



Derby City Council

Corporate Parenting Committee
25 July 2017

Report of the Strategic Director of Peoples
Services

ITEM 8

Leaving Care Service

- 1.1 In December 2016 a case File Quality audit was completed in the Leaving care service. Once completed a clear comparison could be made with regards to a similar Audit that took place in December 2015/16. It should be noted that a greater number of audits were undertaken in 2016/17. This Audit preceded the Ofsted inspection of 2017.
- 1.2 The care Leavers forum has continued to function and provides a platform whereby Care Leavers are able to influence the service they receive. This continues to be challenging with regards to improving

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the content of this report, the outcome of the Audits and the progress of the service over the last 12 months.
- 2.2 To note the Judgement made by OFSTED in their recent inspection with regards to outcomes for Care Leavers and the service being provided to them.
- 2.3 To note the continuation of the Care Leavers forum and efforts made to ensure that the voice of care leavers is heard and influence service development
- 2.4 To note the content of the report and make any appropriate recommendations.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is important to recognise that the support being provided to this vulnerable group of young people has improved over the past 12 months and that progress has been evidenced in Pathway plan audit's in October 2016, the Case File Quality Audit in 2016/17 and the recent OFSTED judgement of the service which was judged as 'Good'.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The Leaving Care Service. Case File Audit 2016/17

- 4.2 Within the case File audit 158 cases had been audited and this was an increase from 37% of cases in 2015/16 to 88% in 2016/17. The main objective of the audit was to establish that, "young people should be well supported, in good quality accommodation & being well prepared for independence.'
- 4.3 It was reported that overall the findings of the audit were positive. That there were a significant number of 'good' and 'outstanding measures'. There was a very clear marked improvement in the quality of the work, against the previous audit.
- 4.4 The main body of the report evidences clearly the distance travelled by the service over the preceding 12 months and references the Practice standards which provides additional context to the audit. Pathway planning continues to improve, engagement is good, engagement& participation- multiagency networking is good, direct intervention is good. Evidencing Management oversight does need to improve and remains a challenge. How to accurately reflect the case discussions that take place outside of formal supervisions?
- 4.5 The audit makes 3 recommendations.
1. Commend staff and managers for quality of the work and improvement from previous audit.
 2. Ensure assessments and plans are complete and up to date in all cases, and plans discussed in supervisions.
 3. Share the good practice around how this improvement journey was achieved in an appropriate management forum.
- 4.6 Response to recommendations.
1. All relevant staff have been commended for their efforts.
 2. Assessments (Pathway Plan part 1) are now completed on LCS as part of the Pathway planning process. Plans are discussed as part of the supervision process within the leaving care service
 3. Good practice and Improvement journey has not yet been disseminated in a management forum. Ofsted inspection had interrupted progress. Consideration on how this can be delivered will take place with DHOS.
- 4.7 **Leaving Care Improvement Plan and Board.**
Continues to meet every 2 months in order to progress the Improvement plan for the service and continues to have Care leaver representation as a regular member of the board.

4.8 **Care Leavers Forum.**

The forum continues to meet on a monthly basis. Changes have been made with regards to who facilitates the meetings. Care Leavers said that they didn't feel it was beneficial to have the Leaving Care Team Manager and Personal Advisers facilitating the meetings as they felt that perhaps they didn't feel free enough to be critical of the service. It was agreed therefore that the DHOS would undertake this task going forwards.

The forum was consulted with regards to the development of the Care leaver's pledge, which is both in printed form and on line.

The forum has agreed to develop a guide for Care leavers about all things housing. This would be a guide which would explain what type of accommodation Care leavers could expect to be able to access as they make the transition to adulthood and would aim to clarify the process and options open to them.

With regards to attendance at the forum this does continue to be a challenge with regards to numbers and hence the need for a broader range of methodologies that will be explored over the coming months.' 50 % of Care leavers do not live in the City.

The forum has agreed to develop a communications group that will explore further how best to utilise social media in order that the views of a broader range of Care Leavers can be gathered and would include those who currently live outside of Derby.

The most pressing issue at present for the forum are Finances. It has been noted, especially for those who live independently and who are on low incomes, that the amount of money that Care leavers are expected to live on is very low and that it really is a struggle from week to week. The DHOS and Leaving Care Manager are currently reviewing the financial offer to Care leavers and the DHOS will be preparing a report to reflect the current situation and make future recommendations.

One of the recommendations is picking up on the national call for Care Leavers to be made exempt from Council tax payments. Twenty councils have already taken this step and those Care Leavers who live independently have said that this would make a significant impact on their income.

4.9 OFSTED.

The Leaving Care service received a 'Good' judgement during the Single Inspection of the LA's Children's services 2017.

The inspectors made the following key observations,

'The vast majority of care leavers who move into independent or semi-independent accommodation live in suitable and safe properties. '

'Care leavers receive appropriate support to help them to develop the skills that they need to live independently'.

'Personal advisers review care leavers' pathway plans on time and at appropriate intervals. Almost all pathway plans are clear and detailed, and focus appropriately on the themes most likely to have a positive impact on each young person's life, including their health, education and relationships with others.'

'Personal advisers understand the health needs of their young people and usually document them clearly in pathway plans.'

'The proportion of care leavers who participate in education, employment and training has risen. The figure reported to inspectors of 64.6% is higher than the England average of 49%, and most participate on a full-time basis. '

'Most care leavers feel good about themselves. They state that their personal advisers genuinely care about them and are proud of their successes.'

The above observations accurately reflect the work and distance travelled by the service over the past 12 months and is an accurate reflection on how the service has improved and responded to the previous auditing processes.

There was one recommendation from the judgement

'Care leavers do not always receive details of their full health histories or those of their birth families, meaning that they may be unaware of susceptibility to health risks or conditions as they go through life. (Recommendation)'

The Improvement Board had identified this as an area where we needed to improve and it is contained within the Leaving Care Improvement plan.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None

5.2

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Suanne Lim Judith Russ, Head of Children's Safeguarding
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Antony Mains 01332 643898 Antony.mains@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 N/A

Legal

2.1 The Leaving Care Service is a statutory service as outlined in the Children Act, 1989

Personnel

3.1 N/A

IT

4.1 N/A

Equalities Impact

5.1 N/A

Health and Safety

6.1 N/A

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 N/A

Property and Asset Management

8.1 N/A

Risk Management

9.1 N/A

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults