

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – JULY 2019

Title of paper:	Pathway Planning	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services	Wards affected: All
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Other colleagues who have provided input:	N/A	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	N/A	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:		
Strategic Regeneration and Development		<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools		<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services		<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer		<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture		<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration		<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>This report includes the current issues in relation to the legislative duties required by Nottingham City Council, in respect of those children eligible for a Pathway Plan. It focuses on the work required by Social Workers and Personal Advisors in relation to the Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Reviews of Pathway Planning, in order to ensure young people have a robust plan to aid transition into adulthood.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	The Board continues to support and understand the required duties of Corporate Parents, in relation to Pathway Planning for children in care and care leavers.	

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Nottingham City Council has a legislative duty to ensure all young people have a robust Pathway Plan that is recorded and reviewed on their individual file.
- 1.2 The Council has an E-Pathway Plan to ensure Pathway Plans are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Pathway Plans measure outcomes, and provide evidence of young people’s wishes and feelings. The Learning and

improvement framework 18/19 found the standards of the pathways plans overall was good.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 In April 2011, guidance was issued by the Government to Local Authorities / Agencies who provide services to care leavers. This was updated in May 2014, to include further duties in respect of Staying Put arrangements. The updated Guidance also included direction on providing young people access to their records, and guidance in respect of Personal Advisors assisting and supporting young people with access to training: “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). The main aim of this guidance is to ensure care leavers are provided with the relevant support and advice, so they can be supported to achieve any aspiration they may have and the right support to tackle any difficulty or challenges they may face.
- 2.2 Building on this, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 27 April. This policy document stipulates that all Local Authorities in England must formally produce a Local Offer for Care Leavers. Local Authorities are also required to support Care Leavers until age 25 although this is dependent on the views and wishes of each individual young person. It is also a requirement as per this guidance that the Local Authority must provide a designated member of staff, who will be responsible for nurturing and assisting with the educational attainment of Care Leavers.
- 2.3 For all young people, the transition into adulthood can be a turbulent and challenging time. However, the transition time can be supported by living with Carers / Parents until ready emotionally and/or financially for independence. This is promoted by our Staying Put Policy and we encourage those young people who are not ready or who we assess as not able to sustain their own tenancies either to Stay Put with their foster carers, or Stay Close within a semi-independence placement, as this will enable them to access their support until they are ready emotionally and practically to live independently. As at 6 June 2019, we have 17 young people remaining in Staying Put arrangements and a further 4 such arrangements are planned as the young person reaches 18. For young people leaving care, Staying Put may not always be offered by carers.
- 2.4 As Corporate Parents, we need to provide support for our care leavers in the same way that reasonable parents provide support for their own children and planning how to do this with the young person is critically important. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to assess, plan, implement and review Pathway Plans, and support young people as they transition into adulthood. This applies irrespective of other services provided, e.g., if they are disabled, in custody or if they are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.
- 2.5 The Children Act 1989 requires that a Pathway Plan must be prepared for all eligible children and continued for all Relevant and Former Relevant Children. The Pathway Plan is derived from their Care Plan and sets out the necessary actions to be taken by the Local Authority, the young person, their Carers and Agencies so that each young person has an individual plan that provides them with the services required in supporting a successful transition into adulthood.

- 2.6 The E-Pathway Plan addresses the requirements of the Act. It includes:
- young person's health and development;
 - education, training and employment;
 - contact, supports and networks;
 - young person's financial capabilities and money-management capacity;
 - young person's views;
 - input from Parent / Carer, providers of housing, Personal Advisor, health, education and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).
- 2.7 Young people leaving care should have a Health Passport (referred to as Important Health Information), which gives their full medical history in consultation with a Looked After Nurse. The Children in Care Health Team are responsible for the production of Health documentation. We are working in partnership with our health colleagues to improve the number of Care Leavers who have this information and an audit of compliance is scheduled to take place in June 2019.
- 2.8 The Leaving Care Team currently employ a qualified Social Worker, who acts as a Transitions Worker to work with social workers, Personal Advisors, young people and other professionals to input into Pathway Planning for young people who may require Adult Services or further support in their transition. The Whole Life Disability Team retain responsibility for formulating Pathway Planning for children in care who have a permanent and substantial disability. All care leavers who are eligible for Adult Services also receive services relevant to their status as a care leaver.
- 2.9 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) have both a leaving care and immigration status, which means Pathway Planning can be complex. This requires a multi-faceted planning model; addressing planning for young people with permission to remain in the UK, for those who have been refused permission to remain, those who may want to return to their country of origin and those who have been granted time-limited discretion to remain in the UK. The Council has a legal duty to support UASC who are post-18 and in an appeal regarding their immigration status. These duties include the allocation of a Personal Advisor, providing accommodation and financial support.
- 2.10 The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 means that the Council has a legal duty to extend Looked After status to all young people remanded into custody. Therefore, once eligible, there is an expectation that these young people have a Pathway Plan.
- 2.11 All young people, from 15 years and 9 months of age, are required to have a Pathway Plan formulated, implemented and reviewed by their allocated Social Workers. Post-18 care leavers are allocated a Personal Advisor who is then the key professional responsible for the continuation and review of the young person's Pathway Plan up until they are 25, if required.
- 2.12 Performance in respect of Pathway Plans has remained a challenge in ensuring all young people have a compliant and authorised Pathway Plan, complete with an independent Personal Advisor viewpoint. Performance has continued to improve and Audits are being undertaken to test quality. The Leaving Care Service are part of the City Council Audit process and in 2018 thirteen cases were audited with eight being rated as Good and two being rated as Outstanding. This was the first Audit programme that looked at the quality of Pathway plans. Cases will continue to be audited in the new audit process being rolled out in 2019.

- 2.13 All young people who have a Pathway Plan also complete a Life Skills Booklet to assess all areas of their semi-independent skills and forms part of their assessment as to the next steps of their independence and acts as evidence regarding their ability to sustain a tenancy in their own right. This is currently being revised and being piloted within our own internal semi-independence provision before being rolled out completely.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 4.1 None.

5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

- 5.1 None.

6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)

- 6.1 None.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An EIA is not required because the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions.

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 Leaving Care Act (2000)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/35/contents>
- 9.2 The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations – Volume 3: Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers (2010)
https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PS_The%20Children%20Act_Nov2012a.pdf
- 9.3 The Children and Social Work Act (2017)
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/pdfs/ukpga_20170016_en.pdf