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Care

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Care Team Manager

## **Participation and Co Production Activity - Leaving Care Service**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 This report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with an update with regards to participation and co production activities undertaken with care experienced young people which evidences how the Local Authority is meeting its statutory duties to care experienced young people in how it is improving outcomes for them.
- 1.2 The Leaving Care Service provide support to care experienced young people aged 16 to 18 co-working with the Children in Care Service and from the age of 18 until 21 where Personal Advisors (PAs) attain full case responsibility. There are corporate parenting responsibilities for the Local Authority for care leavers from age 21 to 25 years outlined in The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.3 There is statutory guidance for Local Authorities on applying Corporate Parenting Principles to care leavers set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This report sets out to outline how the Local Authority is meeting the Corporate Parenting Principle's regarding participation and co production, as there is a duty to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings and take these into account when designing and delivering services (section 2.1. Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2018).
- 1.4 Ofsted also introduced their new, separate judgement to the framework for Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) specifically about the experiences and progress of care leavers in January 2023. The new judgement area focuses on the things that matter most to care leavers' lives. The evaluation criteria can be broken down into the following main areas:
  - relationships and participation
  - health and emotional well-being
  - local offer
  - good decisions
  - helping and protecting
  - employment, education and training
  - support into adulthood

## **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To ensure Corporate Parenting Board members are made aware of the current arrangements for delivering opportunities for care experienced young people to be engaged in co production and participation.

## **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 To ensure Corporate Parenting board members can raise any areas they feel the direction of travel for the service is going well and any areas where they are concerned, which can be used to inform service planning and delivery.

## **Supporting information**

- 4.1 The following information provides an overview of key activities which have been undertaken with care experienced young people to ensure they are engaged with co production of services and are able to participate in activities which enrich their experience and improve their overall outcomes.
- 4.2 There is a Care Leavers forum held bi-monthly. This forum is held in a local venue of the care experienced young people's choosing. The forum is arranged and chaired by a care experienced young person and a 'You Said We Did' approach' is taken which enables care experienced young people to feedback areas of development or improvement they have identified through their experiences or discussions in the forum and for senior leaders to respond with actions taken or further information. There are times care experienced young people may need further understanding of the issues or rationale for decision making. (See You Said We Did Appendix A).
- 4.3 Care experienced young people attended a session in the council chamber to review the local offer for care leavers. Their feedback was insightful in terms of the language used and presentation of the offer as well as how accessible it was. This resulted in an update to the document as well as the website in line with their feedback and ideas.
- 4.4 The Care Leavers forum has also been instrumental in the co-production of or feedback for service development and offer to care experienced young people. For example; the development of the offer for tenancy support and supporting care experienced young people to develop DIY skills through Derby Homes; being trained as local recruiters and participating as panel members in interviews for recruitment for the Trauma Navigator recently recruited by Health and also a Children's Practitioner for Transitions for the Staying Close project. Feedback on the development and design of Oak House under phase 1 of the small children's homes model with Homes to Inspire.

The Care Leavers forum assisted with selecting furnishings, décor and the name of the home. The care leavers forum has also been involved in the development of the YMCA Care Leavers Flats project which is 11 flats available on the YMCA campus that are offered to care experienced young people in partnership with the YMCA and the Leaving Care Service. The Care Leavers Forum participated

in designing a young person friendly leaflet to showcase the flats and the project. (See Appendix B YMCA brochure). Care experienced young people and the Leaving Care Personal Advisors were involved in preparing and serving a community meal at the YMCA, serving over 200 meals to the community of Derby.

- 4.5 Care experienced young people have also attended a meeting with Jill Boak from the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Directorate to discuss youth homelessness, access to housing and preparation for adulthood.
- 4.6 There is also an offer to care experienced young people of a range of activities and events throughout the year which enhance their experiences and opportunities (see photographs of events in appendix C). These activities include an annual celebration event, which enables care experienced young people to share and celebrate their achievements, enjoy a meal together and enjoy some entertainment. The care experienced young person is encouraged to identify the achievement they wish to celebrate, and their PA presents them with a certificate and gift card on the evening. The Care Leavers Forum was also involved in the planning and preparation of the event. The next celebration event is planned for the 20 June 2024.
- 4.7 There is also the offer of a holiday at Back Dane, which is a former farmhouse, managed as a holiday cottage by the Beasley Back Dane Trust. The Back Dane Trust is a small volunteer-run charity that owns a converted farmhouse, in the Peak District National Park. It is situated on the edge of Cheshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The cottage was left as a legacy donation to the trust. The legacy was to offer inner city care experienced, refugees, young carers, children and adults with learning difficulties a holiday and respite. Care experienced young people have told us that the holiday helped them not to feel as lonely, one care experienced young person celebrated their birthday during the holiday and said it was the best birthday they had ever had, and one care experienced young person shared they wanted to become more involved in the care leavers forum as a result of being involved in the holiday and would even like to lead the forum. Former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are now care experienced have also attended the holidays and have enjoyed being outdoors in the countryside and sharing stories of home and songs in their first language with other young people sat around the campfire. The next Back Dane holiday will take place from 8 April to 11 April 2024 with 14 care experienced young people invited who will be cared for and supported by a Leaving Care Team Manager and two Leaving Care Personal Advisors volunteering their own time as well as volunteers from Back Dane Trust.
- 4.7 The Leaving Care Service and Care Leavers Forum encourage other care experienced young people to attend the forum who are yet to engage by arranging a regular meal out which has increased engagement from care experienced young people in the forum in other activities but also has enabled other care experienced young people the opportunity to meet and develop friendships. Feedback that care experienced young people have given us about these evenings has been positive with some telling us that the first time they attended one of these meals was the first time they had socialized in some time,

with one young person stating they do not feel like they have any friends in Derby and spend most of their time alone, so this had helped them make connections with others.

- 4.8 For Christmas 2023 there was also a range of activities offered through various partnerships the Leaving Care Service has developed. There was a Christmas meal which was provided by the Staffordshire Freemasons at no cost to the Local Authority. 50 care experienced young people and their Personal Advisors were invited to enjoy a Christmas meal, entertainment and the care experienced young people were all given a gift of a goody bag. Care experienced young people told us that they felt they had a warm welcome, they enjoyed the entertainment and food, and they really welcomed the practical hamper they were given as well as the gift they received of a gift card to spend as they choose. Through the partnership that has been developed with Derby Theatre care experienced young people were also invited to attend the Pantomime (Cinderella). Derby Theatre also provided food after the performance of Cinderella. Some care experienced young people also took their children to the show and a good time was had by all.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 As outlined in this report, all participation work is led by the voice of care experienced young people and led by them wherever possible.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 This work has been led by the service and the young people accessing it, there are very few other options given that this should be care experienced young person led.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 There are costs associated with hire of room and some of the activities but as highlighted in the report other organisations have provided financial and resource support for our care experienced young people, thereby reducing the impact on the Local Authority.

### **Legal implications**

- 8.1 There is a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to develop corporate parenting principles that promote young people's participation, and this report is an overview of how Derby is achieving this.

### **Climate implications**

- 9.1 There are no specific climate implications as a result of this report.

### **Socio-Economic implications**

- 10.1 Care experienced young people accessing the service often face socio-economic challenges and the service uses its knowledge of community

resources to ensure families are signposted to the right service to support in this regard. By enabling care experienced young people to participate in the co production of the offer available to them and participate in activities which enrich their experiences the adverse impact of their early life experiences and opportunities for the future are better supported to improve their outcomes.

## Other significant implications

### 11.1 No other significant implications

This report has been approved by the following people:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign off</b>
<b>Legal</b>	Olu Idowu	4.3.24
<b>Finance</b>	Janice Hadfield	4.3.24
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Suanne Lim	11.3.24
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Suanne Lim	11.3.24
<b>Other(s)</b>		
<b>Background papers</b>		
List of appendices	You Said We Did Participation Images	

## Appendix A

### You Said We Did

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Forum venue</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	We want to hold the Forum in a pace where young people feel comfortable – a social environment rather than somewhere in the Council House, that feels like we're holding an official meeting (and have a more negative feel to the whole thing). We also want staff involvement to be kept to a minimum. You asked that we be there before and after the meeting and to be on hand after.
<b>We did:</b>	With Melissa's help, it was arranged that the Forums would be held at the Carnero Lounge. The same 2 staff members Helen O'Kane and Bev Scott Mullen support young people to get there, where necessary provide train or bus tickets. Staff ensure that any safeguarding matters from the forum are handled without delay. We do not sit in the meeting, and we ensure that we are on hand throughout should you need us.
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	The Carnero Lounge gives them the right sort of space – they feel like it's sociable, with enough space around them that they can have a private discussion and feel safe doing this (In having this session, some friendships have also formed) You also like to sit with us after the forum event and spend some social time. You have enjoyed getting to know us and it feels good to you to know that we genuinely care.

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Taking on own Tenancy</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	<p>Young people shared that it would be helpful for all Derby Homes staff to understand what 'care leaver' means, so that when you call for help with a housing issue, be it a tenancy problem or a repair, you are offered more understanding and support.</p> <p>Forum members discussed delays in getting repairs done when you're with Derby Homes. They felt that if you could explain you are a care leaver, Derby Homes might realise that you don't necessarily have the skills to fix something yourself or ask a parent for help, and therefore be more proactive in tending the property.</p>
<b>We did:</b>	We talked to Derby Homes about this, and they were completely on board
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	Derby Homes have fed this information to the team and have also agreed to decorate a young person's flat before they move in

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Young People at Risk of Exploitation – how can PAs identify and support a young person being exploited</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	<p>PAs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*be non-patronising.</li> <li>be able to have open dialogue with the young person so they can recognize if something is happening.</li> <li>*visit the home regularly so they can see if the home is safe, they should also see them alone so that the YP feels comfortable sharing if they are being victimized.</li> <li>*meet the young person in a space where they feel safe and comfortable.</li> <li>*go through finances with a young person so they can detect potential financial abuse.</li> <li>*have more training on being intuitive and picking up on 'hidden signs' of abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>We did:</b>	All PAs attended training on 'Trauma Informed Approaches' and 'Safeguarding'
<b>Outcome/ Feedback:</b>	The young people commented, at the next Forum that they feel their PAs support them with safeguarding and feel PAs are caring and understanding

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>DIY and Repairs – support to be more self-sufficient</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	<p>We're not always aware which jobs can be a DIY task, and would like some help to understand this (and learn about how to fix certain things ourselves)</p> <p>Possibly DIY classes?</p>
<b>We did:</b>	We spoke to Derby Homes who are very happy to come along to a Forum and develop this further. As a starting point, they asked the forum for more information around the specific areas they would like to look at – a document was produced to get this off the ground
<b>Outcome/ Feedback:</b>	We are planning to invite a member of staff from Derby Homes to the next forum to start developing this further (and have sent the information on to him)

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Local Recruiters</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	We're enthusiastic about participating in recruitment for the Leaving Care team, the council and certain roles within the NHS. Being care experienced gives a good insight into what's needed in those roles. It's also great experience to add to a CV

<b>We did:</b>	Training was held for this, and 2 young people have also attended interviews for a Trauma Navigator role
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	Both young people engaged well with the professionals and interviewees and acted in a mature, professional manner always. They offered excellent feedback in the decision-making process and we valued their contributions and thoughts.

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Budgeting and Universal Credit payments</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	I've settled into my flat, but the thing I'm struggling with is my budgeting (getting Universal Credit once a month)
<b>We did:</b>	PA talked to the young person about changing UC to get payment every 2 weeks. PA contacted UC coach and requested the payment change. Young person also used her UC journal to request the change in payment and spoke to work coach at appointment. PA purchased a budgeting folder to help the young person separate her money (and improve on budgeting skills)
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	Young person is now able to separate her money into sections and has a visual aid which helps her to budget more effectively She's starting to receive money more regularly and this also helps

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Checking Universal Credit and calculating rent payments</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	At work my hours are always different, so I'm never sure whether Universal Credit will cover my rent. I'm worried about whether I need to pay any of my rent myself each month (don't want to get into debt)
<b>We did:</b>	PA supported the young person to look at UC account and compare this to rent account. We used a diagram, to show how rent account builds up and how UC can then pay (none, some or all of) the rent PA has also made a calendar entry to check their UC account at the end of each assessment period, so they get used to working out if they have any rent to pay (have also suggested / will support with looking for a job with regular hours if this makes things better)



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Loneliness</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	Loneliness All young people spoke openly about the realities of loneliness as a care leaver. One young person stated that they enjoyed the forum because it was the first time they had socialized since moving into a new flat. Young people suggested that there should be more opportunity to meet other care leavers, and that PA's could share contact details of YP if both parties agree. They all expressed enthusiasm at the idea of taking part in activities with other care experienced, and even stated 'it would be fine to pay for it ourselves, we just want to meet new people in the same situation'. Two young people talked about how much owning a pet had improved their mental health and reduced loneliness. Christmas - As well and having something on Christmas day for isolated young people, YP asked if they could have a Christmas part
<b>We did:</b>	We listened and have arranged regular forum meetings, events, and a holiday to give opportunities to care experienced an opportunity to meet and choose to share contact details if they felt this was right for them. We worked together with the Freemasons who put on the Christmas party.
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	I have made new friends. I worried that coming to a forum would put a spotlight on me, I feel more confident now. I meet other care experienced outside of the forum, made friendships. Looking forward to the holiday.

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>End of Summer Meal</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	We would like to be able to get together in a more social way, rather than just sitting down for a meeting – it will also help to get more people to join the forum, as the meal will act as an icebreaker.
<b>We did:</b>	We arranged a meal for 14 young people, held at Nando's in Derby – we supported people to get there where this was needed (some older care leavers also joined as they are interested in becoming mentors for some of the younger ones)
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	All the young people thoroughly enjoyed it and have asked that we do it again. We listened and a next meal took place 29 February

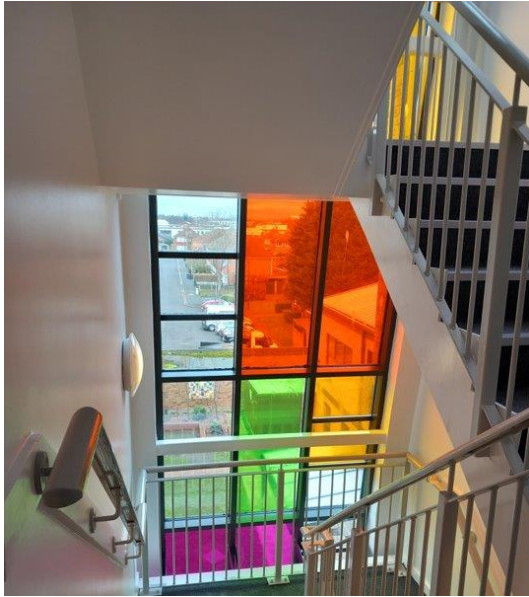
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>YMCA Care leaver flats project</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	As a group that a brochure showing the flats was vital as some care experienced have heard rumours and this would help put care experienced young people's mind at ease.
<b>We did:</b>	We put together the brochure and you looked at this within the forum group.

<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	You all felt the brochure was simple and would not be too overwhelming for a care experienced young person. That the brochure would help care experienced young people to have a good visual of the accommodation. That it would help the PA to also highlight how a care experienced young person could start to visualise how to make the flat more homely and help personalise
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Care Experienced celebration event</b>
<b>You Said:</b>	I don't want a stranger to give me my certificate. My PA supports me, and I want to celebrate my success with them. Don't wear lanyards, dress casual and not in suits. We are adults, can we have a glass of wine or beer to celebrate instead of pop.
<b>We did:</b>	Your PAs presented your certificates, talking through your success. If your PA was not able to be there, we ensured that someone you knew well with the leaving care team presented your award. We made the evening relaxed and really enjoyed seeing how much you all participated in your evening of celebrations.
<b>Outcome / Feedback:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great evening.</li> <li>• Felt proud to be there.</li> <li>• Best event ever.</li> <li>• Can I be the DJ next year?</li> <li>• Felt proud.</li> <li>• I enjoyed being hugged, made me feel better inside.</li> <li>• Much better than last year.</li> <li>• Food was great.</li> <li>• Seeing others go up for their award gave me the courage to get up for mine.</li> <li>• Very relaxed.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

### YMCA Flats



## Appendix C

### Activities and Events

#### Care Leavers Celebration Event March 2023



#### YMCA Community Meal





## Back Dane Holiday



## Christmas Party



## Care Experienced Young People's night out at Nando's.



