

REPORT FOR: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date of Meeting:	18 th December 2012
Subject:	Apprenticeships for Children Looked After and Young People who are Leaving Local Authority Care
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mitzi Green, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	N/A
Enclosures:	X16 interim report October 2012

1.0 Summary and Recommendations

- This report seeks to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel about how children looked after and young people leaving care will be supported with access to apprenticeships in Harrow.
- Panel members are invited to consider recommendations contained in section 3.11 and give guidance on subsequent Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decision making arrangements.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Children looked after (CLA) and young people who are leaving care (care leavers) must be supported by Harrow Council, as Corporate Parents to support them to achieve economic wellbeing

2.2 In order to support apprenticeships for CLA and young people leaving care, more effective communication and partnership working network needs to be established with Early Intervention Service and The Xcite Team in Economic Development. The Chair of the CLA Life Chances Forum (who is also an officer member of the Corporate Parenting Panel) has begun to develop a positive relationship to support the role of the Council as Corporate Parents. The intention will be to promote and support CLA and young people leaving care to have apprenticeship opportunities more available and integrate this with the Lifeskills Programme and transition to adulthood.

2.3 The terms of reference for the CLA Life Chances Forum focus on improving the life chances and outcomes for CLA. The forum is to scrutinise current processes, maximise the benefit of local partnerships and address specific issues to support apprenticeships. An integral aspect of this work will be to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of CLA and care leavers.

2.4 Representatives of the CLA Life Chances Forum and partnership with Early Intervention is:

- CLA Service Manager
- Children's Placement Service Manager
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Early Intervention Service Manager
- Leaving Care Team Manager
- CLA Team Manager
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Team Manager
- CLA Nurse practitioner
- Children with Disabilities Team Service Manager
- Harrow Foster Carer's Association
- "Beyond Limits" Child in Care Council
- Independent Visitor Scheme co-ordinator

3.0 Issues

Children Looked After and young people leaving care have require additional support to help with transition to adulthood and opportunities in developing work experience and apprenticeship opportunities to enable better opportunities and more permanent employment. These vulnerable groups do not achieve as well academically as their peers who are not looked after or leaving care and academic achievement is consistently poorer.

3.1 Please see Appendix A regarding the x16 Project.

3.2 Apprenticeships and work experience placements provide young people with skills, experience, expertise and an opportunity to develop and build upon with their curriculum vitae and enable a valuable reference for permanent employment. As Corporate parents and the largest employer within the borough, we should provide more opportunities and an integrated approach with existing schemes and initiatives.

3.3 The Sustainable Procurement policy was adopted in October 2011. Since then 28 companies have agreed to take on 35 apprentices to help deliver contracts. This includes highways contractor May Gurney (6), housing repairs and maintenance contractors Slade and Linbrooks (16) and gas contractor Quality Heating Services (3). The 24 different firms within the Corporate Repairs & Maintenance and Capital Frameworks will now compete on price for specific contracts. Each has committed to taking on apprentices based on contract value (one apprentice per £1m to £3m of contract spend), creating a likely total of around 10 apprentices.

3.4 The council is using its role as an enabler to create apprenticeships through the planning process. In the last 12 months this has generated apprenticeships with Home Group at the Rayners Lane Development and with Catalyst on the Mill Farm development. Section 106 agreements have been finalised on the Lyon Road site providing financial contribution for the employment and training with Whichford. This will provide resources to support the placement of apprentices following the commencement of development. Negotiations are in place with Land Securities providing financial contribution for the employment and training on the "Kodak" site. An employment and training plan will be agreed to provide resources to support the placement of apprentices on site. An independent evaluation of the construction training initiative funded through the Honey Pot Land development

3.5 We would want to ensure that we meet our responsibilities in respect of legislation and Corporate Parents to promote and support the leisure activities and participation for CLA and young people leaving care.

3.6 Apprenticeships and Work Experience Programmes

The X16 Programme was launched in September 2012, offering work experience placements to vulnerable groups. Dedicated spaces were offered to CLA and careleavers, Please see appendix A, which is a 3-month review prepared by Programme Coordinator, Sarah Davies, from the Youth Development Team in Early Intervention Service .

3.7 Outstanding CLA Success in X16

This is a case summary of a CLA young person on the x16 programme:

RM is a resident of Harrow Council Semi Independent Unit. He is 17 years old and been in the care system since he was ten years old. Despite a Level One Certificate in Painting & Decorating (his only qualification) he was unsure of his employment pathway. He shared no interests and displayed low aspirations apart from aiming to see his estranged daughter.

RM started the Catering Assistant role at Harrow Council's Retreat and made excellent progress Week 1-5. RM displayed enthusiasm to learn, reliability, motivated other X16 peers and an overall responsible attitude to work and learning. RM was on bail for an offence committed before the start of X16, his commitment deteriorated during the period immediately prior to sentencing. His attendance and professional communication slipped. He behaved more erratically. He went 'missing' from his placement in Honeypot Lane and missed work experience hours. Despite this change he maintained 100% attendance at the training day. Since being sentenced we have seen stability return. Fully supported by the team in Retreat, RM is attending his work placement regularly.

The December issue of Harrow People will feature Xcite Employment Package and focuses on X16 graduate RM. The article (agreed by RM) reads very positively. He opted for an inside slot and declined to be on the cover. Despite being on track to complete the X16 Programme, RM is not employment ready, but displays growing job readiness skills which need nurturing in a supportive environment. Economic Development, X16 and The Catering Department are currently exploring pre-apprenticeship opportunities for RM to remain in his placement in Harrow's staff canteen for further 12-months and currently researching the cost.

RM is on track to gain two good employment references, Certificate in Employability and an up-to-date CV.

3.8 Access and opportunity

As Corporate Parents, it is important that we enable our CLA and young people to use all services and facilities operated by the Council, to promote engagement, healthy living and aspirations. CLA and careleavers are the most disadvantaged group in our communities, so it is important that we demonstrate our responsibility as Corporate Parents and ensure our CLA and young people leaving care have the opportunity and access to services and facilities that would otherwise be too costly to participate with.

3.9 Life Skills Programme & Healthy living

In supporting CLA readiness for apprenticeships and developing skills for training and employment, the Life Skills Programme will ensure consideration and opportunity is made available to CLA. The Life Skills Programme provides an individual programme tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances of all care leavers to equip them with the necessary skills, confidence and experience to live independently.

3.10 In partnership with the Virtual Head Teacher, the X16 Programme Coordinator from Youth Development Team in Early Intervention service will draft an employment readiness module for the Lifeskills Programme This will focus on Work readiness preparation including building self belief, aspiration and resilience for a greater chance of securing employment for CLA.

3.11 Proposed Recommendations

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to consider the following recommendations in order to address the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities for children looked after and care leavers:

- a) To support all CLA and young people leaving care to have access to apprenticeships
- b) Support CLA Life Chances Forum to establish integrated apprenticeship program

- c) To support the development of a lifeskills unit regarding preparation and readiness for employment is prepared
- d) To support the collective endeavours of the CLA Life Chances Forum and task them with the responsibility for developing clear operational systems and processes for monitoring and reviewing how the access to leisure project and partnership with Community Services for CLA and young people leaving care will be addressed by the Council

4.0 Environmental Impact

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

4.1 Financial Implications

Apprenticeship schemes are expensive, costing £8-£15K for one placement. Costs differ depending on age and vulnerability of the person.

There are only 2 Apprenticeships currently in Harrow. Key learning from X16 suggests a Pre-apprenticeship programme aimed at a level 1 learner would be more successful. Economic Development and X16 are currently researching the implications and possibility of a pre-apprenticeship being offered to a CLA as an extension of a current X16 placement.

Currently there are several funding opportunities, particularly for 16-17 year old vulnerable young people who are NEETs (Not in employment education or training). For example London councils are offering up to £100k for 32 boroughs to support hardest to help youth into apprenticeship and employment with the Voluntary Sector.

4.2 Risk Management Implications

All related risks are recorded in the Children's Services risk register. There is a significant reputational risk from a poor inspection of social care, where support to children looked after and young people leaving care are crucial to mitigate risks and demonstrate developing practice and procedure support to this cohort.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler

on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 5 December 2012

Name: Helen Ottino

on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 5 December 2012

5.0 Contact Details and Background Papers

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**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE*

*(for completion by Democratic
Services staff only)*