



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY JOINT SUB COMMISSION 6 December 2005

Report of the Director of Social Services

Aspire – Leaving Care Service

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the work of Aspire to support 16 plus looked after children, Care Leavers up to 21 years (24 if at university) and 16 and 17 year old Asylum Seeking young people.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Leaving Care Service was established in October 2001 to enable Derby to meet its responsibilities under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The team consists of
- One Service Manager.
 - Six Leaving Care Workers.
 - One part time Leaving Care Worker funded by Connexions.
 - One Project Worker funded by LPSA/NRF.
 - One Project Worker funded by LSC.

and is based in it's own premises in Normanton.

From April 04, due to a change in the legal requirements on Social Service Departments, the team now support unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people who are 16 and 17 when they claim asylum. This support continues until 21 yrs if they remain in England.

Currently 133 young people are supported by the service.

- 2.2 The team aims to provide services that :

- Are relevant to the needs of young people and offer choice.
- Take account of young people's views.
- Meet the requirements of legislation, government targets and corporate parenting responsibilities.
- Treat young people with respect.
- Help Care Leavers achieve their potential and ambitions.
- Acknowledge young people make mistakes.
- Support young people in confronting and overcoming their difficulties.
- Are flexible and timely.
- Offer protection where needed.
- Enable young people to develop skills to participate in society.
- Are cost effective.
- Meet corporate objectives and priorities for change.

2.3 Young people are at the heart of service and policy developments.

Their comments on the service include :

- Helped me find work.
- Everyone friendly, nice atmosphere.
- Lots of information, if they don't know they find out.
- People smile.
- Someone coming to appointments with me, GP, etc.
- I know they are always there for me.
- People believe in me.
- Are supporting me through University.
- Pushed at college, told I could do it and I can.
- Good news boards, good to show success, pleased my news is on it.
- Birthday parties.
- Help with homework.
- Staff get back when I leave a message.
- Like your family, really.
- My 'plan of life'.
- I come in with a bag on and go out with a smile.
- Staff are young, fun, (as we are a more mature staff we particularly like this one).
- Always there, always helpful.
- They care – it's not just a job.
- I went to Derby Playhouse. I've never been to the theatre before – it was cool. Aspire arranged this.
- The Tall Ships trip Aspire arranged was the best week of my life. I learnt so much about getting on with people, working together. Other people relied on me to do my job along with my watch, that's never happened to me before. I felt so good when we'd sailed a particularly difficult bit of the sea.
- The trip I went on to India taught me so much about appreciating other people's culture. We had to represent Derby and that felt good. It opened my eyes to travel and accepting lots of different people. Aspire have arranged for two young people to be ambassadors for Derby on this year's trip. I hope they get as much out of it as I did. I made friends for life.

2.4 The following areas illustrate some of the work undertaken by the team and demonstrate strong partnership working:

- In March '04, Derby had the second highest number of 19 year olds in work, education or training with 84.2%. By March '05 this number had risen to 89.4%.

This is due to :

- External funding attracted to improve this target.
- Strong partnership with Connexions. We share information on outcomes via a partnership agreement.
- Links with LSC, colleges and businesses.

Many other Leaving Care Services have visited Aspire from across the country to learn from our service.

- External funding attracted
 - £92,000 from LSC to appoint a Project Worker to support 16 and 17 year old looked after children into work and to develop the City Council Traineeship Scheme. This scheme is established under the Corporate Parenting umbrella. We now have trainees in the Council House, Accountancy, Admin, Sports centres, homes for elderly people and with partner agencies, for example, Sure Start. All trainees are employed by Derby City Council for one year, paid by the Learning Skills Council.
 - With a Princes Trust grant a Mentoring Scheme for Derby care leavers has been developed. This was the first opened in the East Midlands region and was launched by HRH The Prince of Wales. An 18 year old Care Leaver worked 3 days each week for 3 months with the team, ensuring that young people's views were central. She developed the policies, training, designed leaflets, also helping recruit and train mentors.

A mentor and mentee, along with the responsible Project Worker, received a standing ovation at Leicester recently when they were guest speakers at the launch of a similar scheme.

One mentor has won a Princes Trust award for her services.

- Nine young people have had driving lessons linked to their careers, for example, one youngster who has just qualified as a midwife. This will enable her to work in the community. Funded by Anti Poverty Strategy money.
- LPSA funding and NRF attracted to employ a project worker to improve the numbers of 19 yr old care leavers in work, Education and Training. The success of this work is evidenced in the outcome above.
- Excellent partnerships with Health. The team have access to a designated GP surgery, have ring fenced nursing and CAMHS hours. Health assessments and advice offered to all young people.
- Young people are involved in recruiting staff, writing leaflets and guides. They have been involved in national events; for example, one appeared on GMTV during fostering week, having undertaken a filmed survey for them in Derby. Another was on a TV programme made by the BBC. Care leavers have trained Social Services and partner agency staff and elected members.
- As Corporate Parents, Homefinder via City Council Housing, give Careleavers priority access to accommodation at 18 years. Supporting People provide an 8-week support programme to all Careleavers at 18.

- 2.5 The service has consistently had good inspection reports. Following a recent visit by David Behan, Chief Inspector for Social Care Inspection, he wrote to commend both the team and the City Council for the work in developing Aspire. The team recently gained second place in the National Awards for Public Service.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 None.

Legal

- 2.1 The main purpose of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is to improve the life chances of young people living in and leaving care.

It requires the Local Authority “ to delay young people’s discharge from care until they are prepared and ready to leave; to improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care; to provide better personal support for young people after leaving care; and to improve the financial arrangements for care leavers”.

The Hillingdon Judgement – Aug 2003, gives local authorities the duty to treat 16 and 17 year old unaccompanied asylum seeking children as looked after children and also ensure they receive a Leaving Care service until 21 years.

Personnel

- 3.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 Ensuring that Children who have been looked after in Derby are enabled as adults to
- achieve a satisfactory quality of life
 - play a full part in their community
 - achieve maximum potential

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 This furthers the Council’s Objectives of **healthy, safe and independent communities**.

- A stimulating and high quality learning environment.

This supports the priorities of **improving children and young people’s prospects** and **improving life chances for disadvantaged people and communities**.

- Raising educational achievements.

The service fits across the range of targets and indicators on the outcomes framework for Children’s Trusts.