

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	29 October 2012
Subject:	Children Looked After Life Chances Forum Action Planning
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mitzi Green
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	N/A
Enclosures:	Appendices A – D

1.0 Summary and Recommendations

- This report seeks to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel about progress with the Children Looked After Life Chances forum action planning in respect to support for children looked after who are leaving local authority care.
- Panel members are invited to consider recommendations contained in section 3.30 and give guidance on subsequent Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decision making arrangements.

2.0 Introduction

The Children Looked After (CLA) Life Chances forum was first established in 2007. The purpose of this forum has been to improve the life chances and outcomes for CLA and young people who are leaving care (care leavers).

2.1 The forum has evolved over the last 5 years and strategic leadership, governance and performance have been significantly improved to ensure scrutiny and improved service delivery in respect of standards and outcomes expected for CLA and careleavers.

2.2 Membership is developed to ensure more targeted attention and focus is played to ensure the delivery of the CLA Life Chances forum action plan. The current Terms of Reference for this forum is attached, as Appendix A.

2.3 Representative membership of the CLA Life Chances forum consist of a core and an affiliate membership. The core panel meets bi monthly, where as affiliates are designated a leads on many of the actions, will be invited accordingly to the agenda and action plan review. The membership is:

Core group membership:

CLA Service Manager (Chair)
Virtual Head Teacher (vice chair)
QA Service Manager
Placements Service Manager
Performance Officer - Children's Social Care
Operational Manager, Harrow YOS
Health representative
Housing representative
Leisure Service Manager
Service Manager, Early Intervention Service

Affiliate members:

CLA Team manager representative
Leaving Care team or UASC team manager representative
Fostering team representative
QA manager, Vulnerable Children

PEP Coordinator
Education Officer, CLA
Educational Psychologist

Independent Visitor Coordinator
Advocacy Service
Children's Participation Officer/Beyond Limits
Commissioning Service representative

CLA Nurse
CAMHS representative

Service Manager, CWD

2.3 The CLA Life Chances forum have developed an action plan which is being implemented, this was supported by the Corporate Parenting panel in respect to specific activities being undertaken and actions required to make service improvements with delivery and to improve the outcomes for CLA and care leavers. The CLA Life Chances forum receive regular reports of performance indicators and management information relating to CLA and will monitor and drive performance improvement.

2.4 The CLA Life Chances forum action plan is attached as Appendix B.

2.5 The terms of reference for the CLA Life Chances Forum focus on improving the life chances and outcomes for CLA. The focus of the Care Leavers and Housing Sub Group is to scrutinise current processes, maximise the benefit of local partnerships and address specific issues to improve housing outcomes for care leavers. An integral aspect of this work will be to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of CLA and care leavers.

3.0 Issues

3.1 The CLA Life Chances forum action plan

This section of the report will refer to update and progress in respect of the action plan.

3.3 Review and provide suitable housing options and standards of accommodation

The Corporate Parenting panel in January 2012 made recommendations in respect of ensuring careleavers are provided with suitable accommodation, where they are entitled to housing under the Leaving Care Act 2000 and in partnership with Housing department and the Locata Scheme. It was noted that there had been a significant increase in the demand for single occupancy one bed social housing accommodation, there is a shortage of these types of properties. Whilst the Housing Department increased the quota for care leavers to 25 to place in 2012 under the Locata scheme, this left 14 young people requiring a review of their accommodation needs.

3.4 The careleavers & housing sub group reviewed these 14 cases. The review has established that some of these young people can remain in existing accommodation and have identified short term tenancies to meet their needs. Alternative accommodation options are being considered in order to address the current position with housing department. Consideration is given to moving young people into the privately rented sector in order to develop partnerships with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

3.5 The careleavers & housing sub group has also revised and distributed a protocol for working with careleavers in respect of referral for housing, support with bidding for tenancies and post support with managing a new tenancy. In addition, the Leaving Care team provide a post 18 support programme when a young person is housed and is managing a tenancy for the first time. The sub group has also ensured suitable use of the Gayton for semi – independent accommodation for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.

3.6 The careleavers & Housing sub group is also ensuring a suitable standard of accommodation for accommodation post 18. This was first raised at the Corporate Parenting panel in January 2012. This required focus on the condition of properties and having an agreed standard expectation of presentation and essential items.

3.7 The Housing Department provides a standard decoration allowance for tenants. Careleavers are eligible for this support. The careleavers & housing sub group will continue to monitor standards of accommodation.

3.8 At present care leavers usually purchase essential items from the Independent Living Grant (ILG). In reality the ILG does not cover the costs of all essential items and this creates significant difficulties for care leavers attempting to set up home. These often include fridge/freezer. The sub group is looking at ways of ensuring support and a consistent standard. The Leaving Care Charter sets out expectations regarding these standards, this should be reviewed.

3.9 Engage young people and recognise achievements

Commissioning of semi independent units for accommodation of CLA and careleavers includes expected standards and monitoring requirements to ensure support to young people. The Placements Service monitors this and the allocated social workers receives regular feedback from the provider to ensure young people are engaged.

3.10 Children & Families Services has a systemic practitioner from Morning Lane Associates to support social workers with undertaking direct work with CLA and careleavers.

3.11 The 'day to day recognition protocol' enables social workers to identify daily achievements from CLA and careleavers which are then recognised in writing from a senior officer. This is being implemented frequently. Appendix D shows the achievements recognised since the implementation in November 2011.

3.12 The annual CLA and careleavers Celebration of Achievement Ceremony will next take place on 1st November 2012, in the afternoon. The ceremony involves young people in hosting the ceremony providing entertainment and receiving certificates and reward for achievement with distinguished guests; councillors and senior managers attending.

3.13 The X16 project is a work experience/apprenticeship programme that has been launched in September, where vulnerable groups of young people are being nominated and placed with a number of work based placements in Harrow Council. This is being led by the Early Intervention Service, where CLA and careleavers are being offered 8 work based placements, twice over the next 3 months. We have 7 young people who are taking up placements to date.

3.14 CLA advocacy is ongoing, whilst Harrow Council undertakes a tendering programme. CLA and careleavers are supported to have access to an advocate by their social worker, the Independent Reviewing Officer and or the Complaints department.

3.15 Develop a Virtual School

The virtual head teacher has presented a report to the Corporate Parenting panel in July 2012 regarding progress and is presenting an update at the Corporate Parenting panel in October 2012.

3.16 Support transition to adulthood

Leaving care team have established a case transfer protocol (Appendix C) to support the transition of CLA to the leaving care team and service to support independency. This protocol identifies a leaving care worker to work with the allocated social worker from 17.5 and support transition to leaving care services, this is being embedded by respect team managers.

3.17 The Placements Service is currently consulting on Access to Resources service delivery and supporting Edge of Care. This will identify and support vulnerable children from coming into care and identify alternate interventions. This will include support to CLA and careleavers to engage with services and resources regarding implementing their care plan. The Morning Lane Associate systemic practitioner is providing support to social workers with undertaking direct work with CLA and careleavers.

3.18 The Life Skills Programme has been developed with teenage CLA, care leavers and a range of partners during 2011. It provides an individual programme tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances of all CLA. This includes a readiness assessment for a broad range of issues, including appropriate practical skills, emotional resilience and well-being needs, support requirements and the type of education, employment and training conditions that will support a successful transition to young adulthood, including managing and maintaining a tenancy.

3.19 The Life Skills Programme was issued on 1st June to all 14 – 17 year old CLA. 90 programmes have been distributed to date and programmes distributed as and when a young person turns 14 or comes into care aged 14 – 17 years old.

3.20 CLA and careleavers have found the programmes of benefit and support to their transition to independency. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this. This can be sought when Beyond Limits undertake an evaluation of the Pledge.

3.21 Prioritise health needs

CLA and careleavers have been invited to Harrow Leisure Centre to register for membership. This is being supported by Children and Families services for young people who are dedicated in using the facilities at the Harrow leisure centre.

3.22 The Cedars Youth Centre in partnership with Watford Football Club are also offering CLA and careleavers to make use of the gym facilities in their discreet centre. A registration session is hoped for in December, for young people who are not interested in joining the large Harrow leisure centre.

3.23 The Library service are offering free access to foster carers and CLA to use the services. We are exploring the opportunity to undertake more events and activities in actual Library's to support use and participation.

3.24 Social workers are being encouraged to ensure that Personal Education Plans and Pathway Plans reflect the participation in leisure activities. Initial and Review Health assessments are being tracked and monitored more closely to ensure completion within timescale and contribute to care planning.

3.25 Promote a learning culture

CLA and careleavers participation is being co-ordinated by the Quality Assurance and Service Improvement service. This will develop an action plan and schedule of participation activities.

3.26 Engagement with social workers and social care staff is developing in order to support reflective practice regarding care planning and service delivery. The Morning Lane Associates support staff with this systemic approach to practice. It is important that CLA and careleavers views are considered in respect of service delivery, practice standards and improving services.

3.27 CLA 'Lets Talk' session took place in the summer 2012, these provided opportunities for 3 groups of CLA and careleavers to talk and play with the portfolio holder for Children and Families, Corporate Director of Childrens services and senior managers.

3.28 Beyond Limits and Young Voices will continue to engage CLA and careleavers. Beyond Limits will present a report to the Corporate Parenting panel in December regarding the feedback and evaluation of the Pledge and the Lets Talk sessions.

3.29 Children & Families Improvement plan

This has been recently distributed to staff and will be reviewed by Cabinet in October 2012. A Children & Families Improvement board is established to review the progress of implementation, the Divisional Director for Quality Assurance and Commissioning is asked to provide a report on the Improvement at the Corporate Parenting Panel in October 2012.

3.30 Proposed Recommendations

The Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider the following recommendations in order to address the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities for CLA and care leavers as it relates to the progress of the action plan;

- a) To support the collective endeavours of Corporate Parents to promote partnership working to improve the outcomes of CLA and careleavers.
- b) To recognise the day to day achievements of children looked after and young people leaving care
- c) Support the CLA Life Chances forum with implementing the action plan
- d) To consider a review of the Leaving Care Charter to be included in the review of the Harrow Pledge

3.31 Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact from the issues outlined in this report.

3.32 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to consider.

3.33 Risk Management Implications

All related risks are recorded in the Children's Services risk register. There can be significant reputational risk in respect to Ofsted Safeguarding & Looked After Children Inspection. There is an improvement plan to mitigate this risk.

3.34 Equalities implications

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable child in need. The 2009 statutory guidance "The Roles & Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services" highlights the need for Local Authorities to work corporately to improve the well-being of looked after children and young people leaving care, to make their needs a priority and seek the same outcomes that any reasonable caring parent would want for their own children. CLA consistently fare worse than their peers across a range of indicators including health, education, training, employment, homelessness and offending.

3.35 Corporate Priorities

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable by virtue of the experiences that led them into Local Authority care and in respect of the poor outcomes that many CLA and care leavers experience when compared to their peers, The Council's corporate priorities include providing care and protection to those who are most in need and this includes CLA and care leavers.

4.0 Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler Date: 17/10/12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Name: Helen Ottino Date: 17/10/12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Legal Services

5.0 Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington



on behalf of the*
Divisional Director
Partnership,
Development and
Performance

Date: 1810/12

6.0 Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

**Nick Crick, CLA Service Manager, Children & Families
Services**

APPENDIX A

Children Looked After Life Chances Forum

Terms of Reference *revised September 2012*

Purpose

The purpose of the CLA Life Chances Forum is to develop ways by which agencies can, individually and collectively, improve the life chances and outcomes for Harrow CLA. The standing of the Forum is reflected by a membership of middle and senior managers.

Objectives

- To coordinate the planning of services focussing on improving life chances and outcomes for Harrow CLA
- To achieve interagency cooperation in developing services for CLA.
- To consider areas for improvement using management information and trend analysis
- To identify information that requires the attention of the Corporate Parenting Panel and to respond to requests for information from the Corporate Parenting Panel
- To identify areas of practice requiring improvement
- To coordinate the implementation of new initiatives, guidance and regulations pertaining to CLA
- To consider how CLA can be kept best informed of what is available to them
- To identify ways to support carers and placements in promoting the life chances of CLA
- To consider how the achievements of CLA can be celebrated
- To provide a yearly report to Corporate Parenting
- Develop findings and areas for action from audits, challenge panels, complaints, advocacy, CLA feedback and management information

Meetings:

The CLA Life Chances Forum will:

- Meet every 2 months
- Provide a record of the minutes and actions points
- Prepare and review action plan

Membership

Core group membership:

CLA Service Manager (Chair)
Virtual Head Teacher (vice chair)
QA Service Manager
Placements Service Manager
Performance Officer - Children's Social Care
Operational Manager, Harrow YOS
Housing representative
Health representative
Leisure Service Manager
Service Manager, Early Intervention Service

Affiliate members:

- to be invited accordingly with agenda

CLA Team manager representative
Leaving Care team or UASC team manager representative
Fostering team representative
QA manager, Vulnerable Children

PEP Coordinator
Education Officer, CLA
Educational Psychologist

Independent Visitor Coordinator
Advocacy Service

Children's Participation Officer/Beyond Limits
Commissioning Service representative
Foster carer

CLA Nurse
CAMHS representative

Service Manager, CWD

Any members of the CLA Life Chances Forum will ensure that they are represented in their absence

Time table of next meeting dates:

1st October 2012 @ 2pm

28th November 2012 @ 2pm

16th January 2013 @ 2pm

20th March @ 2pm

CLA Life Chances Forum – Action Plan 2012

- updated September

This action plan has been developed from the key themes from the Teenage Placement Strategy in 2010, CLA Challenge Panels in 2011, 16+ CLA & Careleavers Action Plan and Corporate Parenting Panel priorities to develop partnership working and services to improve outcomes for Children Looked After and Careleavers in Harrow.

This plan will be reviewed at the regular CLA Life Chances Forum, there will be separate task and finish groups that will report to this forum to ensure the implementation and delivery of the plan.

Service Priority	Recommendation	Issue	Action	Lead person	Progress review	Comments
1. Review and Provide suitable housing options and standards of accommodation	Develop and improve suitable housing options for Careleavers	Leaving Care Quota is full, despite over 25 other eligible young people for accommodation. Existing quota is insufficient for demand/need of eligible LAC/Careleavers for the next 2 years and this will place increased pressure on 18+ accommodation budget	Develop Housing & Careleavers sub group to at current accommodation suitability fro Careleavers and report to CPB in January 2012	Peter Tolley Nick Crick	October 2012	2 year strategy Sub group established 39 Young people identified in March, 25 nominated. Sub group to explore alternative accom strategies for remaining 14 YP
	Ensure accommodation standards are suitable	Some semi independent providers have not met the standards for suitable accommodation for CLA, regarding standards of	Concerns are collated visits arranged to the Placements and review standards	Peter Tolley CAQS commissioning	September 2012	Completed Providers reviewed, monitoring & support standard provision. West London

		accommodation and practice	protocol			Alliance partnership exploring provisions and standard approach. - Peter Tolley to present Accom Standards at next Forum
	Use of Gayton	Review and support the use of Gayton to ensure all young people are suitably placed and consistent approach to useage and ensure equality for service users.	Review and prepare protocol and purpose regarding use of Gayton and ensure all services users are supported equally	Peter Tolley	September 2012	Completed <i>Gayton provision reviewed and Peter Tolley preparing standards protocol. All placement request managed by Placements Service, Savings to be same as all other services being provided.</i> - Peter Tolley to present protocol at next Forum
2. Engage young people and recognise achievements	Ensure that Semi independent providers engage with young people	Units not consistently reporting & recording engagement some CLA. Lack of alternate strategies to engage with young people	Develop standards around expectations of key workers to engage creatively with LAC, LCT and UASC. CS implementation	Peter Tolley Simon Clarke	March 2012	Completed <i>West London Alliance developing standard protocols for all providers, to encompass Team around Child Procurement &</i>

			and outcome plan currently in use to ensure Pathway Plan/keyword sessions are aligned focus on outcomes			<i>Placements to review payment by outcomes. - Peter Tolley to present draft protocol at next Forum</i>
	Celebrate Achievements of CLA and Careleavers	Achievements and success of CLA are not recognised on annual or day to day basis Social workers/professionals should do more to be proud of any achievement and recognize this regularly	Establish a better mechanism to share and celebrate achievements of CLA/Care leavers share at Corporate Parenting Panel Establish annual Celebration of Achievement event	Nick Crick	March 2012	Ongoing Previous event on 16 th November 2011 2012 event on 1/11/12 Sub group established to plan and prepare Nominations required Recognition protocol circulated - 12 recognitions
	Develop Apprenticeships for CLA and Care Leavers in Harrow Council	Responsibility for Corporate Parents to support CLA with apprenticeships within the Council and close partners Look to identify 8 apprenticeships in year 1 - ongoing	Promote Corporate Parenting responsibilities and raise profile to support provision of apprenticeships Consider From Care2 Work	Catherine Halsall Dean Woodward	December 2012	Youth take over day held 11/11/11 Sub group to be set up Establish partnership with economic development

			guidance			Prepare protocol and strategy for Corporate Parenting panel to consider
	Support effective commissioning for advocacy services	Ensure equal access and review of al CLA with advocacy	Review advocacy provision and ensure all young people have access to this Ensure clear guidance and expectation of involvement	Stuart Dalton	December 2012	Commissioning Service seeking tender for Advocacy - extension agreed with current provider, review in March 2012
3. Develop a Virtual School	Launch and implement Virtual School	Improve education, attendance and attainment for CLA Appoint Virtual Head teacher and develop strategy for improvement with key stake holders and partners	Virtual head teacher to be appointed and launch virtual school and strategy	Catherine Halsall	December 2013	2 year strategy Cath Halsall appointed Strategic plan developed and action plan to be implemented Report required for next Corporate Parenting panel Sub group to be set up
	Develop support and monitoring for EET	Ensure support and monitoring of young people to ensure EET	Develop education document	Catherine Halsall	July 2012	Draft education protocol prepared for next Forum

			protocol - provide workshops for key staff			NC, KR & CH to review vacant Connexions PA post Connexions PA providing 1 day a week support Negus leading on case action planning for CLA & LCT
4. Support and develop transition to adulthood	Transition Plans for all eligible LAC	Ensure effective transfer of CLA to Leaving Care Team at 18 Transition plans were not evident in all cases. Lack of engagement with adult services Consideration for Adult Services intervention or support more effective care planning	Implement and review LCT transfer protocol Identify young people where additional needs need to be highlighted and engage Transition Plan TPS highlighted this issue in 2010, waiting for Transition Protocol from Roger Rickman)	Nick Crick Roger Rickman	February 2012	Completed Protocol for case transfer to LCT at 18 is in place Circulated in May 2012
	Develop strategies and services to	There are regularly some young people 15 – 17	Identify support services and	Nick Crick	September 2012	Ongoing HPL and LCT can

	engage disengaged young people	<p>CLA, who do not want to engage with their social workers or key workers</p> <p>Need to further develop the skills of social workers to engage with young people and develop strategies to maintain focus and be persistent with support services.</p>	<p>explore training opportunities to support social workers to engage with young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LCT to develop workshop 	Peter Tolley		<p>develop a work shop for staff</p> <p>HPL to develop support strategies for the young people</p> <p>Access to Resources service to be established, PT</p> <p>Morning Lane Associates to support social workers</p>
	Launch and implement Lifeskills Programme	Support young people with ongoing interaction, support and monitoring to develop and improve skills for independent living and transition to adulthood	Launch and implement Harrow Council Lifeskills Programme	Nick Crick Sue Bush	July 2012	<p>Completed</p> <p>Launched at Corporate Parenting panel in January 2012</p> <p>Staff workshops held in May 2012</p> <p>Implementation in June 2012, for all 14 – 16 years olds</p> <p>Beyond Limits to establish review and evaluation by Dec January 2013</p>

<p>5. Prioritise health needs</p>	<p>Support young people with leisure</p>	<p>Young people not regularly engaged with leisure and healthy living not directly supported</p>	<p>Work in partnership with leisure services to provide CLA & Careleavers with leisure opportunities</p> <p>Report to CPP regarding leisure activities</p>	<p>Nick Crick Tim Bryan</p>	<p>May 2013</p>	<p>Report to Corporate Parenting panel in April 2012 Sub group established</p> <p>incl Libraries</p> <p>Beyond Limits to survey CLA & young people leaving care</p>
	<p>Raise awareness regarding motivation for LAC young men and raise awareness for sexual health advice for LAC young women.</p>	<p>Some young male CLA seem de-motivated whilst some young female CLA, require regular sexual health advice and support</p>	<p>Ensure Lifeskills Programme captures more regular review and awareness</p>	<p>Jackie Middleton Andreas Kyriacou Nick Crick Sue Bush CAMHS rep</p>	<p>July 2012</p>	<p>Completed Clinic in a box at Gayton, dropping in at HPL and Civic Centre 3 for YOT young people</p> <p>CLA Health action plan implemented to link with C&F Improvement Plan</p>
	<p>Develop and support CLA Health engagement and monitoring</p>	<p>Ensure effective support to CLA & Careleavers and speedy referral to specialist services, ensure monitoring and review of health status</p> <p>Develop improved partnership with CAMHS</p>	<p>Develop Health protocol and</p> <p>- provide workshops for key staff</p>	<p>Nick Crick Andreas Kyriacou Jackie Middleton</p>	<p>December 2012</p>	<p>Draft protocol and flowchart to be circulated in Sept 2012</p> <p>Establish fortnight dropin at Civic Centre for all new CLA and support to staff</p>

						<p>Review role of CLA nurse to improve quality and performance, staff workshops in Sept</p> <p>Recruitment of specialist CAMHS provision in Targeted Services by Morning Lane Associates</p>
	Monitor and report on the Harrow Pledge	<p>1) Harrow Pledge needs to be explained to all CLA and incorporated into care plans</p> <p>2) System is required to report themes and effectiveness of the pledge to Beyond Limits and Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>Agree Protocol</p> <p>Agree mechanism for feedback to staff, CLA, Beyond limits and Corporate Parenting Panel</p>	<p>Jonathan Williams</p> <p>Nick Crick</p> <p>Adeline Abraham</p>	January 2013	<p>Pledges circulated to all CLA, social workers delivered</p> <p>LAC Reviews to monitor progress</p> <p>Beyond Limits to develop monitoring and evaluation of pledge</p> <p>Ministerial feedback session held in July 2012</p>
	Identify key issues for Corporate Parenting Panel to comment on the effectiveness of	It is important that Corporate Parenting Panel is able to exercise its responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of the	Agree work plan of reports to present to Corporate Parenting Panel	<p>Nick Crick</p> <p>Jonathan Williams</p>	On going	Beyond Limits to prepare 2012 schedule and integration with Corporate Parenting

	services to CLA	services and practice in relation to CLA.		Peter Tolley		panel Corporate Parenting panel calendar to be circulated
6. Promote a Learning culture	Develop systematic collation of feedback from children and carers to assist in the development of services and practice	There is a need to collate all the wealth of information from children by way of complaints, consultations and events to inform practice and service delivery	Identify current information streams Reflect, analyse and disseminate Review practice and impact on children and services provided to children	Jonathan Williams Nick Crick Adeline Abraham Stuart Dalton	January 2013	Lets talk sessions taken place in summer, evaluate feedback from CLA, Careleavers and BL, Young Voices to present to Corporate Parenting panel in December 2012
7. Children & Families Improvement Plan	Improvement Plan	Service improvements	Implement requirement and tasks for services	Nick Crick Sue Dixon Cath Halsall Peter Tolley	1 st October 2012	Focus on health, education and supervision

APPENDIX C

HARROW COUNCIL

Careleavers & Housing:

JOINT HOUSING PROTOCOL FOR CARE LEAVERS

1. Introduction

Young People leaving care are entitled to support with accommodation needs from their Council. The primary responsibility for securing accommodation for care leavers rests with the local authority housing department and it is essential that a Council wide corporate parenting approach is adopted.

The housing needs of care leavers can be complex and must be addressed before they leave care, by the Children and Families directorate completing pathway plans and a joint assessment of need to support a referral to the housing department under the Locata Scheme. Post support is critical to enable young people leaving care to sustain and maintain their tenancy.

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regs 2010 and the accompanying s7 guidance (which also came into effect on 1.4.2011) specifies the assessment, care planning, intervention and case review to be followed in preparing 16 and 17 year olds for when they will not be looked after.

This protocol will ensure that this approach is adopted by establishing partnership arrangement with Children & Families directorate and Housing department.

2. Aims of the Protocol

To ensure an effective and smooth transition of corporate responsibilities between housing and children's services by jointly addressing the diverse accommodation needs of young people leaving care.

To prevent care leavers becoming homeless thereby avoiding the need for care leavers to enter the homelessness system.

To ensure case management oversight of a new tenancy.

To support young people to become responsible and successful tenants.

3. Objectives

The Careleavers & housing sub group will meet monthly in 2012, then quarterly.

The aims of the group are to discuss:

- Referrals and tenancy nominations
- Progress with careleavers bidding for allocations
- Ensure support with monitoring tenancies
- discuss concerns
- Ensure rent payments are up to date
- Monitor, review and project future referrals and demands for housing needs
- Feedback to the CLA Life Chances Forum
- Discuss any concerns and problem solve to seek solutions

The group will also:

Jointly assess and meet the diverse housing and support needs of young people leaving care.

Work closely together to establish a common database of housing resources and service provision for young people.

Ensure care leavers achieve a successful transition into independent living through support, preparation and provision of suitable accommodation.

Ensure young people are awarded care leaver priority status (Band B) to prevent the need to go through the homeless route.

Identify gaps in service provision for young people and to work together with other agencies to address these gaps, feeding information into the relevant strategies.

Jointly ensure that all staff are aware of the housing needs of young people leaving care and the obligations of each agency to address these needs. Strategies may include ongoing joint training, housing to attend team meetings and so forth.

Provide clear guidelines on the management of difficult tenancies which will include contingency arrangements.

Ensure that Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) fulfil their role to assist the local authority to provide suitable accommodation for care leavers.

Representatives of the group will be:

- Housing Manager
- Housing support representative
- Leaving Care Team Manager and UASC Team Manager
- Children Looked After Team Manager representative

- Housing Benefit representative
- Metropolitan Support Trust representative

In respect of 16 and 17 year olds requiring accommodation, the statutory guidance (issued under s7, LASSA 1970) - *Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation*, post the *Southwark [2009]* judgment, emphasises that it is the responsibility of Children's Services to assess their holistic needs including needs for accommodation. This guidance has been appended to the Joint Protocol on Homeless 16 and 17 year olds for staff in Children's Services and in the Housing Assessment Team.

4. Legislative Framework

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 (CLCA 2000) and the Homelessness Act 2002 (HA 2002) are designed to ensure that local authority children's services and housing departments work together to ensure that the accommodation needs of care leavers are met. *Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010* and the accompanying statutory guidance, together issued as *Vol 3 to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regs - Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (Oct 2010)*. The new guidance (which is mandatory, unless exceptional reasons justify a variation, as it is issued under s7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970) and the 2010 Regs came into force on 1.4.2011, support effective transitions and services for Careleavers.

The Housing Act 2002 states that a young person has a priority need for accommodation if he or she is:

- A person under 21 who was (but is no longer) Looked After by the local authority between the ages of 16 and 18 (except relevant students).
- A person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been Looked After by the local authority.

1.3 The C(LC)A 2000 Regulations and Guidance also detail how the local authority strategy for care leavers should take into account:

- the diverse accommodation and support needs of care leavers
- the capacity to offer young people a degree of choice of accommodation
- existing and planned provision of safe affordable accommodation
- gaps in provision
- the need for contingency arrangements

4. Equality and Diversity

The equality and diversity policies of Harrow Borough Council must underpin the way agencies address the needs of care leavers. Housing and children's services value diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity and access to suitable accommodation for all young people, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, culture, faith or disability.

The sharing of information between agencies is undertaken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Sharing Code of Practice.

5. Eligibility

Young people aged 16 to 21 (or up to 24 if in further/higher education), who have housing, or support needs and who have left or are due to leave the care of the local authority.

Following the Hillingdon Judgement this protocol will apply to Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers who qualify for a leaving care service and have been granted refugee status or indefinite leave to remain.

Under current policies care leavers identified under local quota arrangements are eligible under band B of the local Allocations Scheme , thereby preventing the need for care leavers to go through the homeless route.

The housing department will offer 25 units for careleavers during 2012/2013.

6. Process

Children Looked After aged 17.5 will be nominated subject to the successful completion of the Lifeskills Programme and will have a completed referral and needs assessment
The referral nomination will be co-ordinated by the Leaving Care Team and UASC Team administrative support officer
These referral nominations for the LOCATA scheme will be forwarded to the housing provision manager by 1st March each year
The careleaver will be offered an interview to meet a housing officer to discuss their nomination and confirm suitability
Once the careleaver reaches 18 they will be offered a LOACTA reference number and given advice as to the bidding process
The careleaver will bid for a unit/tenancy via <http://www.locata.org.uk/> for a 3 month period
If no bids are made or the 3 months timescales elapses, a direct offer may be made to the care leaver
When a unit/tenancy is confirmed, the young person will make arrangements to move into their property and within a 3 week period, subject to the tenancy agreement
The careleaver will be supported to make an application for suitable benefits (where eligible). Children & Families department, will support the careleavers benefits for a 6 week period. If no application is made, the tenancy may be withdrawn and the young person may forfeits their entitlement and may be evicted
Tenancy support and advice will be available by the Leaving Care Team and Metropolitan Support Trust

Children & Families department and Housing department will support careleavers in adhering to this process and successful bidding.

Housing and children's services will jointly agree local service outcomes and outputs that are monitored.

7. Support

All young people aged 16 to 21 (or up to 24 if in higher education or disabled) leaving care who are eligible, relevant or former relevant will have an assessment of need and pathway plan, that will identify needs, services and resources to support the young person.

The pathway plan will detail accommodation needs and the type of housing related support that the young person may require in order to successfully maintain a tenancy. All pathway plans must include a contingency plan. These are reviewed at least every six months.

The Lifeskills Programme is introduced for all young people at 14, or when they come into care if older than 14.

Metropolitan Support Trust (MST) will offer weekly support initially with a new tenant and support the young person with setting up their bills, managing their finances and any other advice as required. MST will provide support to young people from 6 months to 2 years, depending on the young persons needs. Social Workers will complete referral forms once the young person has signed their tenancy.

The housing department should contribute to the review of pathway plans in terms of providing information to Social Workers, especially with regard to anti social behaviour, rent arrears and any other concerns. The careleavers sub group will review support plans and identify any careleavers at risk of eviction.

Any young people at risk of eviction must be highlighted and escalated to respective team managers.

Consultation should take place between agencies, and agreement reached, prior to any formal action being taken to end a tenancy.

8. Accommodation Standards

Each empty property will meet the Health and Safety standards legally required to let Social Housing (please see appendix 1).

9. Dispute Resolution

Any difference of opinion over areas of responsibility and proposed action should initially be dealt with by the caseworker in each respective department. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the matter should be referred jointly to the housing manager and the team manager (leaving care) for a decision. The Careleavers & Housing sub group may also assist to resolve any dispute. If the matter remains unresolved, the matter must be escalated to the respective service managers for Children Looked After Service and Housing.

10. Review

This protocol will be reviewed annually by the Careleavers & Housing sub group and ratified by the CLA Life Chances Forum.

CLAservice/LCT/Sept2012

APPENDIX D

CLA & Care Leavers 'day to day' recognitions:

Name	Team	Recognition	Date letter sent
	CLA 1	Football scholarship in Woking FC	25/11/11
	CLA 2	Host CLA & Careleavers celebration of achievement awards	17/11/11
	UASC	1 st year University	Nov 2011
	UASC	1 st year University	Nov 2011
	UASC	1 st year University	Nov 2011
	CLA 1	Behaviour & attendance certificate from school	April 2012
	CLA 1	Work experience	April 2012
	CLA 1	Contribution to Beyond Limits and ministerial consultation	May 2012
	UASC	Emotional resilience course and managing child care	May 2012
	UASC	London Metropolitan University from 9/2012 to study Sports Science	May 2012
	UASC	Football tournament in Ireland	May 2012
	CLA 1	Progress with stability & placement	July 2012
	CLA 2	Enrolling into College	September 2012
	CLA 2	GSCEs	September 2012
	UASC	VTEC distinction grades	October 2012
	UASC	Deaflympics team GB selection	October 2012
	CLA 1	Medal following school Uni trip & quiz	October 2012