

Corporate Parenting Panel

25.06.14

Report on:

Care Leavers Employment, Education & Training [EET]

Date: June 2014

1. Introduction

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. Information from the Children Right's Director's surveys on care leavers and Children in Care Council (CICC) meetings show that many care leavers feel that they leave care too early and often feel isolated and lonely.

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. For example, 34% of all care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at age 19 in 2013 compared to 15.5% of 18 year olds in the general population.

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.

Care leavers are less likely to have achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs (37% of looked after children compared to 80% of non-looked after children in 2012). Only 6% of care leavers go into higher education compared to 23% of their peers at aged 18.

A big priority for government is, therefore, to ensure that children in care and care leavers get the support they need from schools, colleges, universities and local authorities to maximise their educational attainment and employment opportunities
(*Care Leaver Strategy, Oct 2013*)

2. The responsibilities of the CLA team

The team is responsible for children and young people who are looked after by Harrow Council who have a plan of permanency by way of long term fostering or adoption. When a young person reaches the age of 18 they are transferred to the Leaving Care Team.

3. The responsibilities of the Leaving Care and UASC team

The team is responsible for young people who are preparing for their move into independence and further education, employment or training under the Leaving Care Act 2000. They support unaccompanied asylum children under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

4. Young people who are in employment, education or training (EET)

NOTE: The data below is accurate as of May 2014.

Age category	EET	NEET	EET - Split
16 years old care leavers Total= 26	24	2	16- School (GCSE) 1 – Sixth Form 1 -College 4-ESOL course 1 – Prison 1 – Harrow Tuition
17 years old care leavers Total= 24	19	5	10- College/Apprenticeship 3 – 6 th Form 1- Training Provider 3- ESOL course 2- Part/Full-time Employment
18 years old care leavers Total= 31	24	7	7 - ESOL course 2 - 6 th Form 8 - enrolled in college 1 -Training Provider 1 - in Prison 1 – University 4 – Part / Full Time Employment
19 years old care leavers Total = 39	30	9	3 – ESOL course 1 – Training Provider 11 - Enrolled in college/apprenticeship 9 – Part / Full-time employment 3- Prison 2 – University 1 – X16 / working
20 years old care leavers Total = 38	24	14	2 - ESOL course 7 - Part / Full Time Employment 4 - Training Provider 9 - Enrolled in college/apprenticeship 2 – University
21 years old care leavers Total = 11	10	1	1- ESOL course 2 -Enrolled in college/ apprenticeship 1 - V-Talent 4 - Part / Full- Time employment 2 – Prison

22-24 years old care leavers	11	1	2 - University 5 - College / Apprenticeship 1- VTalent 1 – Prison 1 – Full-time Employment (case to be closed) 1 – case to be closed
Total = 12			
Total 182			

5. What do we do to support young people to maintain their EET status

- Social workers actively engage, encourage and support young people in their chosen field of education, employment and training.
- Pathway plans and reviews are now being chaired by the Team Manager or Senior Practitioners, to ensure there is effective management input and oversight, to ensure the plans are multi- agency and of a high quality.
- Recognising the achievements of young people including financial reward in accordance with the Leaving Care Charter.
- All young people who are EET are entitled to travel and lunch money in addition to their weekly allowance or subsistence payments.
- Regular monitoring of attendance and progress and early identification of any difficulties.

We have 7 young people attending University studying a range of subjects, including mechanical engineering, politics, law and business studies. The young person studying Law was provided with work experience through Legal Services in Harrow before taking up his place at Cambridge University.

A number of young people are attending college and their studies include construction, art and design, child care, hospitality, drama, sport and IT.

Of those young people who are currently attending college, 5 young people plan to progress onto university undertaking, sports, teaching, business, radiography.

The young people who are in employment include the banking sector, social work, education (learning and development mentor), working for a car dealership having successfully completed an apprenticeship, and for an accident claim company.

We have a number of young people who aspire to find employment in catering, retail, estate agency, engineering, electrical installations once they complete their course and are being supported by the careers advisor, CFBT (based at Youth stop) and social worker.

In conjunction with Harrow libraries 3 work placement opportunities will be offered to CLA and care leavers over the summer period (this will be offered to both EET/NEET young people).

6. Young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Evidence shows that young people leaving care tend to be disadvantaged when trying to find employment for the following reasons: low skills, poor education, health issues and little knowledge of employability skills and the labour market. Unemployment comes at a high social cost and is associated with social exclusion, poverty, poor health, homelessness, crime, isolation and loss of skills and motivation.

7. What are the barriers/issues:

- **Education** - Children are leaving care with a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills and are around four times more likely to be expelled.
- **Skills** - Young care leavers often lack the skills and self-esteem necessary to impress employers and as a result can find themselves trapped in long term unemployment.
- **Drug and Alcohol** - Almost a third of young people misuse drugs and alcohol within a year of leaving care [Dixon, J. (2008) *Young People Leaving Care : Health Wellbeing and Outcomes*]. One study found that over half of the individuals with a history of care had used cannabis in the past month, with 15% having used ecstasy and 10% having used cocaine.
- **Teenage Parenthood** - Children who have been in care are almost two and a half times more likely to become teenage parents, compared with those brought up with both natural parents. One study found that a quarter of young women leaving care are pregnant or already mothers, and nearly half become mothers by the age of 24 (*communitycare.co.uk, 2008*).
- **Custody** - Children in care represent less than 1% of all children yet almost 40% of people in custody under 21 were in care as children. 27% of the adult prison population and half of all those in custody under 25 were in the care system [*Voluntary & Community Sector (2010) United We Stand Manifesto*]. Custodial sentences create further barriers to employment as employers often don't want to hire candidates with a criminal record.
- **Health** - One of the major barriers to employment faced by care leavers is health, including a lack of emotional well-being, multiple mental health issues and a deficiency in mental health support. Around 55% of care leavers suffer, or have suffered from depression [*Centre for Social Justice (2008) Breakthrough Britain: Couldn't Care Less*] and many lack confidence and self-esteem. Mental health issues and depression can be a huge barrier to employment due to their symptoms and the frequent need for long term and intensive support.

8. There are 4 different groups within the NEET cohort:

1. **Those not available for learning** who will be deemed as having "reasonable excuse" for not participating e.g. due to pregnancy, maternity leave, illness.
2. **Core/sustained NEET**, those with long term and complex barriers to learning.
3. **At risk NEET**, those who are undecided, dissatisfied with current opportunities **OR** with some barriers to learning eg low qualifications.

4. **Open to learning** young people with no discernible barriers to education or training.

The majority of young people who are looked after and NEET fall within categories 1-3.

Age category	EET	NEET	Reason for NEET
16 years old care leavers	24	2	2- Unaccompanied Minors who have arrived in the UK recently
17 years old care leavers	19	5	1- Recently dismissed from employment 1 – Mental Health 1- Refuses to engage 1- Offending / YOT 1- Emotional issues
18 years old care leavers	24	7	3 – Non engaging 2- Mental Health 2 – Full Time mother
19 years old care leavers	30	9	2 – Mental Health & Learning Difficulties 1 - Mental Health 1 –Interview with the Prince’s Trust on 23/06/14 1- Full-time mother 1 Physical health issues 2 -Unemployed, actively looking for work 1 - Being re-assessed for his age at request of solicitor
20 years old care leavers	24	14	1 - Withdrawn from college due to low attendance 3 - Full-time mother 1 - Low self esteem, low confidence 1 - Due to start a music course next week 2 – Mental Health 1 – Previously non engaging, in and out of prison, now engaging with Michael Beckford 1 – New Father wants to spend time with newborn 2 -Missing young person 1- Physical Health issues 1 – Non Engaging
21 years old care leavers	10	1	1 – Case to be closed (all rights exhausted)
Total	129	39	

9. NEET to EET

16 year olds:

The two new UASC arrivals will be supported to undertake an ESOL course starting in September 2014.

17 year olds:

The young person that was recently dismissed will be undertaking an ESOL course over the summer.

The young person with emotional issues plans to return to college in September to retake GCSE's.

The young person involved with YOT plans to start college in September undertaking business.

The young person with mental health hopes to engage in employment sometime in the future.

18 year olds:

The young person who is a full-time mother hopes to start college in September undertaking a nail technician course.

The other full-time mother hopes to return to EET but not sure yet what she would like to do.

1 non-engaging young person now hopes to find employment and one is planning to return to college in September undertaking BTEC Business.

19 year olds:

There 2 young people actively looking for work, one continues to find a job as a nail technician and the other hopes to start university in September.

The young person with physical health needs plans to return to college to undertake ESOL.

The young person who is a mother hopes to undertake a fashion course in September.

One young person has an interview with the Prince's Trust on 23/06/14 and will hopefully start this course the following week.

20 year olds:

The new father hopes to find work and is actively looking for employment.

One young person will be starting a music course.

The young person with low attendance hopes to return to college in September undertaking BTEC in IT.

The non-engaging young person plans to move to Sheffield in August and undertake employment.

The young person with low self-esteem wants to undertake a FA football coaching and is being supported to find a course.

The young person previously in and out of prison is actively looking for work with Michael Beckford.

21 year olds:

All 21 year olds are engaged in EET.

10. Activity to reduce the number of young people who are NEET

- A periodic panel has been established to individually review all young people who are NEET. The panel is chaired by the Divisional Director, Service Manager, Team Manager and Senior Practitioners for Looked After Children/Leaving Care & UASC. The next meeting is planned for early Autumn 2014.
- The purpose of the panel is to identify and minimise the blocks to engagement and participation thereby helping young people to access a range of opportunities.

Following presentation at the panel each young person will have a detailed action plan with actions, timescales and responsibilities clearly identified and agreed.

- Ensuring that all young people have an up to date aspirational pathway plan. Work is currently underway with the Virtual School to strengthen pathway planning.
- Increasing the skills of the staff to engage with young people who are NEET e.g. Motivational Interviews.
- Increased frequency of visiting to young people who are NEET.
- Weekly performance management reports to track improved performance.
- Engagement of young people with the X16 programmes attached report.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the wide range of services available and to support young people and facilitate access to such services.

11. Dedicated CLA / LCT & UASC Careers Advisor

Aim

To provide direct support to NEET young people 16-21 years (25 if SEN) who are in the care of Harrow Council. Support to focus on out-reach work enabling this group of vulnerable young people to overcome barriers which may be impacting on their personal, social, educational and economic progression and ability to become EET and reach their full potential.

How is this achieved?

This is achieved through regular contact with the young person, starting with an initial guidance interview to establish the young person interests, needs and barriers to learning. This is then followed up with a clear SMART action plan which identifies support to be offered. This is reviewed and monitored during the transition from NEET to EET. The desired timescale for transition from NEET to EET is over a 3 month period which is reviewed.

The CFBT worker holds a caseload of 15-20 young people offering intensive support to the most disengaged and hard to reach young people but also those ready to engage or through transition from college to university or employment.

The CFBT advisor also maintains contact with those supported into EET to ensure stability and continuity. The key aim around those already engaged in EET is prevention of drift and this is achieved by the CFBT supporting social workers, engagement with education providers and effective Pathway Planning.

There has been a significant shift in working together with the Virtual School with much more joint working, information sharing and presence at key meetings.

12. Total number of care leavers aged 16 to 21 years looked after by Harrow Children and Families

Age category	EET Oct 2013	EET in May 2014	NEET Oct 2013	NEET May 2014	EET % Oct 2014	EET % May 2014	NEET % Oct 2014	NEET % May 2014
16 yr old care leavers	21	24	4	2	84%	92%	16 %	8%
17 yr old care leavers	22	19	7	5	76%	79%	24%	21%
18 yr old care leavers	35	24	8	7	81.3%	77%	18.6%	23%
19 yr old care leavers	31	30	19	9	62%	77%	38%	23%
20 yr old care leavers	19	24	14	14	57.5%	63%	42.4%	37%
21 yr old care leavers	9	10	17	1	34.6%	91%	65.3%	9%
Total	137	131	69	38	66.5%	78%	33.4%	22%
					11.5% increase in EET YP		11.4% decrease in NEET YP	

13. Three Inhouse Projects available to support young people into EET



a) Harrow Council in partnership with vInspired is continuing to run a new, exciting youth development project called 'vInspired Talent'. The programme is funded by vInspired and aims to recruit at least 40% NEET young people as well as improve achievements of unemployed and disadvantaged young people.

AIMS:

- For participants to progress into sustained employment, education and/or training through voluntary work placements and a Level 2 accredited qualification
- Engage young people in the community through volunteering
- Develop self-confidence and build on leadership skills

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The 24 weeks (6 months) will contain the following modules:

- Induction and Team building
- Placement
- Level 2 Qualification
- Social Action project
- Support and Progression

Participants will:

- Gain a minimum level 2 qualification
- Design and deliver a social action project
- Receive a £250 personal development grant after completing the programme
- Receive up to £30 a week allowance
- Support given while entering into employment, education and training

b) LANGUAGE IS NOT A BARRIER (LINAB PROJECT)

Objective:

From Autumn 2013, this new project aims to focus specifically on working with unaccompanied asylum seekers to provide them with individual and group tutoring sessions. It will also offer them the opportunity to enjoy leisure activities with one another, in an attempt to combine education and leisure for a good balance of both, as both mental and physical stimulation are important in encouraging better learning environments.

The education provided will be based on the needs of every individual, focusing on basic Mathematics, English and Science. Intermediate and advanced levels of education will also be delivered depending on the needs of the young people.

Implementation:

The educational workshops will be held at the Gayton Hotel. They will take place twice a week for three hours each evening. One evening each week will also be allocated for leisure and sporting activities.

The staff will be supported by VTalent volunteers to help deliver the sessions. It will also ensure that each individual has an allocated time of individual learning, so they are able to address problem areas and share their concerns.

Evaluation Plan:

Throughout the nine-week programme, the staff will evaluate the success of each individual session they deliver or help to facilitate. These accounts will include the level of engagement of the young people, whether the approach was useful in helping the young people to understand a specific topic better, what was not a useful approach and any suggestions noted by the young people.

These accounts will then be evaluated week by week to consider the different suggestions and changes that need to be made or to consider issues that need to be resolved. After the course

of the nine weeks, these accounts will be looked into again at further detail to measure the success of the programme, whether the objectives were reached and the changes that could be made to improve the programme.

The impact of this project has been such that Harrow Council Children and Families Directorate has commissioned the project to continue through 2014/2105 providing a budget of £6,000. The core club runs 2 evenings a week, and now includes weekend trips in to London for a range of cultural activities. Educational achievement, self esteem and integration remain key aims for the project together with providing a gateway for young people to other activities and offers. Young people who have participated in this programme are now becoming involved with delivery.



c) X16 is an employment and job readiness programme targeted at our most vulnerable 16 – 24 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), with a strong focus on young people we have a corporate parent responsibility for.

The programme has supported two groups each of 15 young people from October-December and April – June 2013 and from September 2013 will operate on an extended model with additional funding from the City of London Corporation.

The programme helps young people build resilience, knowledge, skills and gain confidence to:

- Apply for jobs, attend interview and begin work, or
- Apply for further training and begin further or continued education, or
- Apply for apprenticeships, attend interviews and begin apprenticeships

Who Is X16 For?

16-25 year old NEET's living or socialising in Harrow, priority allocation will be given to:-

- Young people for whom we have corporate parental responsibility
- Clients receiving services from Harrow Children and Families Directorate
- Young people need to be job ready

Key elements of the programme are:

- To recruit young people to the programme who have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an apprenticeship within 4 months.
- Intensive focus on first stage support with a new 8-week intensive personal and social development programme addressing personal resilience, character building and life skills. This will include a 3-day residential.
- Increased resources into engaging with targeted sector-specific employers, into pre-work experience preparation, including taster days and visits.

- Completion of recognised training directly complementing the young person's chosen sector of work, for example First Aid Training.
- Increased resources for mentoring support throughout the programme and 3-month post programme support
- Flexibility of delivery to enable tailored support to individuals; links to apprenticeships and where possible, specific support to address any barriers to employment – i.e. Housing, debt or health
- Stronger voluntary sector involvement in project at all stages

A programme steering group including delivery partners, Social Workers and ex-care leavers has been set up to oversee the project.

Taking X16 Forward

Youth Development, Economic Development and Ignite Trust have been successful with a joint application of £100K from City of London Corporation's Get Young People Working – The Youth Offer.

We aim to offer tailored one to one and group support to 80 NEET young people aged 16-24 yrs recruited to the programme over 2 years, delivering 2 programmes a year as follows:

- Programme 1: September 2013 – December 2013
- Programme 2: January 2014 – April 2014
- Programme 3: May 2014 – August 2014
- Programme 4: September 2014 – December 2014

14. Conclusion

There are some key challenges in the service to ensure that young people are supported in the transition to independence and are able to make full use of the opportunities available to them. There is a detailed action plan and rigorous management scrutiny of the performance within the service aimed at ensuring the performance of NEET to EET improves significantly thereby giving young people the best possible start into adulthood.

Since last October there has been an increase in EET and a decrease in NEET young people. The team and careers advisor continue to work hard to ensure better outcomes for young people. Taking this forward we are looking at offering a drop-in service once a week to care leavers which will be undertaken by the careers advisor, hopefully offering flexibility and more opportunity for young people to access advice and guidance on education, training and employment.