

Care Leavers Local Offer

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the development of Derby City's Local Offer for care leavers as required under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The offer contributes towards achieving the outcome of improved decision making and support for looked after and previously looked after children.
- 1.2 Section 2 of the 2017 act requires all local authorities to publish information about services offered to care leavers and other services that may assist care leavers to transition to adulthood and independent living. The local offer should ensure that all care leavers have a clear idea of what services are available to them, as well as helping to highlight any gaps in provision or support that the young person may need.
- 1.3 Following consultation with Derby's care leavers, the structure of the local offer will be divided into suggested sections that provide details on services pertaining to; Support and Guidance, Education, Training and Employment, Accommodation and Independence, Health, Money and Finances, Relationships, Identity and Participation in Society and Voice Being Heard. It will be formatted into required, discretionary and aspirational activity.
- 1.4 To ensure Derby's Local Offer reflects the seven principles of Corporate Parenting, also introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, broader council and partner agency meetings have been arranged to strengthen the discretionary and aspirational offers. This includes, but is not exhaustive of; the whole council, elected members, employees and partner agencies.
- 1.5 Derby City will publish a final Care Leaver Local Offer by December 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.2 To note development to date of Derby City's Local Offer in response to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and make relevant suggestions accordingly, to its development.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that Derby City's Local Offer meets and exceeds the required legal expectations and that the process of its development is open and transparent.

4.1 Children and Social Work Act 2017.

From 1 April 2018 the statutory requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 came into force. A number of additional responsibilities were placed upon Local Authorities as part of the act that directly relates to care leavers. One of these key responsibilities was to provide a 'Local Offer' to care leavers.

4.2 A significant part of a local authority's support to any child over the age of 16 who is, or has been, a looked after child, is assessing their needs in order to determine what advice, assistance and support they require. A detailed plan, called a "pathway plan" is prepared as soon as possible after the assessment. Personal advisers act as a focal point to ensure a care leaver is provided with the correct level of support. They can participate in reviews of the pathway plan; liaise with the responsible authority in the implementation of the pathway plan; co-ordinate the provision of services; and take steps to make sure the child or young person is using those services.

4.3 Section 3 of the 2017 act requires local authorities to provide personal advisers to care leavers up until the age of 25, removing the distinction between care leavers in education and training and those who are not. It also means that all care leavers will be able to return for help from their local authority at any time up until they reach 25.

4.4 The additional work and expectation will be met through central government new burdens funding and additional local authority resources to meet the increased demand of care leavers returning for a service under these new requirements.

4.5 Local Offer.

Local authorities have until December 2018 to develop their local offer. The offer is an opportunity for Derby to demonstrate its collective level of commitment to developing quality services for their looked after children transitioning into adulthood. It will require robust support from all organisations including the Corporate Parenting Committee and relevant stakeholders, for example, health, Department of Work and Pensions, immigration, education, council directorates, housing, and commissioned services, to create a strong and meaningful citywide Corporate Parenting offer.

4.6 Children in care and care leavers are helping to design how the offer is progressed. A consultation exercise has been undertaken with care leavers and attached as appendix.

4.7 The local offer is intended to show the different stages and eligibilities for care leavers. As it evolves there will be ample opportunity to innovate and to make Derby's collective offer to care leavers, outstanding.

4.8 Examples of existing offers in Derby:

- Leaving care transition support.
- Council tax exemption till age of 25 years.
- Communication allowance
- Apprenticeships
- Providing care leavers with access to specialist advice on housing options prior to them leaving care
- Providing care leavers with education and employment advice, including apprenticeship opportunities
- Targeted support provided by Local Area Coordinators (in Derby)
- Providing intensive support to help care leavers maintain tenancies, including training on managing their finances and avoiding rent arrears

4.9 Suggestions by care leavers of what is offered:

- Technical support with communication/social media.
- Traineeships and work experience.
- Mentoring and emotional wellbeing support.
- Priority access to area related services.
- Practical support.
- Free access/use of council owned facilities.
- Transportation solutions.

4.10 **Corporate Parenting.**

Derby's Local Offer is dependent upon a strong and focussed Corporate Parenting approach that champions care leavers and provides them with access and opportunity. Once published, the offer will need support from Corporate Parenting partners to ensure that it remains reflective of and driven by its seven principles, those being;

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None, creation and publication of a local offer is statutory duty and must be completed by December 2018.

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, Head of Specialist Services

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Local Offer (Draft) Appendix 3 – Care Leavers consultation.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Children and Social Work Act 2017 implementation will require additional resources. The DfE has outlined to Local Authorities that there will be burdens funding available to finance this work. The Council in addition has agreed additional resources to support the increased responsibility of returning care leaver to the age of 25 years.

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. This will include front line Personal Advisors in the Leaving Care Team and also Business Support functions.

IT

- 4.1 The Offer once complete will need to be published and cited on Debry City Council website. Social media promotion will also be required.

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 effectively implementing this legislation, which include legal and practice risks, including 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.