

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 20th January 2020

N

Subject: Through Care

Summary statement:

Leaving Well update – Pathway Planning Process for Care Leavers

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Childrens

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report is to provide an update to the panel on developments in respect of the Leaving Well 'app' a pathway planning tool for care leavers.

Local authorities have duties under the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 towards care leavers.

Under Section 23 of the Leaving Care Act local authorities have duties to allocate a personal advisor and young people from 15 and $\frac{3}{4}$ must be provided with a pathway plan.

The pathway plan should consider the care leaver's need for support and assistance (which have already been identified in the previous assessments) and how best to meet these needs until the age of 21 (or longer if the young person is in education or training or requests an extension of support).

Areas covered should include:

- accommodation
- practical life skills including money management
- education and training
- employment
- financial support
- specific support needs
- contingency plans for support if independent living breaks down

The pathway plan is reviewed and updated every 6 months.

2. BACKGROUND

In Bradford we currently have 615 young people who are eligible for a pathway plan.

Ages are as follows:

15.5	29
16	91
17	136
18	116
19	108
20	96
21+	39

Bradford have a local offer where we offer young people over the age of 21 and opportunities to continue to have a plan and remain an open case.

Our current performance is 86% completion of pathway plans. Performance has taken a dip but is now on an upward trajectory with our aim being 90% by Jan 2020. This has been a direct result of the implementation of Leaving Well and everyone getting used to a new system.

Pathway plans were previously completed via our Local Children System (LCS) using prescribed templates. Workers would discuss the content of the plan with young people and then return to the office and complete the plan for the young person. Young people's feedback was that they did not like templates or that the plan was 'done for them' not 'done with them.' It was recognised that the pathway plans did not capture the young person's voice and they were not able to "own the plan" and as a service we wanted to improve this.

Through Care is part of the National Benchmarking Forum for Leaving Carers, Social Finance (Leaving Well) presented the Leaving Well pathway planning tool pilot at a forum and invited local authorities if they were interested in being a part of the pilot. Following a competitive process Bradford were successful and became part of the pilot along with four other local authorities. Roll out of the Leaving Well app commenced in February 2019.

Through Care have completed 462 Leaving Well pathway plans since this time.

Below are examples of direct feedback from young people and workers in Bradford.

'simpler, easier, less time consuming'

'think brilliant – young peoples views are there'

'at last my voice is there'

'I've enjoyed doing it, I can do it when I want and can easily tell my worker how I am feeling'

'not suitable for everyone still need paper document for some'

'enjoy doing it on a tablet or phone'

'found easy – enjoyed using with young people – its fun'.

Two examples of pathway plans, completed via the Leaving Well app will be presented at the meeting . Workers have fed back regarding both young people that they had not known some of the views prior to the young people indicating their feelings. For example Plan A feeling worried about friendships – this has now turned into a goal that they are working on together.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

What is working well

- Young people can directly input into their plan
- Young people can have a voice on their plan
- It is a three way process, between the care leaver, allocated worker and team manager
- Pathway plans can be completed anywhere, via a phone or tablet
- Pathway plan can be completed together or by the care leaver on their own.
- Easy quick check in/view of how a care leaver is feeling

- Training and support from Leaving Well is on-going
- Regular contact with Leaving Well (weekly)
- Bradford IT department have been fully involved – their support has been invaluable
- Feedback is accepted and changes are made
- Young People report that they like using it
- It is interactive with the young person
- Workers report that they like the layout of it and it is simple and how it is care leaver focused.
- Language can be changed on the “app” to other languages
- Young people have reported that they feel listened to.

What needs to be considered

- Process and template need to be delivered across the wider children’s service to ensure consistency.
- It is a pilot and therefore the system does have some errors, which at times can be frustrating for workers and young people.
- Engagement of young people with the plan, it does not suit everyone. Workers have to be flexible to the young peoples needs.
- Management area of the plan needs development, process needs to be streamlined, this has been fed back.

Next steps

- To continue to provide training to staff and increase confidence and familiarity.
- To continue to seek the views of care leavers.
- To quality assure all plans in February.
- Management performance reports are currently being development to report on local trends of our young people.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

Bradford have been successful in engaging with the pilot the Leaving Well app, it is pilot and therefore currently there is no cost. At the point of the app being the ‘finished’ product it will be rolled out nationally to local authorities and there will be a cost. Bradford along with the other pilot authorities are currently working through what a fare cost will look like going forward.

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

- Contact the Policy Officer, on Bradford 434123 or e-mail jamie.saunders@bradford.gov.uk for further guidance.

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

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

See above

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

N/A

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

It is felt that on balance the quality of pathway plans has improved through the use of Leaving Well. This will improve further as the service restructure takes hold and we have a skilled 16+ service. At this moment we would want the authority to commit to investment going forward.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the views of the Corporate Parenting Panel are sought.

11. APPENDICES

None

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None