

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	1 October 2014
Subject:	Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training.
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer, Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Simon Brown
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training Report.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the performance of young people in education, employment and training at the 31st May 2014. It identifies the barriers to accessing opportunities and the support available.

Recommendations:

Panel is to note the report.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

The duties that local authorities have towards their care leavers are set out in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Young Persons Act, 2008 and the 2011 Planning Transitions to adulthood for care leavers.

To close the gap in education attainment and employment outcomes for young people in and from care and other young people, local authorities must strive to create opportunities for young people to learn and develop new skills.

Corporate parents must ensure they raise the aspirations they have for their young people. This means providing on-going support to help young people think about and plan for their future, educational and employment careers and ensure they receive the personal and financial support to achieve their potential.

Options considered

None

Background

A good standard of education is a key driver towards achieving positive employment outcomes in adulthood. However there remains a significant gap between the educational achievements of care leavers and their peers.

Current Situation

In October 2012, the Department for Education launched the **Care Leavers' Charter** - a contract between local authorities and young people leaving care which sets out the support they can expect up to the age of 25. There has been a clear improvement in the quality and value of the Pathway Plan Reviews which are much more robust and outcome focused with a clear pathway regarding education, training and employment.

The **Children in Care and Care Leavers Partnership Strategy 2013/15** sets out how we, as a Council and as a partnership, will work to achieve our shared ambitions for children and young people in our care and care leavers. This department is currently working in partnership with various organisations such as DWP, Care to Work programmes, in house providers and our dedicated CFBT, careers advisor, providing care leavers with work experience, apprenticeships and other training opportunities.

The report clearly indicates a steady improvement over the last 6 months in those engaged in education training and employment and highlights that the current strategies in place are working effectively.

Implications of the Recommendation

The Leaving Care and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Team is part of the Children and Families Department within Targeted Services.

The team structure is as follows, 1 Team manager, 2 Senior Practitioners, 4 Qualified Social Workers, 4 Social Care Assistants, 1 CFBT worker (careers advisor), 1 Customer Support Officer and 1 Administrator.

We currently have 173 young people under our service; including children looked after and care leavers.

Referrals to the team come via the Children Looked After Service once the young person turns 18 and the Croydon rota. On average we receive two referrals a month through the Croydon rota.

Financial Implications

Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training is funded within existing budgets.

Risk Management Implications

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 procedures to support to this cohort.

Research and inspection reports show that the quality of support care leavers receive is patchy and that their journey through the first decade of adult life is often disrupted, unstable and troubled. They often struggle to cope and this can lead to social exclusion, long term unemployment or involvement in crime.

Equalities implications

Around 10,000 young people leave care in England each year aged between 16-18 years old. They leave home at a younger age and have more abrupt transitions to adulthood than their peers. Unlike their peers who normally remain in the family home, care leavers will often be living independently at age 18.

A good standard of education is a key driver towards achieving positive employment outcomes in adulthood. However, there remains a significant gap between the educational achievements of care leavers and their peers.

The 2009 statutory guidance 'The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead ds Member for Children Services and the Director of Children Services', highlights the need for Local Authorities to work corporately to improve the well-being of looked after children and care leavers, to make their needs a priority and seek the same outcomes that any reasonable caring parent would want for their children.

Council Priorities

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for families
- Making a difference for communities

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 16/09/14		
Name: Banaz Draey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 23-09-2014		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Naiha Ali, Senior Practitioner, Leaving Care and UASC Services
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Background Papers: None