



**CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE**  
**22 September 2015**

**ITEM 11**

Report of the Acting Strategic Director of  
Children and Young People

**Care Leavers Service**

**SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Local Authorities are required to provide support services to Young People leaving the care system under the Children Act, 1989 Guidance and Regulations- Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care leaver (revised January, 2015)
- 1.2 The team in Derby is small but there are sufficient numbers of PAs to provide a very good service for Care Leavers.
- 1.3 There has been a recent service review and an improvement plan has been implemented.
- 1.4 This report is to report on progress against that plan.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Progress against the improvement plan to be noted and endorsed.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The success of a local authority's corporate parenting duties can be measured by how well care leavers are doing in terms of their outcomes e.g. health and emotional wellbeing, accommodation, employment and training.
- 3.2 Ofsted will be very interested in the welfare of care leavers when the authority has its SIF inspection, which is imminently expected.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Derby Leaving Care Service comprises a team manager, Antony Mains who came into post in July, 2015 and 10 FTE Personal Advisors (PAs). The PAs provide support and help to care leavers aged 18 – 21 years and act as advisors for 16 and 17 year olds in care regarding the making of plans for their future independence. The overall objective of the team is to ensure that care leavers make a successful transition to adulthood by helping them acquire the necessary skills and emotional resilience which will enable them to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing. It also supports young people to enjoy stable and enduring relationships with peers, staff and carers.
- 4.2 In April, 2015 an internal audit / assessment was carried out of the service, led by Andy Smith, Acting Director of Children's Service. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the experience and progress of care leavers in Derby through auditing pathway plans, tracking cases with personal advisors and talking directly to care leavers. Personal Advisors and four care leavers were included in the process.
- 4.3 In response to the audit/ assessment an improvement plan was drawn up and an improvement board was established to drive the changes. The board consists of staff from various services such as Connexions, DWP, housing, Commissioning as well as representation from the leaving care service. Most importantly, the board has representation from Care Leavers themselves. The aim is that the board will also invite other services to attend that have a direct effect and input into the lives of Care Leavers such as Sexual health services or Drug and alcohol services as and when particular issues come to the fore.

#### 4.4 Progress made against the Plan

1. All young people aged 16 to 21 (25 if still in education) have an allocated Personal Adviser (PA).
2. Personal Advisers are now working alongside young people's Social Workers for up to 2 years before they turn 18, in line with statutory requirements. This is to address the needs of young people preparing to leave care and to create a realistic Pathway Plan for them. The PA then assumes case responsibility for the young person, ensuring continuity for the young person.
3. A Care Leavers forum is being established. The first meeting will take place in September, 2015. This meeting will establish a core group of Care Leavers to give feedback on their experiences and to address service improvements. Representatives from this group will sit on the Improvement board. The forum will be representative of the Care Leaver cohort and include Care leavers who are parents.
4. Pathway Plans are now being recorded onto the Young Person's record on liquid logic. A paper based consultation document has been developed for PA's and Social workers to use when seeking the views and aspirations of young people. This is being scanned onto Liquid Logic.
5. Auditing of Pathway Plans continues and alerts have now been set up on the system which informs Social Workers/ PA's and their respective managers that a young person is eligible for a Plan or if a plan review is due.
6. September 2015 all PA's will have received additional training in order that they can use the system effectively.
7. Where young people are considered to be living in 'Unsuitable accommodation' (with the exception of custody) a risk assessment is being completed by the PA and signed off by the Leaving Care manager. The assessment outlines what action will be taken to address the situation and is being reviewed regularly. This also applies for those young people with whom the service has lost touch. The assessment is scanned on to the young person record.

8. The introduction of a new recording system has presented a challenge. By the end of September 2015 all PA's will have received additional training in order that they can use the system effectively.
9. Personal Advisors' MIPs will reflect the improvements identified in the plan as well as the roles and responsibilities of the PA, including visiting requirements . Leaving Care Team managers MIP has been completed and all PA's will be completed by the end of October 2015.
10. The Staying put Policy is now embedded and PA's have been provided with the relevant documentation. It is to be expected that there will be more take up of this policy allowing more Care leavers to remain with their carers post 18. PA's will be able to raise this issue at the right time for young people i.e. when they are 16 and 17 years.
11. The training flat (Etwell Street) and its purpose and function is currently under review. This is a facility that can be of great use to Care leavers considering independence and provide them with the chance to experience independence while still having support around them.
12. Currently the Service utilises two documents which are given to Care leavers outlining their entitlements and what they can expect from the Leaving Care service. These documents are to be combined and re- designed to ensure that they are accurate, up to date and young person friendly. It is envisaged that the Care Leavers forum would be utilised to improve its design and identify additional information that they would like it to contain.
13. Liquid Logic has the ability to deliver accurate information across a range of performance indicators for the service. This will provide us with all the information required in order to understand this cohort of young people and plan services. PAs have been informed about the importance of accurate data inputting and regular monitoring has started to take place with regards to EET, accommodation suitability, type of accommodation and the frequency that PAs are in touch with young people.
14. The COG has committed to create and ring fence 5 practically based apprenticeships a year and ring fence them for care leavers. Although the Council provides a large number of apprenticeships for young people most of them are in business support and a lot of care leavers are interested in doing more practical work such as gardening, caring for others, painting and decorating etc.

<b>OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>
---------------------------------

5.1 None.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Maureen Darbon
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Maureen Darbon – 01332 642668 – <a href="mailto:maureen.darbon@derby.gov.uk">maureen.darbon@derby.gov.uk</a> None Appendix 1 – Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
---------------------

**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The Care Leavers service is a statutory service and the budget has not been reduced over the last few years

**Legal**

- 2.1 The service is regulated by statutory guidance as set out in the Children Act, 1989 and subsequent amendments.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 None

**IT**

- 4.1 None

**Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 Care Leavers are a vulnerable group of young people who are unlikely to meet their full potential without significant help from the Council. They are over represented nationally in NEET figures, mental health services and the criminal justice system.