

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014**

|   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of paper:</b>  | <b>PATHWAY PLANNING</b>   |                                      |
| <b>Director(s)/<br/>Corporate Director(s):</b>  | Alison Michalska, Corporate Director<br>Helen Blackman, Director – Children’s<br>Social Care  | <b>Wards affected:</b><br><b>All</b> |
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| <b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s)<br/>(if relevant)</b>  | <b>1<sup>st</sup> July 2014</b>   |                                      |
| <b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>  |   |                                      |
| Cutting unemployment by a quarter   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Cut crime and anti-social behaviour   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Help keep your energy bills down  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Good access to public transport   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Nottingham has a good mix of housing  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Support early intervention activities   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |
| <b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>  |   |                                      |
| <p><b>This report includes the current issues in respect of the legislative duties required by Nottingham City Council. It focuses on the work required by social workers and the Personal Advisors in terms of the complexity of Pathway Planning and the importance of ensuring all young people have a robust quality Pathway Plan to ensure a smooth transition into adulthood.</b></p> |   |                                      |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b>   |   |                                      |
| <b>1</b>  | <b>The Board to continue to support and understand the required duties in respect of Pathway Planning.</b>  |                                      |

## **1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Nottingham City has a legislative duty to ensure all young people have a Pathway Plan that is recorded on the child's case file.
- 1.2 Recent Peer Review/Ofsted Inspection have highlighted the need for Nottingham City Council to provide a specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely plan that can better evidence outcomes for young people than the current document provides.

## **2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

- 2.1 In April 2011, new guidance was issued by Government to Local Authorities and Agencies who provided services to Care Leavers (The Children Act, 1989, Vol 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers). The guidance has been updated (May 20<sup>th</sup> 2014). The updated guidance gives further duties to Local Authorities to advise, assist and support the young person and foster carer when they wish to stay living together after the young person reaches their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The updated Transitions guidance also includes a new section related to access to records, and expanded guidance on Personal Advisors' role with young people who are not sure what course or training they may wish to take. "Young people do not need to have decided what education or training they would like to pursue. They can get in touch if they are wanting to pursue education or training and in such cases, the Personal Advisor should help the young person identify the best options suited to them" (3.56).

Authorities should also provide support to those young people who are experiencing 'practical or emotional difficulties' that are preventing them from entering education or training.

- 2.2 The main aims of these Regulations / Guidance is to ensure Care Leavers are provided with comprehensive personal support so that they can achieve their potential as they make their transition into adulthood.
- 2.3 Transition to adulthood can be a turbulent time and for many young adults, their transition to adulthood can be extended until they are emotionally and / or financially ready. However, young people from Care may not have this option, therefore, as corporate parents, responsible Authorities should provide support to Care Leavers in the same way reasonable parents provide support for their own children.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to prepare / review Pathway Plans and support Care Leavers as they make their transition to adulthood. This applies irrespective of any other services provided, e.g. if they are disabled, in custody or are an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC).
- 2.5 The Act requires that a Pathway Plan must be prepared for all eligible children and continued for all relevant and former relevant children. Each young person's Pathway Plan is derived from their Care Plan and sets out the actions to be taken by the Local Authority, the young person, their carers and the full range of agencies,

so that each young person is provided with the services they need to enable them to achieve their aspirations and make a successful transition to adulthood.

2.6 The new Pathway Plan proposed addresses the requirements of the Act:

- Young person's health and development (we aim to ensure young people, when they leave care, have a full medical history).
- Education, Training and Employment.
- Contact / Support networks.
- The young person's financial capabilities and money-management capacity.
- Young person's views.
- Input from parent / carers, providers of Housing, Independent Visitor, Personal Advisor, Health, Education, IRO.

The new Pathway Plan was presented to the Children in Care Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014. It received positive feedback from the young people who felt it contained clear targets. The new plan is still under development and (at the time of this report) is being reviewed by the Authority's legal team in order to ensure it is compliant with relevant legislation.

2.7 Nottingham City Council employs a dedicated Transitions Worker to work with young people, Adult Services, Carers, Social Workers and Personal Advisors to input into Pathway Planning for those young people presenting as requiring Adult Services to ensure a smooth transition and pathway. Nottingham City's Disabled Children's Team retain responsibility for formulating Pathway Planning for the young people they care-manage.

2.8 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children have both a 'leaving care' status and an immigration status, therefore, Pathway Planning is complex and challenging. This requires a triple planning model (Wade, Mitchell, Bayliss) that includes plans for staying in the UK, plans for those young people who have been refused permission to remain and those who may choose to return to their country of origin. Multi-dimensional pathway planning for these young people needs to be flexible and realistic. Local Authorities are responsible for UASC post-19 who are in appeal. This includes allocation of a Personal Advisor, accommodation, financial support.

2.9 From December 2012, Local Authorities have been responsible for those young people facing custodial sentences (Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012.) The LASPO extends Looked After status to all young people remanded into custody. Therefore, once eligible, there is an expectation Pathway Planning commences for these young people.

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, over 30 young people were remanded, with the majority of them becoming eligible for Care Leaver Services.

2.10 All young people eligible for a Pathway Plan must be allocated a Personal Advisor (PA). These are not qualified workers but have to possess the necessary skills and expertise to work with young people leaving care. Regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations sets out the function of a PA. These include providing information and support in relation to finances, housing, health, education, training and employment.

PAs are the key professional for coordinating Care Leaver support. All young people will have an allocated PA until the age of twenty-one or twenty-four and beyond if in full-time education.

- 2.11 In 2013, Nottingham City Council introduced a Life Skills Programme to promote semi-independence skills in an evidenced way for all young people. The booklet has been introduced to foster carers, residential staff both internally and externally placed.

Placement Services are looking to introduce this as part of Contracts to providers.

The feedback received has been very positive, both from carers and young people, but there remains further work to be done to strongly embed this as part of the practice for professionals working with young people.

- 2.12 Performance in respect of Pathway Plans has been a challenge. However, within the last six months, there has been increased performance in all key areas. Report (12<sup>th</sup> May) states; **83.8% eligible young people had compliant Pathway Plan and 99% of Care Leavers have compliant plan.**

### **3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

None

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

None

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)**

- 5.1 The implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 which came into force December 2012, has had an impact on placements, resources and Pathway Planning. Nottingham City Council has introduced a protocol to ensure services are delivered in a timely, efficient way to ensure young people receive a service relevant to their need.

### **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

This report does not include proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions.

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

**7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

7.1 None

**8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

8.1 The Children Act 1989, Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.