, facilitating and presenting foster parent training, new social worker induction, presenting information on service user perspectives to students studying social work at Bradford University, coordinating and evaluating student's presentations on service user's perspectives for Dr Warren at Bradford University.

- 3.4 Young people's panels; the young people received training in recruitment and selection. They are expected to understand the roles and responsibilities of the posts being interviewed for. They are expected to formulate questions for the candidates based upon the job specifications and any representations/concerns that they have over the role. They also create a scoring matrix for the questions. The panel are expected to keep extensive notes on each candidate and feedback extensively. The feedback is either to the Co-ordinator or the commissioner of the panel.

The young people's panels have been very successful and all the feedback on their performance has been positive. We have regular panels booked on a monthly basis.

- 3.5 Fostering training; the young people formulated a training programme for foster carers. They developed a short video to be used in this training. The young people deliver this full day training to every cohort of new foster carers. Some of the training is quite challenging for new foster carers however this training has been extremely successful and is valued by both our fostering colleagues and the new foster parents. We have five training sessions booked this year.

- 3.6 University training; the young people offer three different services to Bradford university social work department and the social care degree course.

They speak directly to the students presenting their experiences of care, their expectations of good practice and their critique of bad practice. They are involved directly with the student's presentations, offering a service users perspective and experience in the formulation and presentation. The young people then sit on the evaluation panel helping to mark the final presentations for the service user's perspectives module. The feedback from Bradford University has been very positive and they have expressed a desire for this to continue. We have four sessions booked this year.

- 3.7 Social Worker induction; this is a fairly new addition to the CiCC's tasks. It has been agreed between the principal Social Worker, the Coordinator and the CiCC that all new Social Workers meet with the young people as part of their induction. This is an informal session where the young people offer their perspectives on what makes a good Social Worker and obversely what makes a poor social worker. The number of sessions will be dependent on how many new cohorts of Social Workers we welcome to the authority.

- 3.8 Consultations; the CiCC are regularly asked to consider new plans, new services, service developments and external services for young people. They undertake these consultations on a regular basis.

- 3.9 Future Developments; the CiCC are developing their services to increase participation across the care arena and thereby increase their effectiveness as representatives of the care/care leaver population.

3.10 The Coordinator is currently working with the Service Manager for community homes to examine how we can increase the participation of community home residents. We are looking at new ways of effectively utilising residents meetings and key work sessions to directly feed the residents voices to their representatives. We are also looking at how to capture that hard data and evidence it effectively. One avenue of exploration is the possibility of training young people who have left care in the community home standards, group work, child protection and keeping records. The Coordinator has already received five referrals for young people who would be appropriate and willing to undertake such a role. We would then envisage those young people facilitating residents meetings and/or meeting with residents on a one to one basis to record their concerns/observations on our services. This would include a pro forma with clear dates of any action taken on issues raised. This could be overseen by the Service Manager and the Coordinator to feed back to both the CiCC and the community Home Managers to elicit a clear and transparent process of participation.

3.11 With the residents of community homes who are younger e.g. 12 and below, we are exploring appropriate alternative models to increase participation. The Coordinator is meeting with managers, practitioners and attending residents meetings to establish how we can record, act upon and evidence the participation that is already embedded in everyday service delivery. We are also examining how residents meetings can be improved to show clear evidence of children's voices being recorded and acted upon. The former Manager of Meadowlea which received an outstanding mark from Ofsted is proving invaluable in formulating models for the participation of younger residents.

The Coordinator has already mooted these ideas to the new Service Manager of Fostering. The Coordinator and Service Manager plan on exploring similar themes and developments in the fostering service. We are just waiting for the Service Manager to take up her post.

3.12 The CiCC have undertaken a commitment to establish regular attendance at regional and national meetings and events for CiCC and participation including the National Care Leavers Bench Marking forum. This will enable them to share models of good practice and new ideas to elicit greater participation.

3.13 The CiCC have also expressed an interest in evaluating services at the point of contact by organising a secret shopper model of evaluations for services to children and young people. This would entail young people making contact with various services e.g. Duty at Leaving Care, to evaluate how service user friendly they are, how accessible and how effective. This could be used as valuable feedback to improve our services to children/young people.

3.14 The CiCC have also expressed an interest in receiving training and information on radicalisation and extremism and the have set the Coordinator the task of exploring how they can implement this. The Coordinator has established local connections with national organisations offering training in this arena. The Co-ordinator is now looking at the feasibility of incorporating such a programme with the possibility of young people offering cascade training to their peers.

- 3.15 The Co-ordinator has also been requested to attend the new life story work development forum with a view to developing life story work. The CiCC will be involved and consulted during this process.
- 3.16 The next step for future developments; all the developments listed have cost implications. Not least that young people need to be reimbursed for their time and travel. As we increase participation and training we also increase the time and travel of participants. Our next step is to cost all these developments over a twelve month period and assess feasibility. As part of this strategy the CiCC have requested oversight of their budget. In practical terms this means a budget meeting with the Coordinator every three months where they can see what has been spent and plan accordingly for future expenditure.
- 3.17 Outcomes for young people; the young people garner a multitude of experiences and skills from involvement with the CiCC. They learn how to negotiate, how to argue the point and not the person, how to express themselves confidently in a variety of different arenas (from weekly meetings to meetings with Directors and Elected Members) they are offered training in recruitment and selection. They can directly affect the services they use and thereby feel empowered and invested in local services.

They get to meet a variety of people, interview them, consult with them and negotiate with them. They learn confidence in their own intellectual musculature. They make new friends. They learn about democracy and how it works. They receive briefings and information sessions on a wide variety of subjects and have a safe space to explore them.

The CiCC have had young people go on expeditions to the Sinai desert, Iceland and half way across the Far East.

We have attended regional and national events on care where they have shared opinions and experiences with children/young people from all over the U.K. They have met with M.P's, all party parliamentary groups and the Children's Commissioner. They have taken part in ground breaking academic research including just recently by the University of East Anglia on Children and Young People in Care who identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Questioning)

Not least one ex-CiCC member has now completed a level three apprenticeship and is now successfully employed as a full time residential practitioner in our Local Authority.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 There are no financial issues arising from this report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 There are no risks or governance issues arising out of this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 There are no legal issues arising from this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

None.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel note the content of this report.

11. APPENDICES

None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 Children in Care Councils: A London Picture. October 2010.

12.2 A Guide To Good Practice In The Structure and Running of Children in Care Councils. NCB 2016.

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Report of the Strategic Director to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 13th September 2017.

E

Subject:

Improving the Support for Young People in Care – Our Role in Corporate Parenting

Summary statement:

The report summarises the activities undertaken by Bradford’s Future Leaders 2017 cohort in taking forward the recommendations made by the Future Leaders 2016 cohort and their “Our Role in Corporate Parenting” report. This report will provide a suggested plan of priority actions for the Future Leaders 2017 cohort to further develop our Corporate Parenting offer.

Jim Hopkinson
Deputy Director
(Children’s Social Care)

Portfolio:

Children Services

Report Contact:

Sarah King – Targeted Early Help Team
Manager

T: (01274) 432259

E: sarah.king@bradford.gov.uk

Diane Cokewright

Health and Wellbeing Reintegration
Officer

T: 01274 439236

E: diane.cokewright@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children’s Services

1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel on the 8th March 2017 accepted the recommendations' and findings of Future Leader 2016 (see attachment Appendix 1) and requested for Future Leaders 2017 to complete phase 2 to take the recommendations forward.

2. OTHER CONSIDERATION

- 2.2 Since March 2017 Future Leaders have consulted and engaged with Through Care Service and Jim Hopkinson, Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to gain a better understanding of strategic and operational service delivery and continue to do so, this is a two way commitment.
- 2.3 Future Leaders 2017 have identified priority areas to focus on with support from thorough care service. These priority areas are listed below alongside a brief narrative of current activity and the recommendation numbers relate to the recommendations in the attached report "Our Role in Corporate Parenting".

3. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 3.1 Future Leaders time and commitment.

4. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 None.

5. OPTIONS

5.1 Recommendation 1

Through care strategy meeting, key players from health, education, CAMHS, Social care, housing, fostering and residential. Youth service has been requested but not available due to time. Leisure and Culture services have links with but not attending meetings. Voluntary sector services are linked in with LAC services this is working, they have an open invite to attend as and when needed. Future Leaders recommend that through care strategy meetings continue to explore links with other organisations in the future to meet the needs of LAC and leaving care young people.

5.2 Recommendation 2 and 10

To support the development of the LAC communication plan working the LAC young people and key players – liaise with Emma Collingwood:

- Social media, twitter, what's app, face book
- Other ways of communicating with young people
- Communication plans that meets everyone's needs
- Not timely to get info onto council pages

- Access to information as and when needed
- Young person's app
- Extended to over 25's.

Future Leaders to support corporately – to launch October half term (national care leavers week).

5.3 **Recommendation 3 and 6**

To work with LAC to create a video for all corporate parents to raise awareness and explain the Role of the Corporate Parent.

- New starters pack
- everyone in council to watch
- members
- Children in care council to support with and future leaders.

Role model – mentoring young people till 25 – 3 times a year (link to video) – Training pack available/ independent visitor.

Voiceability review?

5.4 **Recommendation 4 and 8**

Gym membership cards for over 14's rolled out the leisure card for LAC is in processes and requires sign off by senior management. Further scoping is has been undertaken with regards to culture and retail offer.

Future leaders to continue to explore with LAC children.

5.5 **Recommendation 5 and 9**

To be discussed with LAC if this is an event which they would be interested in.

There should be more engagement with young people to attend many of Bradford Events – links with communication plans.

That apprenticeships and shadowing opportunities for LAC should be offer by all council departments – Apprenticeship worker already available in through care services.

Organisations willing to do apprenticeships- training needed, options for accommodation linked to this at Culture Fusion.

Future leaders to meet with Emma Collingwood to take forward.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 We ask that the members of the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse the future plans as detailed above.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 **Appendix 1** - Future Leaders 2016 Report: Our role in Corporate Parenting.

7.2 **Appendix 2** - Engaging young people into the workforce of Bradford Metropolitan District Council through the Apprenticeship levy 2017.

Appendix 1

City of Bradford Metropolitan
District Council

**Improving the support for young
people in care/care leavers**

Our role in Corporate Parenting

Future Leaders Programme 2016 -Mustansir
Butt, Tina Butler, Noreen Akhtar, Ishaq Shafiq
and Anisah Naz
10/5/2016

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Section One

Introduction

Background

Bradford Councils Future Leaders Programme 2016, was designed to contribute to the Council's talent management approach. It also forms part of a wider strategy that seeks to embed leadership skills, mindsets and behaviours across the organisation.

We, as part of Bradford Councils Future Leaders Programme, are five members of the team, who expressed a wish to work with Children's Services Department. This includes receiving individual mentoring from the Senior Leadership Team.

A challenge was set by Michael Jameson, around Looked After Children;

- How do we support young children in care?
- What is our understanding; what's the current landscape?
- What do we currently deliver and commission?

We have called ourselves, "Michael's Challenge Team."

Areas Explored

Following this, a desktop exercise was undertaken to start scoping in relation improving the support for children and young people in care, in seeing the local and national landscape.

Listed below are the key areas that we as a team were keen to explore as part of this task.

- What support is available?
- What are your priorities for looked after children?
- What's your understanding of corporate parenting and what do you see your role as being?
- What do you see as the challenges, barriers, solutions and opportunities for your service, for doing things differently?
- If your child or other family member had to access care services, what would you want to see and experience?
- Today you will receive a 12 year old in your care – where do you see them in six years' time?
- As part of our scoping exercise, which local authorities / or organisations would you suggest we contact, to understand more about children in care?
- We'd like to set up a small focus group with C&YP – is this a good idea and if so, will you help us to broker conversations with key people we need to talk to?

Who we have spoken to:

The Children in Care Council.

As part of this task we have also engaged with key officers and councillors and they include:

- Michael Jameson: Strategic Director Children's Services
- Jim Hopkinson: Deputy Director Children's Specialist Services
- Jenny Cryer: Assistant Director Children's Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships
- Helen Serlin: Team Manager, Leaving Care
- Mick Nolan: Coordinator of Bradford's Children In Care Council and Participation
- David Byrom: Head of Service, Children's Services
- Di Watherston: Head of Service, (Social Work), Children's Services
- Andrew Burns: **Business Development Manager Sport & Culture**
- Cllr Val Slater: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder;
- Cllr Carol Thirkill: Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel.

We have also had conversations with the following West Yorkshire Authorities:

- Calderdale;
- Leeds.

Section Two

Setting the Scene

The vision for the Bradford district which both the Council's Children's Services and the Children's Trust share, is:

Our children and young people are the future of Bradford. We want them to grow up in a Family Friendly City where every child, young person and family is safe and well. We want them to realise their full potential, have high aspirations for themselves and their neighbourhoods and to become adults who help to drive the prosperity of our District.

Bradford's Children, Young People and Families Plan sets out the priorities for children, young people and families; how we plan to achieve these, who is responsible, and what success will look like.

- Priority 1: Ensuring that our children start school ready to learn;
- Priority 2: Accelerating education attainment and achievement;
- Priority 3: Ensuring our children and young people are ready for life and work;
- Priority 4: Safeguarding the most vulnerable and providing early support to families;
- Priority 5: Reducing health and social inequalities, including tackling child poverty, reducing obesity and improving oral health;
- Priority 6: Listening to the voice of children, young people and families and working with them to shape services and promote active citizenship.

Bradford has five key District priorities which are “owned” by different strategic partnership groups in the District. It has been developed alongside the District Plan which looks at the priorities for all areas including for children.

- Better Skills, More and Better Jobs and a Growing Economy;
- Great Start and a Good School for all Our Children;
- Better Health, Better Lives;
- Safe Clean and Active Communities;
- Decent Homes that People Can Afford to Live in.

A number of clear targets have been set within the local looked after children and care leavers strategy. These cover:

- Improve permanency for children through adoption and special guardianship orders
- Improve outcomes for looked after children and young people through improving placement stability;
- Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people being looked after;
- Ensure looked after children and care leavers are safe in their home and in their community;
- Improve education and enjoyment outcomes for looked after children;
- Improve positive contribution outcomes for looked after children. Make sure all looked after children are listened to so their views can help plan what we do and make it better;
- Support and develop our Children in Care Council;
- Strengthen the corporate parenting role;

- Improve access to work, education and training and ensure young people who leave care have access to a safe place to live.

The number of Children and Young People in Care is 922 and the age ranges from birth to 18+ years old. There are 451 females and 471 males.

There are approximately 428 Children and Young People in Fostering placements within the District and there are 59 children being looked after by another Local Authority.

Table 1 – Number of Looked After Children, by age and ethnicity.

Age	
0 – less than 1	51
01 – 04	147
05 – 09	187
10 – 15	367
16 – 17	163
18+ and in Community Home	7

Ethnicity	
White British	576
White Other	33
Gypsy/Roma	24
Asian/British Asian – Bangladeshi	6
Information Not Yet Obtained	16
Other Ethnic Group	11
Mixed – Other	19
White - Eastern European	7
Asian/British Asian – Pakistani	71
Mixed - White/Black Caribbean	31
Traveller of Irish Heritage	4
Mixed - White/Asian	85
Mixed - White/Black African	10
Black/Black British – Caribbean	2
Black/Black British – African	17
Asian/British Asian – Indian	3
Asian/British Asian – Other	4
Black/Black British – Other	2
Refused	1

Who looks after our Looked After Children:

392 Our Foster Carers
 217 Friends and Family
 91 Placed with Parents
 58 Our Residential Care
 83 External Residential/Foster Care
 Others
 (Adoption orders, hospital, secure etc.)

Statistics as of December 2016.

Section Three

Key Findings

This section presents the findings of this working group, into improving the support for children and young people in care and care leavers.

Following engagement with key stakeholders, a number of key findings and gaps were identified, which included:

Key Finding 1

Comparative work undertaken also identified that Leeds City Council has a multi-agency LAP, using a multi agency approach with Looked After Children. This has proved to be very successful as key agencies formed part of the approach and services appear more co-ordinated, thus addressing the needs of Looked After Children more effectively.

Identified Gap

There does not appear to be a multi-agency LAP partnership approach in Bradford, hence there appears to be a gap in Bradford Council.

Recommendation

To develop a multi agency approach to work with Looked After Children, which would improve the coordination and delivery of services and support to Looked After Children. The multi agency partnership should be accountable to Bradford Council's Corporate Parenting Board. Representation would be expected from Leisure and Cultural Services, Third Sector partners, including key representation from the businesses Community. Other key stakeholders will be identified as the project progresses.

Key Finding 2

With regards to communication, messages are delivered through the Children in Care Council; however there is no overall communications plan which could be used to deliver key messages in relation to Looked After Children.

Identified Gap

There appears to be no overall Communications Plan in place to not only deliver key messages in relation to Looked After Children but also to provide Opportunities to raise awareness, promote and buy in regarding the Corporate Parenting role, especially in expanding this across Council and Stakeholders.

Recommendation

A development of a robust communications plan which ensures that Looked After Children/leaving care are given specific consideration within existing plans around priorities and development of services for children and young people, for example the Children, Young People and Families plan) and that key organisations are held to account in relation to equality of access for Looked After Children.

Key Finding 3

During the information gathering process it became apparent that the offer to Looked After Children in terms of Corporate Parenting support was not clear. There also appears to be opportunities to look at developing raising awareness sessions with Councillors in terms of fulfilling the Corporate Parenting role.

There was consensus amongst Senior Councillors, Council Officers and Looked After Children, about the need to strengthen this area further, by ensuring that within Bradford Councils Report template; a further heading be included to be called, "Implications for Corporate Parenting". This would further reinforce the importance of Corporate Parenting, whilst also demonstrating that this is a cross-cutting issue.

Identified Gap

Opportunities to raise awareness, promote and buy in regarding the Corporate Parenting role, especially in expanding this across the Council and key stakeholders.

Recommendations

There is a need to communicate a clearer understanding of what the role is of the Corporate Parent, who these are and the responsibilities surrounding this. There is opportunity to enhance the role of the Corporate Parent and we would seek to embed the role wider, and would like to pilot an initiative with Future Leaders, in taking a mentoring role with Looked After Children.

Council Management Team will clarify with each Council Department, their role as a Corporate Parent. We will ask each department to run an annual event for Looked After Children. Each Council Department will be responsible to design and publicise what their event is and the dates of each event should be coordinated so there is an even spread over the year.

It is recommended that all elected members receive as part of their member introduction training sessions that there is inclusion of the expectations around the role of being a Corporate Parent, focusing specifically on accountability and responsibility. This should also be extended to Council Staff.

It is recommended that a new section be included in Bradford Councils Report template called, "Implications for Corporate Parenting".

Key Finding 4

Discussions with Looked After Children indicated that they are offered free tickets/offers and they felt that 'this is good, but that there is a flaw and that this can fall short as some families may not be able to get involved due to cost and need to be bespoke for each young person and as a family.'

Identified Gap

The need to encourage Looked After Children to make the most of the cultural offer and developing systems to ensure that the services available to young people meet their needs and are accessible.

Recommendation

Working collaboratively, alongside representatives from the Children in Care Council, the new cohort of Future Leaders will work with a number of key partners in the District to develop a cultural offer to our Looked After Children. It is anticipated that they will develop the scheme and in term will aim to develop a discreet swipe card/potentially linked with an app, for discounts or free. This will include retail and leisure outlets.

Key Finding 5

Dialogue with Officers and Councillors revealed that more could be done, in terms of developing and promoting the cultural offer for Looked after Children. Bradford Council has many facilities such as swimming pools, theatres and museums; where access could be made available to Looked After Children free of charge and to include businesses.

Identified Gap

The cultural offer, or lack of; that is currently available across the District for Looked After Children.

We undertook some comparative work relating to the cultural offer within neighbouring authorities and below are the key points. It is clear that there are differing offers:

- **Bradford Council** are currently piloting an initiative, that started in September, of initially 60 membership cards, for free access for care leavers for gym, swimming and fitness classes. Passport to Leisure passes are also available for half price access for younger children. This is in the early pilot stage and at the last count, approximately 30 care leavers had signed up. A number of those had not attended a gym/swim/class before
- **Calderdale Council** offer passport to leisure and MAX cards that are given to carers and special guardians that enables them to get discounts in certain places, e.g. Eureka, bowling, free/discounts and recreational offers
- **Leeds Council** offer Looked After Children and care leavers, free access to swimming pools and gyms through Leeds City Council Sport & Active Lifestyles

Recommendation

It is recommended that a separate piece of work be undertaken to explore the costs associated with providing all Looked After Children free access and free Passport to Leisure cards and to make use of facilities at the disposal of the Council; swimming pools, theatres and museums. This would ensure opportunities for young people to use these facilities, this creating more social, cultural and learning opportunities.

Key Finding 6

Further discussion with Council officers and Councillors highlighted that there are not enough apprenticeship opportunities for Looked After Children from Bradford Council's apprentice scheme.

Identified Gap

Places on Bradford Councils apprenticeship scheme are not currently targeted to Looked After Children.

Recommendation

We recommend that Bradford Council prioritises places on the Councils apprentice schemes to Looked After Children (and to include 'professional' shadowing opportunities, similar to takeover challenge day but more regularly and consistently).

Key Finding 7

During the information gathering stage, it became clear that there needed to be greater clarity in relation to what is in place for Young People who are leaving Care Leavers. Moreover, in our role as Corporate Parent, it is crucial that we know once Young People leave the care of the Council, that they are correctly signposted to organisations and services that will continue to assist them in their life development.

Identified Gap

Not signposting and supporting Young People, once they have left Bradford Councils Care.

Recommendation

To talk to care leavers before they have left responsibility of the Local Authority in more detail as to what level of signposting/support they would/or would not like to receive, in terms of the Council tracking their progress to help fulfil our Corporate Parenting role.

Section Four

Concluding Remarks

Providing support, guidance and care to Looked After Children in the District by Bradford Council, is complex and one that requires a multi-faceted approach. It was clear from our information gathering, that the commitment from Bradford Council Children's Services Staff and Bradford Councillors was exceptional.

It has been clear from the information gathered, that whilst there are good practices that exist to support young children in care, it is also clear that more can be done. Moreover, we have seen a commitment to ensuring children and young people in care do receive the highest possible care.

Members of the Children in Care Council felt that Looked After Children should have similar opportunities and positive life experiences as all children. They said that they "don't want to be identified as kids in care." The Children in Care Council said that they all want young people in the District, to be well rounded, resilient and leading citizens, equipped with the skills and tools to be what they aspire to be.

Members of the Children in Care Council told us they do not feel that they currently have the same opportunities as young people who are not in care. They feel children in care should have similar opportunities."

As key stakeholders, we are seeking to continue to work inclusively and collaboratively with members of the Children in Care Council to further co-create, develop and shape further, an area of work. This supports and encourages an ethos of working with the voices of children and young people. This is our commitment beyond this report.

Bradford Council needs to fulfil our role as a Corporate Parent, from the point at which children and young people come into our care to not just when they leave care, but also after care. As a Corporate Parent, we need to be treating Looked after Children, as if they were our own children and in the words of one of our young people, "we want someone to make sure we are doing okay."

Next Steps

In relation to the next steps and progressing forward with this work, it is vital that the momentum is not lost and that an action plan be developed which sets out how the recommendations for this review will be implemented and taken forward. The action plan will also include areas of accountability and timescales for delivery.

The draft report will also be considered by Bradford Councils Corporate Parenting Panel, on Wednesday 8 March 2017.

Section Five

Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations set out below have come from the desk top research, discussions with the Children and Care Council, Bradford Council Children Service's Officers, Councillors and comparative work with the other West Yorkshire Authorities.

Recommendation 1

To develop a multi agency approach to work with Looked After Children, which would improve the co-ordination and delivery of services and support to young people in care. The multi agency partnership should be accountable to Bradford Council's Corporate Parenting Board. Representation would be expected from Leisure and Cultural Services, Voluntary and Community Sector Agencies as well as key representation from the businesses Community. Other key stakeholders will be identified as the project progresses.

Recommendation 2

A development of a robust communications plan which ensures that Children in care/leaving care are given specific consideration within existing plans around priorities and development of services for Looked After Children, for example the Children, Young People and Families plan) and that key organisations are held to account in relation to equality of access for children in care.

Recommendation 3

There is a need to communicate a clearer understanding of what the role is of the Corporate Parent, who these are and the responsibilities surrounding this. There is opportunity to enhance the role of the Corporate Parent, we would seek to embed the role wider, and would like to pilot an initiative with Future Leaders, in taking a mentoring role with young people in care.

Recommendation 4

Working collaboratively, alongside representatives from the Children in Care Council, the new cohort of Future Leaders will work with a number of key partners in the District to develop a cultural offer to our Looked After Children. They will develop the scheme and will then aim to develop a discreet swipe card/potentially linked with an app, for discounts or free. This will include retail and leisure outlets.

Recommendation 5

Council Management Team will clarify with each Council Department, their role is as a Corporate Parent. We will ask each department to run an annual event for Looked After Children. Each Council Department will be responsible to design and publicise what their event is and the dates of each event should be coordinated so there is an even spread over the year.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that all elected members receive as part of their member introduction training sessions that there is inclusion of the expectations around the role of being a Corporate Parent, focusing specifically on accountability and responsibility. This should also be extended to Council staff.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that a new section be included in Bradford Councils Report template called, "Implications for Corporate Parenting".

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that a separate piece of work be undertaken to explore the costs associated with providing all Looked After Children free access and free Passport to Leisure cards and to make use of facilities at the disposal of the Council such as swimming pools, theatres and museums. This would allow young people to use these facilities, this creating more social, cultural and learning opportunities.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that Bradford Council prioritises places on the Councils apprentice schemes to Looked After Children (and to include 'professional' shadowing opportunities, similar to takeover challenge day but more regularly and consistently).

Recommendation 10

To talk to care leavers before they have left responsibility of the Local Authority in more detail as to what level of signposting/support they would/or would not like to receive, in terms of the Council tracking their progress to help fulfil our Corporate Parenting role.

Recommendation 11

That an action plan be developed which sets out how the recommendations for this review will be implemented, including areas of responsibility and timescales for delivery. Progress against the action plan should be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in six months.

Research Report
Gemma Cain – Future Leaders Programme
2017

**Engaging Young People into the Workforce of Bradford
Metropolitan District Council through the Apprenticeship Levy
2017**

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the individuals involved in compiling this research as the information required to give an accurate position is often a matter of sensitivity and covers subjects that are complex and go way beyond the normal realms of consideration in relation to standard recruitment processes.

Special thanks go to the GMB Trade Union in Bradford for providing access to their partners and organisations who were willing to contribute. Offering support and an on-going willingness to continue to assist with this research and facilitate any arrangements which may contribute to the success of any programmes developed as a result.

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Introduction

As part of the Future Leaders Programme 2017 I have been tasked by the Director of Childrens Services, Michael Jameson to research the way in which Bradford Metropolitan District Council can break the stigma of not being an employer for young people and attract new talent into the Apprenticeship Levy 2017 scheme. The research was two-fold in that it focused on two main areas, one being very generalist and the other being very specific,

- Consider how Bradford Council can become more attractive to young people as an employer and what barriers are currently in place, what can we change and what is it about the current image that is restricting recruitment potential?
- How can Bradford Council engage Children Leaving Care (CLC) into employment through the Apprenticeship Levy Scheme (ALS) and what barriers, challenges and support is required to make this successful?

The report deals with the two areas in turn and will highlight the main points that highlight our current weaknesses as an employer and what would potentially need to be changed to improve the image and engage young people.

It will demonstrate areas which will need to be given serious consideration, specifically in light of CLC and the challenges that will be faced in supporting these young people, followed by recommendations based on information obtained from experts in their respective fields and how this can be implemented successfully without proving detrimental both structurally and financially.

Executive Summary

The research proved very insightful regarding both the current image of the Council and how it is perceived; in addition there is also a huge amount of work to do enable the council as an employer to make this programme a success.

The following points highlight the main areas of concern that were highlighted through the research of which will be expanded further in the report.

- Nationally the Council is now in a position of weakness when proposing to recruit new apprentices, with the levy scheme affecting a large amount of employers both locally and nationally, the market to recruit young people has never been more competitive, demonstrated by the fact that, Keighley College, specifically stated that even them as a training provider held numerous vacancies with good employers with exciting prospects that they simply could not fill as the recruitment market for young people is extremely tight.
- The current facilities for attracting apprentices to the council are simply outdated and are not in any way attractive enough to stand out from the crowd. This is compounded by the fact that young people engage and seek job opportunities in a completely different manner now, of which the council has not yet embraced.
- A programme that is extremely proactive would be required to put the council out there on the job market to really stand out, especially in light of the Workforce Development Teams view to become one of the leading training and Apprenticeship providers, this would involve completely rethinking the way in which they currently recruit.
- Some of the Councils existing affiliations and commitments require further consideration and collaborative working is going to be the key to making a programme successful. There is the potential to have ready access to the groups of young people that the council wishes to specifically target such as those from SEND, BME and CLC with additional support throughout the placement/employment giving it further chance of success.
- One of the biggest challenges the council will face is the attitudes and behaviours that will likely need to change. With an ageing workforce and the potential for large influxes of young people, training will become key to facilitating a successful scheme, specifically around disability awareness, Safeguarding and even more specific areas such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

- Whilst the council has proposed work placements and traineeships, they may also benefit from considering Supported Internships, as the likelihood of success with the individuals who would be partaking would increase significantly by being able to gain additional support through the learning provider the council would not likely be able to put resources into.
- CLC whilst becoming young adult are still in an extremely vulnerable stage of their lives and whilst may make a great success of an apprenticeship placement would need an extra level of support than is provided in a normal apprenticeship arrangement. Significant attention would need to be given to any existing Education, Health and Care Plans, and significant collaboration with the Leaving Care team, support workers, social workers and other parties would need to be developed.
- Consideration needs to be given towards the possible development of a preparation for work scheme, this is due to the fact that some of the target groups the council proposes to recruit will likely need some coaching or assistance in building up basic life skills such as travelling to work alone as an example, to prepare them for the world of independent working.
- In all the research carried out, support has been raised in almost every element regarding CLC, specifically the care element. This is the area which was highlighted as requiring skills which may need to be developed significantly within the council, in addition, education around Children who have been in care and also spotting signs of potential issues that may begin to impact their ability to fulfil their potential.
- Engaging with young people currently in care will be the most useful source of information to making any programme to recruit this target group a success. By speaking to the individuals directly it would provide a first hand account of what they as individuals would like to aspire to and where they perceive themselves. By assuming what these individuals would like to do or get involved in will not go far enough to ensure successful placements.
- Mentorship and or workplace buddies will be one key to making these individuals feel comfortable in the workplace and provide an opportunity for them to open up about problems and or issues whether work related or personal that is impacting them. Again requiring training but further providing the opportunity for success, this maybe someone the Child Leaving Care picks or someone appointed in the first instance to establish a working relationship with them.

Findings

The recruitment of Apprentices and Introduction to Work

Having consulted sources of primary and secondary research it is apparent that there is a huge task ahead for the Council in terms of making itself more attractive to young people regarding the apprenticeship scheme in addition to attracting those from vulnerable groups such as CLC and SEND.

Having taken the opportunity to really look into what is on offer, if we simply consider our publications and website (www.bradford.gov.uk) compared to our comparators who are in the same recruitment situation, it is clear that we far from stand out. The way in which young people communicate and search for jobs has changed, using the National Apprenticeship Service website (<http://www.getingofar.gov.uk/>) as a prime example, it is eye catching and delivers exactly what a young person enquiring about apprenticeships would be interested in. The information on there is informative and the language used caters to a variety of audiences.

In meeting Mark Rowe, National Apprenticeships Officer for TUC and Union-learn, he clarified this point further, explaining that the majority of the leaders in this area spend a lot of time and money on getting this part of their recruitment right, they engage with young people to see what they want and also explained that it is really going to have to stand out and do something different as there has never been more of a tighter market to recruit new apprentices from.

Chris Stott, head of Business Engagement at Keighley College, explained further that, even at a time where there has effectively never been more opportunity for apprenticeships for young people, the college have vacancies for positions with good employers that pay over and above the national minimum apprentice wage that they simply cannot fill. He felt that competition was the main contributor to this factor and this was compounded by the difficulty in general to engage young people.

We went on to discuss at length the way in which the Council plans to attract new apprentices and garner interest in the roles that are carried out. It became very clear that unless something new and exciting is developed there would be little interest. Mark explained that some of the employers he works with in industries such as Nuclear and Heavy Engineering, the use of open days where people can look around, see how things are done, look at the plant and equipment used and talk to staff that do the jobs to get them really thinking about what they want to do.

One suggestion he made and placed a lot of emphasis on was to visit and go see what goes on in terms of an apprentice recruitment programme, especially due to the fact that if the council were to visit Yorkshire Water for example, there would not likely be much crossover in the types of roles each employer would be looking to recruit to and given the historic success of their programme could provide some insightful information on how to really build an attractive recruitment programme for new apprentices.

When conducting further research personally, it appeared that Bradford Council – Skills for work signed up to the governments Disability Confident Scheme (www.GOV.uk), however only at the base level of Committed. The levels range from Committed to Employer and then Leader, in light of the Councils vision to be inclusive and also attract candidates from the SEND and CLC sectors, it is surprising to see that this is not something that as an employer is not more openly identified and advertised.

It became clear from all that were involved in the research, that to clearly make the project a success, there would need to be a significant amount of collaboration involved specifically regarding the minority groups. This would involve working with the education provider to ensure that the level of care within education is brought into the workplace in the form of reasonable adjustments where practicably possible, with regular contact with Social services, Support workers and alike. It was made clear by Emma Rich, head of SEND and CLC at Keighley College that the support isn't just someone who they can go to every now and again, it goes further in that some SEND employees/trainees would likely require a programme of introduction to the workplace to build their confidence as any situation like this would likely be well out of their comfort zone. Even going as far as travelling to work every day.

Elements of independent living would need to be considered to compliment what is being taught through the learning provider. It was made clear however, that whilst there may be concerns about the financial impact connected to some of these adjustments, through the proper assessments made by Access to Work it would be highly likely that funding would be provided to support the individual on their Work Placement/Apprenticeship.

Great emphasis from all involved also placed concern on the level of training management had received in managing and supporting young people, more specifically in relation to the council's current workforce demographic regarding age. The awareness of disabilities and difficulties was an area which requires a lot of work and commitment from leadership to engage in training and understand the basic fundamentals of the Equality Act 2010 (www.legislation.gov.uk).

Without this there is the potential for unintentional discrimination through management actions that albeit were good in their intention but place someone in the qualifying category at a detriment.

It would place more emphasis on management making decisions based on educated judgement rather than simply relaying all decisions to HRplus to negate risk, this may work in the short term but could become a barrier to progressing work on a day to day basis.

Children Leaving Care into Employment

Not having much prior knowledge of the area regarding children leaving care there is still a significant amount of research to be done to ideally make any recruitment programme as successful as possible.

First giving regard to past research which includes in depth case studies (Dixon 2006), it is noted that there are inherent difficulties in the individual maintaining employment or staying with a placement, simply based on their personal past, the type of care they have entered into and personal issue they have had to overcome or are currently dealing with, this may be drug or Alcohol abuse or other extremely sensitive matters.

What does come through in this report is how someone can make a success and like with any other young person a willingness to succeed and better themselves proves the key to moving forward which is something the council through its programme would need to be mindful of, support and embrace at many levels.

In discussing the subject with Emma, she emphasised that the likelihood of those who would enter into a work programme/placement would, like in the above findings, benefit significantly from a pre-employment programme, this is due to experiences such as this in most cases being completely alien to them. There is also the propensity for the individual to not just be vulnerable in the sense that they have been cared for by the local Authority but may also have complex educational or health needs that would need to be supported.

Again from the research it would appear again that support is the key work that keeps being reiterated, this was also seconded by Mark Rowe in that he explained that the he has seen programmes where vulnerable individuals were in work placements such as Remploy, and where the individuals were adequately supported it was extremely successful and not only that, the attendance levels and absence rates were extremely low even with complex needs due to the commitment from the individuals and their willingness to engage in employment.

In gaining research from a teacher who works with children currently in care and those preparing for leaving care, the message that was made abundantly clear was that serious consideration would need to be given to any Education, Health and Care Plan in place remaining in place until the individual turns 25. Whilst to most who work in education and social care this may seem obvious however, to Human Resources and Management it is likely a concept of employment that has not been given much consideration unless they have worked regularly with this group of people.

She also raised the point of personal characteristics that can become a barrier to employment such as *“mood swings, emotional outburst, lack of trust, attachment issues and an eagerness to impress/ overachieve or just fail as that is what they have always been told will happen”*. Again, though the message was clear that given the amount of support available already and through collaborating through the 6-12-month LAC reviews with a robust support network there is every chance of these opportunities succeeding.

One recommendation made by Keighley college is a model that has been extremely successful elsewhere is a supported internship (<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk>). They have proved to be very useful regarding CLC and also SEND and give a huge amount of information for employers in light of the above subject giving the young individual much more chance of success and the possibility to go onto take up an apprenticeship placement thereafter.

The department of Children's Services and the Skills for Work Team will likely be heavily involved in this stream of the Apprenticeship Levy programme, but the question would be how the council intends to develop a framework for raising issues and dealing with them given the amount of outside support the young individuals would have. If we took a matter of discipline for example, whilst the statutory entitlements exist in legislation, it would need to be decided how the situation would need to be treated and who would need to be involved given their potential vulnerability.

This is a consideration for Human Resources and CMT to address but would need to be decided prior to a work programme to make it as seamless as possible and operate efficiently.

In carrying out my research one of the biggest obstacles has been gaining access to service users from the group this section specifically mentions, however after consulting with Keighley College with significant support from the GMB trade union, I have been granted access to come and work with and interview students who are currently in care and are in the process of leaving, to see what barriers they face regarding employability and also seek what their thoughts and aspirations are in terms of their futures.

I have also been granted access to a GMB member who has Asperger's Syndrome who is currently working full time successfully who would like to share his experiences and also explain some of the barriers he has faced, discrimination he has been subjected to and how he personally made a success of himself in the face of adversity.

Other secondary research such as a report called, Barriers to Employment and Unfair Treatment at Work (EHRC 2013) has also highlighted many issues regarding employment for those from minority groups such as disability, and by giving this some consideration a great amount of thought would need to be given to both the way in which the council chooses to target this group into work and also alleviate any of the fears that come about moving into the world of work.

Conclusions & Recommendations

There is much work to do to really develop a scheme that is inclusive of all young people from every area of Bradford no matter what their difference. In highlighting specific groups to recruit, it is clear that there are many considerations which are not plainly obvious but by not considering them could significantly impact the potential for young people to really excel in the councils desired Apprenticeship Scheme.

Given the information I have obtained over a relatively short period, I would make the following recommendations in the first instance as I feel they would prove extremely beneficial to making this a success.

I must note that the research within this report is not anywhere close to really defining exactly what is required to develop the Council's recruitment plans to really engage young people into working in Local Government. I would suggest that this could be broken up further to really analyse each specific area.

As mentioned in my findings I am planning to continue my research and engage with young people from specific groups to seek their insight into views, opinions and barriers to employment and will be continuing to consult with the GMB Trade Union regarding their engagement activities with young people to see where they can assist further.

I would like to make the following recommendations,

1. The Council carries out a complete review and overhaul of its communications to make them not just more attractive but more accessible and look at the way young people interact in this day and age, using media's such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as examples.
2. Redesign of the Recruitment part of the Councils website and provide a direct access link from the BMDC homepage to the apprenticeship opportunities available through www.gov.uk.
3. That the Council develops open days where prospective candidates can come and visit work sites, see the equipment and meet staff and talk to them about the job they do, in addition to job fairs and recruitment days in schools and colleges.
4. Review of the currently process of recruitment, considering different ways of engaging potential new employees and consider stepping away from the standard competency based interview to really get a good impression of the young person sat in front of them as we may be missing an opportunity to recruit some really good candidates.
5. Management Training – this covers 3 particular areas and would need to go a lot further than just the basic information sessions
 - Safeguard
 - SEND awareness and accessibility
 - Equality and Diversity
6. Considering a supported internship to really engage the most vulnerable young individuals and really offer them an opportunity to succeed
7. Develop a programme to start accessing schools and colleges to begin an engagement strategy with young people, teaching them about the world of work but also building the profile and image of Bradford Council as an Employer and a Brand.
8. Clearly identify specific roles for apprenticeships so that a clear idea of what can be achieved is there from the outset for the applicants. This will also help decide future progression and assist with their continuous professional development.

9. Consider the councils current support network for young people in employment, specifically those with vulnerabilities and assess whether this will be adequate in light of what is hoped to be achieved through this programme.
10. Further collaboration with outside agencies such as schools, colleges, support groups such as MENCAP and Autism First to gain first-hand experience of what we need to do to make this programme as successful as possible.
11. Look at our current affiliations as an employer and reignite them to boost our profile and commitment to being a completely inclusive employer.

By implementing the recommendations above I feel that there is significantly more chance of this opportunity for the council to be a real success, in light of Section 2, Setting the Scene, of the Improving the support for young people in care/care leavers report, these recommendations will significantly contribute to both Priority 3 and Priority 6 and assist with the other 4 priorities.

They will also go further to give every chance of Recommendation 9 (pg14) being extremely successful and offer opportunities for LAC for years to come and develop Bradford Council into becoming the most inclusive employer in the district.

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Mark Rowe

National Apprenticeships officer for the TUC & Union-learn

Chris Stott

Head of Business Engagement – Keighley College

Emma Rich

Head of SEND and Vulnerable Children – Keighley College

Sarah Livingstone

Teacher of Vulnerable Children – Ellar Carr School, Bradford

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**Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care)
to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be
held on 13 September 2017.**

F

Subject:

Updated information for Members on the outcomes for Looked After Children at 31 March 2017.

Summary statement:

The report provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with comprehensive information regarding outcomes for Looked After Children. It is a summary of information known about Looked After Children in Bradford as at 31 March 2017 and draws on the same data used to provide statistical returns to the Department for Education (all figures are provisional, DfE publish the final figures March 2018) . Comparison is made to performance levels at 31 March 2016 and to the first National Statistical Release for 2015-16.

Jim Hopkinson
Deputy Director
(Children's Social Care)

Report Contact: David Byrom
Phone: (01274) 432986
E-mail: david.byrom@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Children's Services

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with comprehensive information regarding outcomes for Looked After Children. It is a summary of information known about Looked After Children in Bradford as at 31 March 2017 and draws on the same data used to provide statistical returns to the Department for Education (all figures are provisional, Department for Education (DfE) publish the final figures March 2018) . Comparison is made to performance levels at 31 March 2016 and to the first National Statistical Release for 2015-16.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 These outcomes are reported on children who are Looked After at 31 March 2017, and have been in care continuously for at least one year on that date.
- 2.2 This is reported annually to the DfE as part of the wider Looked After Children's return (SSDA903) and performance is fed back to Through Care Strategy group to support and improve the work of individual services.
- 2.3 The data provided through the Looked After Children return provides information on performance indicators which are used to form part of the National Indicator Set (NIS). Although the NIS as a central entity has been abolished by the Coalition Government, these performance indicators are still a key local tool in managing the quality of outcomes for Looked After Children in the District. They also contribute to Ofsted's annual evaluation of children's services in Bradford and provide key baseline information for any Ofsted inspection of services to Looked After Children that may take place.

Headlines:

- There has been an increase in the number of looked after children, 927 children were in care at 31 March 2017 compared to 848 last year.
- The numbers of adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders have decreased since last year.
- Numbers of Young people having a Dental Check and up to date Immunisations have increased.
- Numbers of Care Leavers in Employment, Education or Training has improved.
- Young people who were convicted or subject to a youth caution in the year has fallen.

2.1 Overall Numbers

- 2.1.2 There were 927 children looked after at 31 March 2017, which is a 9.3% increase on last year of 848. Nationally the number of looked after children has continued to rise; it has increased steadily over the last eight years. The rate of looked after children per 10,000 population aged 0-17 is at 61 and this has been slowly decreasing since 2012 by effective management of the Looked After population. This compares favourably with statistical neighbours rate of 77.7.

- 2.1.3 There has been a 16% increase in the number of children becoming Looked After at 31 March. 351 children started to be looked after, which is an increase on last year's figure of 302. 281 ceased to be looked after compared to 331 last year.

Nationally at 31 March 2016 there was a 2% increase in the numbers starting to be looked after compared to the previous year.

The proportion of 0-4 and 5-9 year olds becoming looked after has remained fairly stable over the last 3 years, however there has been a fall in the proportion of 10-15 year olds becoming looked after, 23% in 2017 compared to 30% in 2016. There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of 16+ becoming looked after, an increase from 7% in 2016 to 14% in 2017. The increase appears to be due to a rise in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children starting to be looked after, given the increases are largely seen amongst those aged 16 and over, and amongst those with a primary category of need of 'absent parenting'.

2.2 Placements and Adoptions

- 2.2.1 Ensuring Looked After children and young people are in stable placements is a key priority for Children's Services. At 31 March 2017, 69% of children and young people were in long term stable and secure placements, which is a decrease on last year's figure of 71%. This compares favourably with the England average of 68% and in line with the Statistical neighbours' average of 69%. Short term placement stability remains fairly stable; 9.8% of children and young people had 3 or more placements in the year compared to 9.5% last year. This compares favourably with the England average of 10% but is higher than the Statistical neighbours' average of 8.3%.

- 2.2.2 42 children (15%) were adopted at 31 March 2017 this is a decrease on last year of 72 (21%). This compares favourably to the national average of 15% but unfavourable to the statistical neighbours average of 20.9% (comparison from the first National Statistical Release for 2015-16).

- 2.2.3 The number of Special Guardianship orders granted has also decreased 33 (12%) in 2017 from 42 (12%) in 2016.

- 2.2.4 The average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family has also improved in the year in question from 554 days in 2015/16 to 357 days in 2016/17.

2.3 Health

2.3.1 Physical Health

- 92% of Looked After children had all their immunisations up to date increase from 89% in 2016.
- 94% had their teeth checked by a dentist in the year, an increase on last year of 92%.
- 93% of Looked After children had an annual health assessment in the year, a decrease on last year of 95%.

2.4 Emotional Health

- 2.4.1. It is recognised that Children and Young People who have been abused and suffered loss of their primary carer are at greater risk of poor emotional resilience. Concerns remain for the outcomes of young people leaving care whose future is impacted by issues of poor emotional health which for a minority can lead to social exclusion.
- 2.4.2 The emotional health needs of children and young people (Looked After for more than a year) are assessed through a 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). A SDQ generates an individual score for an individual child (between 1 – 40), 0-13 as normal level of emotional need, 13-25 some concerns, 25-40 very concerning. The highest figures are a predictor of emotional difficulties.
- 2.4.3 51% of children aged 4-16 inclusive (who have been Looked After for more than one year) had a SDQ completed, this is a decrease on last year of 69%. The average value for completed questionnaires at 31 March 2017 is 12.2 compared to 12.7 last year. This rate compares favourably with the National and Statistical average rate of 14 and 14.3 (2015-2016 Statistical Release Figures).
- 2.4.4 To respond to the emotional wellbeing of Looked After children and care leavers Social Care Services have implemented specific partnerships with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):
- Therapeutically-oriented care programme at Meadowlea Children's Home which focuses on the emotional needs of children and views the child's development process from a broad psychoanalytical perspective as well as biological and social influences.
 - Leaving Care Workers and young people have early access to CAMHS Social Work service to provide preventative therapeutic work or access to specialist CAMHS and Adult Services.
 - All staff within Children's Homes are being trained to deliver PACE and DDP our model of care for working with young people who have experienced early trauma and attachment issues, we expect this to improve relationships and increase resilience in placements. This training is also being rolled out to Foster Carers.
 - A dedicated CAMHS Looked after Team is in place and two psychologists have been recruited who are working to support our placement resources. This includes direct work at placements as opposed to a clinic approach.

2.5 Children's Homes

- 2.5.1 Changes to the Children's Homes Regulations and Ofsted Inspection Framework were introduced in April 2015 with residential care settings and provisions being inspected against a rigorous inspection framework twice a year. Inspectors consider the information that Ofsted has about the service which includes:

- previous inspection reports
- the home's statement of purpose
- concerns and complaints received
- notifications of serious events received
- written reports following a visit by an independent visitor
- any quality assurance reports required by regulation
- any changes to registration, including change of manager
- any current or recent enforcement activity.

2.5.2 Judgements of the home are made in relation to:

- The Overall Experiences and Progress of Children and Young People living in the home
- How Well Children and Young People are Helped and Protected
- The Impact and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers

2.5.3 With overall judgements in relation to the care delivered being made using a four-point scale:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate

2.5.4 Inspectors will investigate how the manager and staff:

- Understand each child or young person's starting point
- Measure success
- Know they are making a positive difference to children and young people's lives
- Understand and act on the strengths and areas for improvement in practice.

2.5.6 Any judgement of inadequate for the overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home at an inspection of a children's home will lead to an urgent case review. There will also be an urgent case review where the issues identified at an interim inspection give sufficient cause for concern.

Currently Bradford has 11 children's homes, the outcomes for 2016-2017:

Full inspection outcomes

- 2 - Requires Improvement
- 3 - Good
- 1 - Outstanding

Interim Inspection outcomes

- 6 sustained effectiveness
- 4 improved effectiveness

2.6 Achievement

The information on the attainment of Looked After children for the academic year 2016/2017 is not yet available and is the subject of a report to this Committee at its next meeting.

2.7 Positive Contribution

- 96% of Looked After children participated in their reviews at 31 March 2017 which is an increase on last year of 92%.
- 98% of Looked After children had all their reviews on time during the previous year; this is the same as last year.
- The percentage of Looked After young people who were convicted or subject to a youth caution in the year has fallen; 5.5% in 2017 compared to 7% in 2016. There is a dedicated Police Officer working closely with the children's homes to work restoratively and reduce offending and missing episodes.

2.8 Economic Wellbeing

2.8.1 At 31 March 2017, 60% of Care Leavers aged between 17 and 21 were in education, employment and training, which is an increase on last year of 57%. Bradford performance compares favourably with the England average of 49%, Yorkshire and Humber average of 52% and with Statistical neighbours average of 48.5% (2015-2016 Statistical Release Figures).

2.8.2 85% of Care Leavers aged between 17 and 21 were living in suitable accommodation; this is a slight fall on last year figure of 86%. Bradford's figure compares favourably with the England average of 83% and in line with the statistical neighbour's average of 85.6% and Yorkshire and Humber average of 85% (2015-2016 Statistical Release Figures).

2.8.3 6% of Care Leavers aged between 17 and 21 were in higher education, a slight decrease on last year's figure of 7%. This compares unfavourably against the National and Statistical neighbours average of 7% and 8.25% (2015-2016 Statistical Release Figures).

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

N/A.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

N/A.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

N/A.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

N/A.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

N/A.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

N/A.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

N/A.

7.6 TRADE UNION

N/A.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

**7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS
(for reports to Area Committees only)**

N/A.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

N/A.

9. OPTIONS

N/A.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

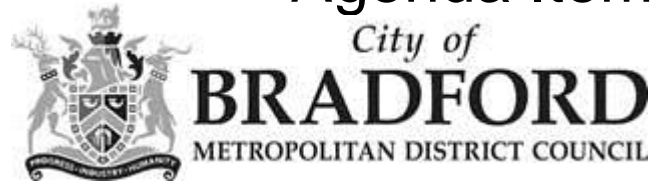
That Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel note the content of this report.

11. APPENDICES

None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Looked After Children Analysis 2017
- National Statistical Release for 2015-16



Report of the Strategic Director to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 13th September 2017.

G

Subject: Council Tax Exemptions for Bradford Care Leavers

Summary statement:

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council has received a letter from the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, regarding the experience of Care Leavers who become eligible to pay Council Tax. The Children's Commissioner has challenged all Local Authorities in relation to their Corporate Parenting duty to Care Leavers living within their area and asked that they consider using their powers to exempt Care Leavers from paying individual Council Tax contributions.

This report sets out Bradford's response and proposals to this challenge.

Jim Hopkinson
Deputy Director
(Children's Social Care)

Portfolio:
Children's Services

Report Contact: Emma Collingwood
Phone: (01274) 437123
E-mail: Emma.collingwood@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bradford Council has the power to reduce Council Tax payable, beyond those standard reductions prescribed in legislation. Section 13A of the Local Government and Finance Act (LGFA) 1992 covers both the Council Tax Reduction scheme for low income households and a wider discretionary power.
- 1.2 The discretionary power allows the authority to reduce Council Tax and includes the power to reduce the Council Tax bill to zero. The law states that the power can be used for individual particular cases or a 'class of cases'. The Council, therefore, has the legal powers to provide additional discretionary support to care leavers and others under Section 13A(1)(c).
- 1.3 Following publication of a report from the Children's Society on care leaver poverty, ("The Wolf at the Door; How Council Tax debt collection is harming children" – March 2015) and a letter to all Chief Executives (Appendix 1) there is national impetus for Local Authorities to review and consider their corporate parenting duties and powers to consider exemptions for particular care leavers from Council Tax contributions.
- 1.4 Bradford is working closely with the National Care Leavers Benchmarking Forum (NCLBF) who report that some 11 Authorities currently have schemes to exempt care leavers from Council Tax as part of a corporate parenting offer. Schemes are at varying levels – up to age 21 or 25 and some have eligibility criteria built into that scheme. Bradford has studied in depth 3 schemes (Rochdale, Cheshire East and Leeds) in order to assist the Through Care Service in creating a bespoke offer for Bradford care leavers.
- 1.5 In consideration of the Bradford 'offer' the Council has to consider carefully the impact of the predicted reduction in Council Tax revenue verses the positive impact this will have for care leavers and the further enhanced reputation for Bradford Council who are already known to be proactive in delivering their corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 1.6 Thought has also been given to the impact that Bradford, as a corporate parent, will be giving to our young people by supporting and promoting the transition to adulthood and independence as well as continuing to promote the responsibilities that each individual has. This needs to be set in the context that there is strong research evidence that many care leavers do and are more likely to live in poverty. *'The Government needs to take such additional steps as exempting care leavers from paying council tax until they turn 25, to make sure they do not fall into debt.'* (A Fairer Start – Childrens Society September 2016).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In Bradford, the current year's data indicates a total of 231 care leavers aged 18 to 21 of which 38 are in employment or apprenticeships and their circumstances are such as they are potentially responsible for 100% of Council Tax payments.

Of these, the breakdown of living arrangements is as follows:

Independent Tenancy -16

Ordinary Lodgings - 5

Other arrangements - 6

Parental Home (or person with PR) - 5

Returned To Live With Relatives (not Staying Put) -5

Semi-Independent Accommodation/ Supported Tenancy (Leaving Care Only)-5

Staying Put with former foster carer (Leaving Care only) - 5

- 2.2 At a minimum, the number living independently could be 16 and at a maximum 24 (including other and semi-independent accommodation). This range of young people would be liable to Council Tax as householders – the others are living in arrangements where they are not the householder (e.g. at home with parent, in lodging arrangements or Staying Put).

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Staying Put Scheme estimates that 11 of their Staying Put providers (i.e. former foster carers) have lost their 25% single occupier reduction through continuing to provide accommodation to their former foster child post 18 irrespective of their EET status. It may seem reasonable to consider the position of Staying Put Providers in looking at a corporate parenting approach to Council Tax exemptions.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Bradford Council Tax Band A is currently £979.80 pa.
Assuming care leavers living in properties at Band A, the figures above suggest that the number of care leavers living independently and liable to full council tax could cost the Council between £ 15,677 pa and £23,515 pa if granted full exemption and the scheme ended at age 21.
- 4.2 Bradford Council Tax Bands (Band A to Band F) range from £979.80 pa to £2,122.97 pa. Assuming the mid point Band C (£1,306.41) for Staying Put Providers, the cost of exempting those losing the 25% single occupier reduction could be in the region of an additional £3,593 pa.
- 4.3 The potential reduction of income due to Council Tax exemption for Bradford care leavers living within the Bradford district would be at a maximum level of approximately £27,000.
- 4.4 The current cumulative debt following a piece of work with the Council Tax Department highlights a figure of approximately £27,600 across young people currently required to pay Council Tax.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES/ LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The Council has a legal obligation if proposals are part of the budget to consult members of the public, it is proposed by the Through Care service that the consultation process be completed within the National Care Leavers Week, October 23rd to 27th in order to optimise public opinion and positivity this week generates.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

7. OPTIONS

7.1 The options are as follows and have taken into consideration financial commitment to the Council as well as other models being implemented nationally.

1. **To do nothing** – Young People eligible for Council Tax continue to be responsible for their payments. This is not in line with the recommendation and challenge all Local Authorities have received from Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England. Many care leavers do fall into the poverty trap, particularly those who are starting out in low paid work and or apprenticeships who as a result of no longer being reliant on benefits find themselves eligible for the whole amount of their Council Tax contributions.
2. **To establish an eligibility criteria for Council Tax exemptions.** A number of Local Authorities have developed an eligibility criteria, for example exempting only care leavers undertaking apprenticeships. The positives of this option are that this would incentivise apprenticeships, which links into other corporate parenting business through the apprenticeship levy. However, there would be negatives for example in the potential complexity of administering such a system, young people are transient setting up systems and process across two key departments in the Council would not be cost effective for the small saving it would give.
3. **To exempt all care leavers up to 21.** This is the preferred option based on the predicted financial costs detailed above. Administering this option would be relatively simple and use systems that have already been established in Bradford. Information would be shared from the Through Care Service on a rolling basis as young people have their 18th birthday and, therefore, become eligible for Council tax payments. The exemption would follow the young person until they are 21, providing they continue to live in the Bradford area. It is recommended that the exemption should continue until the 31st March following the 21st birthday of the care leaver, unless they were to have a change in circumstances before then, such as for example becoming not liable to pay Council Tax.

The cost to the Council is comparatively small against the positive message that this will generate to Bradford Care leavers as well as the enhanced national recognition Bradford can expect to gain in how the Council chooses to exercise its corporate parenting powers and duties to all Bradford care leavers up to 21. This system will incentivise our care leavers to enter the labour market or access apprenticeships, as well as protecting our more vulnerable care leavers who are in receipt of DWP benefits and those at risk of falling into poverty.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The views of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the options set out above are requested in principle and that the Executive are asked to incorporate this in the budget planning for 2018/19 with a view to implement any exemption from 1/4/18.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Letter from Anne Longfield – 12th July 2017

Appendix 1 - LETTER FROM ANNE LONGFIELD

From: "PICKARD, Kelly - Children's Commissioner" <Kelly.PICKARD@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk>

Date: 12 June 2017 at 15:36:31 BST

To: "kersten.England@bradford.gov.uk" <kersten.England@bradford.gov.uk>

Subject: Message from Childrens Commissioner for England : Care leavers exemption from council tax

Dear Kersten

Care Leavers exemption from Council tax

I am writing to ask you to exempt care leavers from paying council tax in your area.

As you will know, children leaving care often struggle with the new financial responsibilities of independence. Some are unaware they even need to pay Council Tax, others don't know how, and many tell me that Council Tax bills are an unexpected and onerous financial burden that can force them into arrears.

Unfortunately, the speed with which Council Tax debt can escalate creates a "lose-lose" situation for everyone. These young people can face court summons and enforcement action very quickly and even eviction. It's not only bad for that care leaver but self-defeating for the local authority who are then have to meet the costs of emergency housing.

The Children's Society raised many of these issues in their *Wolf at the Door* report last year and have since been working with some councils to make positive changes for children leaving care since then.

Taking on new financial responsibilities is part of the move to independence for all young people but care leavers have to face these responsibilities much younger than most and often without family members to fall back on for guidance and support. The Centre for Social Justice found that 57% of care leavers find it difficult to manage money and avoid debt. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that accumulation of debt and threats to tenancies are some of the biggest ongoing issues of concern for care leavers. Research by the Children's Society shows care leavers are three times more likely to have had a benefit sanction – most of which are overturned when challenged.

The Government's Care Leavers' Strategy – *Keep on Caring* encourages Councils to do what any reasonable parent would do to help their children get the best start in adult life. The Children and Families Act encourages Councils to do all they can to support Care Leavers and this has been further enhanced by Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act which places a statutory duty on Councils to make a clear offer to care leavers. Exempting care leavers from Council Tax is an excellent step towards meeting the spirit of all these obligations in a way that will meaningfully improve the lives of care leavers.

Almost twenty local authorities have now taken this positive step to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax – most at a cost of no more than £15,000 - £30,000 in lost revenue, which in relative terms means a lesser loss to the council than would be the significant gain to the care leaver. I have, also, anecdotally heard that local authorities have found the move cost neutral because it saves on chasing council tax arrears and on the costs associated with supporting a care leaver who has become statutorily homeless.

I hope that you will now consider this positive move for care leavers in your local authority and remove the requirement to pay Council Tax for care leavers to the age of 25. I would be very grateful if you could inform me of your decision and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely

Anne Longfield

Children's Commissioner for England



Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 13 September 2017.

H

Subject:

Complaints Raised by Looked After Children and Young People

Summary statement:

This report summarises the issues raised by Looked After Children who have used the statutory complaints procedures to seek redress for their concerns. The report relates to complaints in the period 1st April 2016 to 30th March 2017.

Michael Jameson
Director

Portfolio:

Children's Services

Report Contact: Irina Arcas
Complaints Manager
Phone: (01274) 435269
E-mail: irina.arcas@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report summarises the issues raised by Looked After Children who have used the statutory complaints procedures to seek redress for their concerns. This report relates to complaints in the period 1st April 2016 to 30th March 2017. Appendix A sets out some of the main issues raised by children and young people and the service improvements made to address their complaints.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Children Act (1989) places a duty on all Local Authorities to establish and implement a procedure for dealing with complaints and representations for children and young people looked after by them. There is a designated Complaints Manager who administers and monitors the procedure for receiving and responding to Children's complaints.

2.2 The procedures require that:

- Complaints are resolved informally at the point of service delivery wherever possible (stage 1) by a local manager. Complaints at Stage 1 must be addressed within 10 working days.
- Where resolution of the complaint is not possible at that time, the complaint will be investigated more formally by a senior officer and Independent Person (stage 2). Complaints at Stage 2 must be resolved within 25 working days.
- Where following consideration of the findings of a stage 2 investigation the complainant remains dissatisfied, the complaint will be considered by a Complaints Review panel (stage 3). Review panels at Stage 3 are to be constituted solely of Independent People

Where any part of the complaint has been upheld, the Council is required to ensure that this is resolved for the young person and that it considers what wider service improvements can be made.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 A sound, robust and accessible complaints procedure contributes to children young people feeling safe to disclose any concerns in the knowledge that they will be treated seriously and sensitively. Views from children and young people through complaints and compliments and lessons learnt from their complaints can contribute to the shaping of the services we provide.

3.2 There were 927 Looked After Children and Young People on 31st March 2017. The majority are cared for in foster care placements or in children's home with some looked after by 'Family or Friends' or Placed with their Parents. Others are leaving care to live independently.

- 3.3 The Complaints Unit liaises closely with the advocacy project (VoiceAbility). There was one complaint referred by the advocacy service during 2016/17
- 3.4 There are also arrangements to address issues for children at an early stage and many issues are successfully resolved without the need for children to use the complaints procedures. An example of this is the use of the “Moans and Groans” books in children’s homes.

Complaints raised by children represent 4% of the total number of complaints received by the Children’s Specialist Services, which is a lower proportion than in the previous financial year (6%).

- 3.5 Responding to complaints within the statutory timescales has stabilised at 67%, the same as last year but the number of complaints from Looked After Children and Young People about child protection or their wellbeing has increased nil in the last two years to two in the current year.
- 3.6 All of the complaints received were dealt with at stage 1 and none required escalation to stage 2.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The administration costs of managing the complaints process are held within the Office of the Chief Executive where the Corporate Complaints team sits. Other than the staff costs there are no other financial issues arising from this work.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

Other than the legal responsibilities highlighted in section 2 above, there are no legal issues arising from this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

A sound, robust and accessible complaints procedure contributes to children young people feeling safe to disclose any concerns in the knowledge that they will be treated seriously and sensitively. The process ensures that all complaints from Looked After Children are dealt with in a fair and transparent way irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Not applicable.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

If the Panel needs to consider any specific information in relation to any of the complaints made Members will be asked to consider whether part of the item should be considered in the absence of the public and, if so, approve the following recommendation:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item relating to the Annual Report on Complaints on the grounds that if they were present, exempt information within Paragraphs 1 (Information relating to an individual) and 2 (information identifying an individual) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed and it is considered that, in all the circumstances the public interest in applying these exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The Panel may need to consider the specific personal circumstances of any particular case and it is in the overriding public interest that a young person who has made a complaint should have a right to confidentiality of process.”

9. OPTIONS

The overview of a robust complaint procedure is a key role for corporate parents. The Panel need assurance, through this report, that the process is working effectively and that issues are addressed.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report and consider whether they wish to seek further information about issues raised.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Complaints received from Looked After Children and Young People (April 2016- March 2017).

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Bradford Children Social Care

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FROM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (April 2016 - March 2017)

1. Activity

1.1 The Complaints Unit recorded 141 new complaints against Children Services between April 2016 and March 2017. Of those, 114 were related to Social Care compared to 78 in the previous financial year.

6 of the new complaints were made by young people. One of the complaints was made by an adult in relation to their time in care with the Authority. As such it has been included in this report.

1.2 Considering the number of young people in care (927 as on 31 March 2017) the number of complaints received from looked after young people represents 0.6% of the total of young people in care, which is a lower proportion than in the previous financial year (1%).

Children's Services – person making the complaint	16-17	15-16	14-15	13-14
Looked After Children	6	4	5	9

2. Who made the complaints?

Age	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
<15	1 (17%)	0	0
15-18	1 (17%)	2 (50%)	4 (80%)
19-25	3 (50%)	0	1 (20%)
>25	1 (17%)	2 (50%)	0
Total	6	4	5

Gender	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Male	2 (33%)	1 (25%)	3 (60%)
Female	4 (67%)	3 (75%)	2 (40%)
Total	6	4	5

Disabilities	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Physical	0	0	0
Learning	0	1 (25%)	0
No disabilities	5 (83%)	2 (50%)	5 (100%)
Not stated	1 (17%)	1 (25%)	0
Total	6	4	5

Status	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Care order	3 (50%)	2 (50%)	4 (80%)
Voluntary Placement	2 (33%)	1 (25%)	0
Interim Care order	1 (17%)	0	0
Other	0	1 (25%)	1 (20%)
Total	6	4	5

Ethnicity	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
White British	2 (33%)	4 (100%)	3(60%)
BME	4 (67%)	0	2 (40%)
Not stated	0	0	0
Total	6	4	5

- 2.1 Contrary to last year, when all the complaints received were from young white people, the majority of the complainants in 2016-17 were Asian young people.
- 2.2 The youngest person making a complaint during this period was 14 and the oldest was 37 (historical complaint). The average age was 22.

3. What was the complaint about?

Type of issues	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Communication	0	0	1
Challenging decisions	0	1	0
Child Protection	2	0	0
Information on records	1	1	1
Service Provision (general quality, failure to provide)	7	3	2
Staff (professional practice and attitude)	0	3	1
Total	10	8	5

- 3.1 There were 6 complaints made by Looked After Young People during this period, made up of 10 issues.
- 3.2 Compared to the previous year there is an increase of issues regarding service provision and safeguarding issues. There was an increase in number of complaints about personal information held on the records by Children Social Care, and in particular about confidentiality.
- 3.3. Contrary to the pattern over the last three years, the Department received two complaints made by Looked After Children about child wellbeing, specifically about assaults. One of them (historical complaint) was upheld.

- 3.4 Following a similar pattern to last year, most complaints were related to the social work teams but as in the previous two financial years, the Department did not receive any complaints from young people in care related to residential units (in house or commissioned) or the Youth Offending Team.

Leaving Care received two complaints, whilst it did not receive any during the previous year. On the other hand the Fostering team did not receive any complaints in 2016-17 whilst it received two during the previous year.

Services	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Children's Homes	0	0	0
Children's Homes (commissioned)	0	0	0
Leaving Care	2	0	1
Social Work Teams	3	4	1
LAC	1	2	3
Fostering & Adoption Unit	0	2	0
YOT	0	0	0
Total	6	8	5

4. How were the complaints made?

- 4.1 The most popular method to make a complaint was by e-mail (4) whilst in the previous year it was by a phone call.
- 4.2 There was one complaint made by the advocacy service on behalf of a young person between April 2016 and March 2017.
- 4.3 Most of the complaints (4) were made directly to the complaints unit and 2 were sent to the Director's office.

5. Outcomes of complaints

- 5.1 Six complaints (10 issues) were closed at Stage 1 during this period.

OUTCOMES	Social Work	Homes	Leaving Care	Adoption/ Fostering	Commissioned	LAC	TOTAL
Upheld	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Partially upheld	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Not upheld	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
Inconclusive	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	3	0	6	0	0	1	10

- 5.2 40% of the complaints were fully or partially upheld whilst in the previous financial year most of the complaints (60%) were partially upheld.

- 5.3 For the first time there were two inconclusive outcomes (usually one person's word against another without evidence to support either party).
- 5.4 Contrary to last year's figures, there were 4 complaints not upheld and there were no withdrawn complaints during 2016-17.

OUTCOMES	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Upheld	1	0	1
Partially upheld	3	3	3
Not upheld	4	0	2
Withdrawn	0	2	0
Inconclusive	2	0	0
TOTAL	10	5	6

6. Response times

- 6.1 All the complaints were acknowledged within the 2 required days.
- 6.2 Four complaints were responded within timescales which is the same performance as last year (67%).
- 6.3 The average time to respond to a complaint was 15 days, compared to 10 days during the previous financial year. This average was affected by the 45 days that took to respond to the historical complaint as it was a complex case and information from the archives had to be retrieved.

7. Learning from Complaints

- 7.1 Managers did not return the feedback form highlighting any learning from the complaints made by Looked After Young People at Stage 1. However in one of the responses to a complaint the manager explains that in order to avoid the same situation happening to another young person, a copy of the complaint response will be shared with relevant managers.
- 7.2 Following the recommendation from the Corporate Parenting Panel last year, the feedback form sent to managers after they respond to a complaint at stage 1 has been re-designed in order to simplify the process and encourage more feedback. The agreement with senior management within Children Services was to substitute the feedback form with an e-mail asking one single question "what can be learnt as a result of this complaint?". It was agreed to implement the change coinciding with the upgrade of the complaints electronic system, which due to technical problems was delayed until July 2017.

8. Escalation

- 8.1 None of the complaints made by Looked After Children escalated to Stage 2 or 3 of the Social Care Complaints Procedure, whilst one complaint exhausted the complaints procedure in 2015-16.

8.2 The table below provide a comparison with the total number of complaints received by Children services during the same period.

	From LAC	Total
Stage 1 complaints	6	141
Stage 2 formal investigations	0	6
Stage 3 review panels	0	1
Ombudsman	0	5
Compliments	15	59

9. Compliments

9.1 Children Services received 59 compliments of which 53% were from service users (compared to 75% in the previous year). Of those, 15 were made by young people which is a higher number than in the previous financial year (12).

TYPE	Leaving Care	Family centres	LAC	Fostering	Homes	TOTAL
Impact on service user	5	1	1	0	1	8
Quality of service	6	0	0	1	0	7
Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	11	1	1	1	1	15

9.2 Leaving Care received most of the compliments (11 compared to 12 in the previous year) made by young people in care, usually through the exit interviews (35 exit interviews were undertaken this year). However between April 2016 and March 2017 other teams such as LAC, Leaving Care, Fostering, Owthorpe residential unit and Owlet family centre received one compliment each.

9.3 Similarly to the previous three years although in different proportion, young people were happy with the quality of the service they received (7 as in the previous year) and the impact this had on their lives (8 compared to 5).

TYPE	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Impact on service user	8	5	7
Quality of service	7	7	11
Staff	0	0	1
Beyond job's remit	0	0	1
Total	15	12	20

Corporate Parenting Panel – 2017/18

Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem
Cllr Dale Smith	Cllr Carol Thirkill (Chair)	Cllr Nicola Pollard
	Cllr Sinead Engel (Dep Chair)	
	Cllr Angela Tait	
Alternates	Alternates	Alternates
Cllr Mike Pollard	Cllr Sarfraz Nazir	Cllr Rachel Sunderland
	Cllr Fozia Shaheen	
	Cllr Mohammed Shafiq	

Non-voting Co-opted Members	
Inspector Kevin Taylor	West Yorkshire Police, Partnerships
Yasmin Umarji	Senior Primary Partnership Manager, Education
Ali Jan Haider	Director of Strategy, Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group
The Chair of the Children in Care Council	

Corporate Parenting Panel Date/Venue	Report/Author	Deadline for Reports to Secretariat
<p>19th July 2017</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>Venue : Committee Room 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appointment of Co-opted Members ▪ B Positive Pathways (Innovation Fund) – Progress Report – to include information on the different Residential Homes including their specialisms and the recent changes to this provision – <u>David Byrom/Liz Perry</u> ▪ LAC & Offending – (information report to include information on Police callouts relating to children in residential homes and foster care and concern expressed by young people that the Police are called for incidents where they feel that birth families would not do so, also to include an invite to the Safer Homes Police Officer) – <u>Charlie Jones</u> 	<p>12 Noon – 4th July 2017</p>
<p>13th September 2017</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>Venue : Committee Room 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CICC – (information report so that Members can understand its role, the Officer support provided to the young people involved with the CICC and the aims and outcomes for the young people involved) – <u>Brigitte Davidson/Mick Nolan/Emma Collingwood</u> ▪ Complaints – Annual Report –to include more detail on the substance of complaints (Whilst bearing in mind that all the information will be published and the meeting is open to the public and press), the learning points and how these have been disseminated and the number of exit interviews – <u>Irina Arcas</u> ▪ Improving Support for Young People in Care/Care Leavers Future Leaders report – Progress on implementation of recommendations – <u>Sarah King/Diane Cokewright</u> ▪ Outcomes for Looked After Children as at 31.3.17 – updated information for Members – <u>David Byrom, Vanita Ladd</u> ▪ Council Tax & Care Leavers – <u>Emma Collingwood, Simon Callaghan</u> 	<p>12 Noon – 30th August 2017</p>
<p>8th November 2017</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>Venue : Committee Room 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regionalisation of Adoption Service – Progress report – <u>David Byron/Mary Brudenell</u> ▪ Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Bradford – (Update on current position perhaps including input from the young people involved) – <u>Emma Collingwood</u> ▪ Virtual School Annual Report – <u>Ken Poucher</u> ▪ B Positive Pathways (Innovation Fund) – <u>Jim Hopkinson</u> 	<p>12 Noon – 25th October 2017</p>

<p>10th January 2018</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>▪ Venue : Committee Room 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>IRO Service – Annual Report – <u>Imran Cheema</u></i> ▪ <i>Regulation 44 Visits – Update – <u>Suzanne Lythgow</u></i> 	<p>12 Noon – 20th December 2017</p>
<p>7th March 2018</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>Venue : Committee Room 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Through Care Service – accommodation provision, preparation for independence (including pathways to employment and whether there is a safety net for young people who need guidance later on or who are having difficulties) Council Tax – Information on Financial management skills to be included in this report - <u>David Byrom/Emma Collingwood</u></i> 	<p>12 Noon – 21st February 2018</p>
<p>25th April 2018</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>Venue : Committee Room 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Education Outcomes for LAC – update following stats release - <u>Ken Poucher</u></i> ▪ <i>Emotional & Mental Wellbeing of LAC – update – <u>Kelly Barker</u></i> 	<p>12 Noon – 11th April 2018</p>
<p>Items for Inclusion on the Panel's Work Plan for 2018/19 in due course</p>		