



Derby City Council

Corporate Parenting Committee
21 February 2017

ITEM 8

Report of the Strategic Director of People
Services

Leaving Care Service

- 1.1 Overall the progress and development of the service has been good over the past twelve months. The introduction of a new system (LCS) has presented many challenges from a technical perspective but we have now overcome these and are on target to have 100% of all plans for Care Leavers on the system and in date by the end of 2016.
- 1.2 The quality of Pathway Plans is also improving as evidenced by our recent QA in October 16. We have helped to develop a wider, improved offer for Care leavers with regards to education, training and employment and are capturing the voice of care leavers and improving the service as a result and promoting the Corporate parenting agenda.
- 1.3 Performance management meetings have now started to take place on a monthly basis where issues such as numbers in unsuitable accommodation, NEET, those with whom we have lost touch, number of home visits, number of Pathway Plans in date are addressed.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the content of this report and the progress of the service over the last 18 months

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The service to young people who have been in the care of the council is vitally important as they are often vulnerable, have little family support and need help to make a good transition to adulthood.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The Leaving Care Service

The Leaving Care Service is a service provided to Care leavers from the age of 16. Young people are allocated a Personal Adviser (PA) in addition to their Social worker on or around their 16th birthday. The overall aim of the Personal Adviser and the Team is to help, support and assist the young person to make a successful transition into adulthood.

In order to do this and track the progress of a young person a Pathway Plan is developed which clearly specifies how the PA, Social Worker and others are going to support the young person. The Plan is reviewed, as a minimum, every 6 months to make sure actions have been carried out and that the young person is making the progress expected. It is important to note that the Pathway Plan is the Young Persons plan. Their views and aspirations are essential to how the plan is written, what it contains etc.

The Pathway Plan will also include the views of the Personal Adviser, Social worker and others and sometimes they will be different to that of the Young Person. This is perfectly normal as long as this is discussed and recorded accurately. The PA's views would be their professional opinions on issues based on their expertise and experience. The Personal adviser will be expected to remain in touch with the Young Person and visit them at least every 8 weeks, irrespective of where they may live. This can be more often if the young person needs it and communication via telephone, texting, and e- mailing is also expected in between visits.

Between the ages of 16 to 18, the PA and Social worker will be involved, working together with others such as Connexions, Housing and Health services to provide assistance and support and give the young person every chance of making that successful transition.

- 4.2 Once the young person turns 18 years of age they are legally an adult and their Social Worker will no longer be involved in the Pathway Planning process. The PA however remains and will continue to be involved until the young adult reaches the age of 21. If they want to remain in education then the PA can continue to be involved up until the age of 25. Young adults can also return to the service after 21 if they are seeking support with returning to education and once their request has been assessed then they will be allocated a PA.

Our aim as a service is to help young people make the transition into adulthood successfully, positively and with as little difficulty as possible. Our aim is to develop mature trusting relationships with all care leavers, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children built on honesty and respect. We aim to support care leavers to establish themselves as active, responsible and happy members of society with a solid base from which to reach their full potential and aspirations and to live a fulfilled life.

4.3 **The Team and the Care leavers**

The Leaving Care team is made up of 10 Full time equivalent Personal Advisers (PA's) and 1 Team Manager. The PA's have a wide range of experience and expertise in order to be able to deliver on our aims and objectives for the service. The team has been stable for the last 12 months with no change in personnel.

Currently, (3/11/2016) there are 242 young people aged between 16 and 25 who are open to the Leaving Care Team. 151 are over 18 years.

Current breakdown by age is as follows:

- Age 16 = 2
- Age 17 = 7
- Age 18 = 45
- Aged 19 = 40
- Aged 20 = 41
- Aged 21 = 11
- Aged 22 = 1
- Aged 23 = 2
- Aged 24 = 1
- Aged 25 = 1

4.4 **Intouch with Care Leavers**

The service is in touch with 98% of care leavers. The few we have lost touch with are three former UASC and a young man who is a member of a travelling community.

4.5 Unsuitable Accommodation

10 % of Derby City Care leavers identified as living in unsuitable accommodation as of November 2016. This includes all Care leavers currently open and allocated to the leaving care team. This means they are living in accommodation that is not considered to be suitable or appropriate e.g. living with friends and in prison. The national reported average for this in 2015, taking data for 19, 20 and 21 year olds was 19%. This figure is obviously too high and PAs are doing all they can to reduce it bearing in mind the limited amount of supported accommodation in the city.

4.6 NEET

The percentage of Derby City care leavers who are currently NEET (not in employment, education and training) as of November 2016 is 36%. This includes all Care leavers currently open and allocated to the leaving care team. National reported average for this in 2015, taking data for 19, 20 and 21 year olds was 39%.

4.7 Leaving Care Improvement Plan and Board

In order to improve the service for care leavers an 'Improvement Plan' has been developed. The improvement plan for the service was developed as a result of Quality Assurance visit to the team in April 2015. An Improvement Board meets bi monthly to ensure that progress is made and to continue to explore ways by which the service can improve. The improvement plan is updated at each meeting and completed tasks removed and new targets/actions developed.

The Improvement board consists of a Representative from the Care Leavers forum, a Personal Adviser, Leaving Care Team Manager, Deputy Head of service, Head of Service, Representative from Housing and a DCC Apprenticeship representative. Other services are invited at separate meetings, such as DWP , health , and Connexions staff.

There have been an additional two QA visits in April and October 2016.

There has been a clear improvement between visits with the percentage of Pathway plans audited and being judged as good increasing by 27%, from 38% to 65% including 1 plan judged to be outstanding. However, the service is still considered to be requiring further improvement.

4.8 **Areas for further development following October 16 QA Visit and Responses by the Service**

- **Improved recording of when Plans are reviewed.** *Addition of drop down box on LCS will address this issue.*
- **Individual performance of PA's addressed to ensure management decisions are followed up in a timely manner.** *On-going*
- **Visiting requirements are recorded in the young people's Pathway plans and identified within core objectives in the PA's MIP's.** *This is now a section within the Pathway plans on LCS and must be completed before LCT manager will authorise the plans.*
- **PAs to confirm & log that YP have all of the documents they need prior to assuming full case responsibility at age 18 years.** *The Pathway Plan now has a section which enables social workers to confirm that Young people have the relevant documentation, such as Passport, Ni number, NHS number etc.*
- **Arrange a forum for Care Leavers to attend to give feedback about the service they are receiving and to input into any service developments.** *Initially achieved but methods need to be refreshed and modernised to meet the needs of young people with use of Social media being explored as part of an action within the Improvement plan.*
- **Ensure that 6 apprenticeships in the Council are ring fenced to Care Leavers.** *Partially Achieved – . Four care leaver currently in an apprenticeships in the council*
- **Ensure that Care Leavers who are parents are given equal access to apprenticeships and employment opportunities.** *Young parents are put forward and encouraged to take part in Apprenticeship scheme.*

4.9 **Actions Achieved since July 2015**

1. Leaving Care Team manager in post since July 2015
2. All 16 year old eligible young people are allocated a Personal Adviser from the Leaving Care Team on or near their Birthday.
3. All Pathway Plans for Care Leavers are now recorded onto the new LCS system.
4. Development of a Care Leavers Forum. (development of a care Leavers Entitlements booklet now being distributed to all care leavers aged 16 +)
5. Utilising LCS via reports to establish robust data for Care Leavers, helping us to target resources.
6. Active contribution to the Development of the DCC Apprenticeship/ Traineeship programme.
7. Working more closely/ in partnership with allocated Social Workers between the ages of 16 and 18. (Joint service day on Pathway Planning held on 10th October with CIC teams, LCT and PFA Team)
8. Performance management is now part of what we do. Weekly data spreadsheets sent to LCT manager
9. Auditing of Pathway Plans undertaken monthly (dip sampling) for 16/ 17 year olds.
10. Audit (QA) of Leaving care service in October 16 identified that quality of Pathway Plans is improving.
11. More care leavers have been supported to ‘ Stay put’ with their foster carers post 18. This process is now more embedded.
12. Celebration event for care leavers. 24th November 2016.
13. Establishing a joint forum with PFA team to address the needs of care leavers with additional needs. Addressing issues earlier to assist with a smoother transition to adulthood.
14. Good established links with housing. Helping to improve the service to Care leavers seeking accommodation. The Housing pathway for Care leavers updated which will improve council Tenancy allocations to be timelier.
15. Care leavers Pledge has now been developed in Consultation with the Care Leavers Forum. January 2017

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)	Antony Mains – Leaving Care Team Manager
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Antony Mains 01332 643898 antony.mains@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Draft Care Leavers Pledge

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