

Corporate Parenting Board
21st September 2020

Title of paper:	Care Leavers – Pathway Planning and Supporting Transitions	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman, Director for Children’s Integrated Services	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Clive Chambers, Head of Children in Care clive.chambers@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:		
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)		
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:		
Nottingham People		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Living in Nottingham		<input type="checkbox"/>
Growing Nottingham		<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect for Nottingham		<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving Nottingham Better		<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report explores the current operating environment for the Leaving Care Service and outlines developmental work that is underway to respond to this through the City’s Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) arrangements.		
Recommendation(s):		
1	To note the contents of the report.	
2	That members of Corporate Parenting Board consider whether there is further support that they could offer to support good transitions for care leavers into accommodation, education, employment or training and to promote the development of good services to meet their health and emotional needs.	

1 Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is a key mechanism for ensuring that Nottingham City Council discharges its statutory responsibilities towards Children in Care and Care Leavers. It is critical that members of the Corporate Parenting Board consider how they can work to promote good services for Care Leavers, which enable a successful transition to adulthood for our young people.

2 Background (including outcomes of consultation)

- 2.1 Care Leavers are young people who have been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday. Young people are entitled to support from the ages of 18 – 25 and the nature of this support is set out in their Pathway Plan. Up until the age of 21 there are statutory requirements about visiting frequencies and regular reviews of Pathway Plans. Post 21 years of age contact and Pathway Plan

review frequencies are dictated by the young person’s level of need. What this may mean in practice is that a young person over the age of 21 may not have contact with the service for long periods of time, but can request support at particularly difficult periods in their life.

- 2.2 Young people are entitled to Care Leavers support, irrespective of the reasons that they came into care. There is no differentiation between those young people who came into care due to safeguarding concerns and those who were remanded into care as a consequence of offending behaviour. This is an important position as it recognises the vulnerabilities of young people involved in serious criminality.
- 2.3 All Local Authorities have to publish the support that they offer to Care Leavers in something that is referred to as a Local Offer. Nottingham City Council’s Local Offer can be accessed via the following link –

www.asklion.co.uk/kb5/nottingham/directory/advice.page?id=wtrOogIUhDY

- 2.4 Local Authorities are responsible for the Care Leavers support for those children who were in their care, irrespective of where they live. We currently have children living in London and other parts of England and one young woman who will be undertaking university study in the USA.
- 2.5 On 27.08.20, there were 290 Nottingham City Care Leavers open to the Care Leavers Service. Of these 277 were under the age of 21, although it should be noted that other young people aged over 21 will also be receiving incidental support via the Duty Service. 278 young people had had their Pathway Plan reviewed within the past 6 months. Of those who hadn’t had their plan reviewed, the biggest single factor was difficulty in engaging with the young person, some of whom were in custody. A recent dip sample audit of Pathway Plans had identified a number of areas for development, which will be included in the Directorate’s ongoing Improvement Plan. This includes the review, in consultation with Care Leavers, of the Pathway Plan format. Feedback from Care Leavers and Personal Advisors has been that the current format is not young-person friendly and is not engaging.
- 2.6 Suitability of accommodation and employment, education and training (EET) status are key issues in the lives of care leavers.

	Nottingham City as of 27.08.20	Nottingham City 2019/20 Outturn	Statistical Neighbour Comparator 2019/20
Suitable Accommodation	88.6%	90%	86%
EET	58.2%	66%	53%

- 2.7 Of the 33 young people not in suitable accommodation, 25 are young people in custody. Custody cannot be considered suitable accommodation according to the definition we work to.
- 2.8 Although in many ways our performance is positive, the operating environment that the Leaving Care Service works in has become much more challenging as a consequence of Covid-19. We are already seeing an impact in relation to the availability of accommodation and anticipate a significant impact on EET opportunities for Care

Leavers. The challenges in relation to accommodation have served to exacerbate what was already a difficult situation, particularly for those young people who are not ready to live independently at the age of 18. There is no commissioned accommodation for care leavers in this situation which means that young people have to follow a route developed to meet the needs of homeless adults.

2.9 In response to these challenges, the service are working proactively with partners to respond and ensure our Care Leavers are supported.

2.10 Work with Barnardo's

- Barnardo's are a national children's charity that deliver a wide spectrum of services across the Country. One of their supporters left them a significant legacy, with the sole stipulation that the money had to be spent on services in Nottinghamshire and/or Nottingham City. Following consultation with a range of local agencies and children/young people, Barnardo's concluded that this legacy will have the biggest impact if used to support Care Leavers from Nottingham City. Barnardo's are fully involved in the work set out below.
- Although this funding is substantial there is a risk that it could quickly be used on services that are not sustainable. Given this, the focus is on using the funding for services that we can pilot, but only where there is a clearly identified potential source of sustainable funding. That said, improvements will not only have a positive impact on outcomes, it should create efficiencies by ensuring services are better designed to reduce crisis points.

2.11 Work with the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)

- The ICP have identified Care Leavers as one of its priority cohorts. The ICP brings together leaders from across services operating locally and so is an excellent opportunity to increase the engagement of other agencies in supporting local care leavers. We working closely with colleagues from a range of other organisations to focus on improving the local offer with regard to
 - Accommodation
 - Positive destinations, i.e. Employment, Education and Training opportunities
 - Transitions for those with mental health need.

SWOT analysis and key next steps for each of these area are appended to this report

- Linked to both of these work streams is a review of the commissioning arrangements for children's placements. This will focus on a range of issues, one of which is to move towards a more outcomes focussed model of commissioning semi-independent provision locally. This should promote more positive transitions to adulthood by ensuring young people are better prepared for this.

2.12 The final area of developmental work that is currently underway is work that was initiated with the Mental Health Foundation. This is a national charity that we were working with to develop a Big Lottery bid to fund services to promote positive mental health for children in care and care leavers. This bid had been successful in getting to

the final stage of the process however Big Lottery funding was ring fenced for services linked to Covid-19. We worked with the Mental Health Foundation to re-shape the bid to bring in additional resources to reduce care leaver isolation.

3 Other options considered in making recommendations

3.1 None

4 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)

4.1 Not applicable – all developmental opportunities will be progressed in line with financial advice and will be subject to further approvals processes.

5 Legal and Procurement colleague comments (including risk management issues, and legal, Crime and Disorder Act and procurement implications)

5.1 Not applicable – all developmental opportunities will be progressed in line with financial advice and will be subject to further approvals processes.

6 Strategic Assets & Property colleague comments (for decision relating to all property assets and associated infrastructure) (Area Committee reports only)

6.1 Not applicable – all developmental opportunities will be progressed in line with financial advice and will be subject to further approvals processes.

7 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

An EIA is not required because:

Where necessary, separate EIAs will be completed to progress developmental opportunities outlines in this report.

Yes

8 List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information

8.1 None

9 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

9.1 None

Appendix 1

ICP Care Leaver Priority – Develop a sustainable pathway to suitable accommodation for young people with additional support needs

The specific ask of the ICP is to **promote partnership working to develop a network of positive providers who can offer accommodation options for young people**

What is working well?

Internal semi-independent placements provide a good standard of accommodation and support that is cost effective

Staying put arrangements are in place

Nottingham City Council has a robust partnership with Nottingham City Homes that means Care Leavers have priority access to good quality accommodation

Work is underway in conjunction with Nottingham City Homes and Private Providers to ensure Care Leavers in Appeal regarding their Immigration status are provided with a good standard of accommodation that is cost effective.

We have a local housing provider that specializes in supporting the needs of the BAME community that has significant expertise in this area

What are we worried about? Dangers/Risks/Needs

Those young people assessed through the Pathway Planning process as not being able to, successfully sustain, their own tenancy. Currently there are no suitable options available to provide the support and accommodation for those young people post 18 who require this other than via the homelessness route, which is not appropriate for our Care Leavers.

Those young people who would benefit from the support provided, by living in a family setting, such as Supported Lodgings not currently available, to increase their confidence and independence skills and who cannot access a Staying put arrangement.

Commissioned semi-independence placements for young people aged sixteen to eighteen vary in their effectiveness to prepare young people for independence. Provision varies in terms of quality and cost and there are varied experiences of the support provided to the young people. This inevitably has negative implications for the quality of care, mental health, frequency of avoidable crises and involvement/ investment of crisis intervention agencies (police, EDT, crisis team) and eventually the long term outcome.

What are the next steps?

- Explore what works well elsewhere
- Care Leavers accommodation and support framework
 1. Prepare for reality of housing options
 2. Plan young people's accommodation and support options with them
 3. Reduce Housing crisis
 4. Access housing and support as needed
 5. Access and successfully manage longer term move on and support options

- Developing, piloting and rolling out of training package for semi-independence accommodation providers and their staff may be considered. This should be aiming at developing understanding and skills of the semi-independence providers, helping to develop effective, trauma informed, psychologically minded, mindful, risk aware, reflective and resilient care-settings across Nottingham city.
- Consider options for supported accommodation post 18.

Appendix 2

ICP Care Leavers Priority – Ensure support for positive destinations which includes Employment, Education and Training, is holistic and takes account of health and wellbeing

The specific ask of the ICP is **to promote aspiration and support those who wish to engage in EET**

What is working well?

The EET lead working as part of the Leaving Care team

Working with the two Futures workers as part of the Leaving Care team

Outcomes for care experienced young people are more positive than the national average

Our virtual school has engaged us in Unlock is a project that promotes aspiration for young people and can be used to provide mentoring opportunities for young people.

There is experience locally of delivering specifically tailored services for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (NEST)

Our virtual school has a Post-16 lead

What are we worried about? Dangers/Risks/Needs

Those care experienced young people furthest away from education/employment – perhaps not attended school for a long period of time – requiring support in basic English, Maths, IT and softer skills such as resilience, building self-esteem, confidence etc.

Options for those young people who are harder to reach, offending history, at risk of criminal exploitation

Ensuring appropriate support options for UASC young people

Outcomes in relation to higher education; ensuring the same options are available to care experienced young people if they choose to attend University outside of the area. (Linking in with accommodation options for holidays etc.)

Changing employment and education climate due to COVID 19 – skills gaps, changes to industry provision. There will be a further complication as these forums provide the best opportunity for some young people in care or who have left care to socially integrate.

Ensuring the support around positive destinations is holistic and takes into account mental health and wellbeing

Ensuring support and appropriate outcomes for those care experienced young people who choose to become parents (how success is measured? Outcomes in relation to their children?)

Issues in relation to identity and self-worth can contribute to young people in care lacking in aspiration and create a negative trajectory for them. We need to promote aspiration through supporting young people to develop self-worth, belonging and positive identity

For young people from BAME communities it is really important we offer access to positive role models and help young people to develop networks of support with the community

What are the next steps?

Promoting aspiration and addressing the issue of a lingering psychological state of negative self-worth, identity and belonging – to strengthen mentoring schemes like Unlock; creating our internal mentoring scheme

Develop EET provision specific to UASC needs

Engage with sector leaders through the One Nottingham Board

To work with corporate sponsors in both the public and private sectors to identify 'buddies' that can support care experienced young people to gain experience and knowledge about different areas of work.

To work with corporate sponsors to provide care experienced young people with apprenticeship opportunities.

To consider the best mentoring/befriending support system to offer positive role models for care experienced young people

To look at models of opportunities for young people to develop their skills, such as opportunities to influence, provide peer support.

To offer educational opportunities for those care experienced young people who have been away from the education system for some time, English, Maths and IT support.

To develop a training package to support care experienced young people to gain skills to prepare them for leaving care and becoming more independent, budgeting etc. To look at other organisations that can support with this.

To consider how support is offered to care experienced young people who choose to become parents; peer support, parenting advice, consider how this may link in with accommodation options.

To consider how ongoing on line learning can be incorporated into ongoing options available for care experienced young people.

To look at options for education and training for those young people who are unable to attend Nottingham College due to their level of risk or previous exclusion and to reflect on other options that might be more successful with this cohort of young people (smaller classroom settings).

Appendix 3

ICP Care Leavers Priority – Develop services that promote the emotional well-being of young people as they transition to adulthood and reduce the impact of loneliness

The specific task agreed by the ICP is **to support work to develop a transition pathway from CAMHS to Adult Services for care experienced young people**

What is working well?

We have a dedicated multi-disciplinary CAMHS Team for Children in Care.

We have experience of delivering a programme of support that utilised personal budgets to provide children in care and care leavers with additional support as an alternative to more traditional therapeutic approaches. The impact of this was evaluated by Nottingham Trent University who concluded that it made a positive impact and represented good value for money. There is however no on-going funding for this project and so it is currently not active.

We worked with the Mental Health Foundation on a bid to develop a project that would scale up a service they have developed elsewhere to establish circles of support for children in care and care leavers. This was positively received but the funding decision is on hold following the impact of Covid-19

Discussions have taken place between the CCG and trust to explore the possibility of developing transitions between CAMHS and adult mental health services. There have been audits of case transitions to explore compliance with NICE guidelines in relation to this transition. These findings have been shared and will inform future planning. Some specialist teams in CAMHS (Eating Disorder team) have specialist transition posts in place

We have piloted a befriending service for young people that was very successful

What are we worried about? Dangers/Risks/Needs

Young people who have left care consistently tell us that loneliness is one of the biggest challenges that they face.

We have many young people with significant additional need who do not meet the threshold for adult services. We need to explore other opportunities to support the mental health of these young people that includes universal health services and voluntary sector providers. Better collaboration/ joint pathway between mental health, social care and primary care may be possible and made easier through utilising the ICP platform effectively

Those young people who do meet the threshold for adult mental health services tell us that they find the transition really difficult. We may need specialist roles to support this work and a protocol for joint case working at the point of transition

The specification for the CAMHS Children in Care team has not been reviewed for a considerable period of time. The team does not work with children placed out of area, which is where many of our more complex children in care live. Arranging therapeutic input for children living out of area can be very challenging.

We recognise that young people from BAME communities will have particular needs and experiences of accessing services. The lived experience of people from the BAME community

and those services that have been developed to respond to these will be critically important in progressing this priority

What are the next steps?

- Share the position in relation to the work with the Trust
- Share the NICE guidelines and the findings of audit
- Consider joint transitional pathway between primary care, specialist MH and Social care
- Consider implementation of the proposed joint transitional pathway between CAMHS and adult mental health services
- Reflect on the best mentoring/buddying support system to limit loneliness and isolation.