



Leaving Care Services – Update, October 2018

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress made in relation to the Care Leavers Forum and on the 'Local Offer' to Care Leavers since the last Corporate Parenting Committee meeting.

1.2 **Children and Young Persons Summary**

The Leaving Care Service will start to support young people when they reach 16 years old. They stay involved with young people until they are 21 years and now they can stay involved until young people are 25 years.

The Local Offer is something the government has said we need to produce by December 2018 and will show you what young people can expect when they leave care. It will explain how the Leaving Care Service will help young people, this could be about their rights and support to get into work, and help with money and helping young people is as independent as possible. We want the Local Offer to belong to young people, so it will be updated regularly as we change the way we help young people based on what they tell us.

The Leaving Care Forum is like the Children in Care Council and the forum aims to discuss things that matter to young people when they leave care, things like feeling alone, not knowing what to do if something happens and supporting and listening to young people. So far the forum has helped in getting young people things such as allowances to help them with bills, accessing sport and leisure activities and in helping others understand some of their worries about being a care leaver.

We have struggled to get many young people to attend this meeting and this report highlights ideas that we have about how we improve this. We want to hear about the experiences of care leavers, so we can use this to help and make things better for other young people in the future. The forum used to have a 'proper' meeting around a table, but now we want to do different things such as arranging social groups and doing activities together.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the content of the report and the progress made in respect to how the Leaving Care Service consults with young people and uses the findings of consultation in developing the Leaving Care Service.
- 2.2 To note and comment on the updates made to the Local Offer for Care Leavers and provide strategic oversight.

- 2.3 To note and respond to the recommendations of Corporate Parenting and the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny boards in relation to the Local Offer.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are kept abreast of and can comment on developments in relation to services and functions that support children and young people who have lived in care and gather their voice in child focused ways to ensure these inform services going forward.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The Leaving Care Forum

The Leaving Care Forum has met once since the last report and has been redesigned as a Leaving Care Activity based forum following feedback from care leavers of how this group should function. Three members of the Leaving Care Forum participated in an initial overnight trip to the Peak District in conjunction with a small charity called Beasley Backdane. This was extremely well received. The result has been to develop a timetable of monthly events around young people's interests that have been gathered by Personal Advisors in the Leaving Care Service. Personal Advisors will provide a summary of key issues after each activity and themes will be discussed in team meetings and inform future development.

- 4.2 The Leaving Care Service also contributes to wider participation and consultation that will then be used to inform service development. At present the service and a number of care leavers are supporting national research in relation to the impact of Local Area Co-ordination for Care Leavers with Ipsos Mori. The findings of which will assist us in our own development as a service.

- 4.3 The appointment of the new Children in Care Participation Officer will also have a further role to play in the co-ordination of Care Leaver consultation moving forward. This level of independence is welcomed by the service and care leavers.

4.4 The Local Offer

As of the 1 October 2018 there were 222 young people aged 16-25 who are considered to be Care Leavers, compared to 168 young people at the beginning of 2018. This increase is in direct correlation with the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the associated duties. Part of these duties includes the development of the Local Offer to Care Leavers and it is required to be published in December 2018

- 4.5 The first draft of the Local Offer has been provided to both the Corporate Parenting Committee and Children and Young People's Scrutiny in July and September 2018 respectively. The comments and recommendations made within both these boards with regard to accessibility and language used are already being worked into the Local Offer.

- 4.6 Development work on the Local Offer since the last meeting has been to explore wider council commitment to the provision of services and resources across the eight themes; Support and Advice, Education; Training and Employment; Accommodation and Independence; Health; Money and Finances; Relationships; Identity and

Participation in Society and Voice Being Heard. Given the existing high level of commitment from all directorates within the council we already have a strong offer such as council tax exemption, white good provision and apprenticeships. The service will also ensure the current Care Leavers Pledge is reviewed and in line with the final published Local Offer.

- 4.7 Externally, Building Better Opportunities (Local Enterprise Partnership) have pledged to host a regional event in the new year as part of their remit to support improving employability for the most disadvantaged, helping those with multiple and complex needs, to improving financial literacy. Leaders from across D2N2 will be brought together to establish a core 'regional offer' to increase the capability and resilience for care leavers and identify gaps in regional services.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The Local Offer is a statutory requirement and therefore has to be developed and fully implemented.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim
Other(s)	Andrew Kaiser

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The DfE has outlined to Local Authorities that there will be burdens funding available to finance this work, however, no specific figures have been provided and so we are unclear whether this will cover the level of resources we assess as necessary to ensure the success of this implementation.

Legal

- 2.1 The Local Authority will have a legal responsibility to provide an offer of support to Care Leavers up until the age of 25 regardless of whether they are in full time education or training from April 2018. The Local Authority will also need to have regard to seven 'corporate parenting principles' that will guide the way in which it provides its services to Children in Care and Care Leavers. The Local Authority will be required to publish their support offer to Care Leavers and to promote the educational attainment of children who have been adopted or placed in other long-term arrangements.

The Leaving Care Service is a statutory service as outlined in the Children Act 1989, Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Personnel

- 3.1 Children and Social Work Act 2017 implementation will require additional resources. There will be a need to recruit additional personnel as a result of the workload increases that the implementation of this legislation will bring. This will include front line Personal Advisors in the Leaving Care Team and also Business Support functions, as the service is currently working at capacity and as such, there is no scope for work to be absorbed within the service.

IT

- 4.1 DfE is currently developing proposals in relation to data collection. The working assumptions are that the DfE will not require Local Authorities to provide data on all 22 to 25 year olds through the existing OC3 data collection on Children in Care and Care Leavers. Data collection will focus on the number of Care Leavers covered by the new duty who access services and what was the primary reason they requested support. DfE do not intend to collect data on young people who have not requested support.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers often face multiple deprivations that can lead to life-long needs that are not met and dependency on statutory services. The extension of support can help to address this, if that support is organised and delivered in an appropriately structured way.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising from this report

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None arising from this report

Risk Management

- 9.1 There are risks to the Local Authority of not properly implementing this legislation, which include legal and practice risks. Non-compliance will likely result in care leavers receiving a reduced quality of service, recruitment and retention issues and a potential adverse inspection outcome.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults - Making sure that we take action to safeguard vulnerable adults and children that require higher levels of support including; our looked after children and vulnerable adults with learning disabilities. This will involve early intervention and prevention wherever possible.