

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – SEPTEMBER 2019

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| Title of paper: | Care Leavers Annual Report 2018/19 | |
| 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: | Alan Monaghan - Senior Personal Advisor, Leaving Care Service | |
| Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant) | | |
| 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): | | |
| This report outlines the work undertaken and progress made by the Leaving Care Service since the Ofsted Inspection in Oct/Nov 2018. It is the Annual Report on the Service, to update the Board on services provided to young people transitioning from care into adulthood. | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | |
| 1 | The Board continues to support and understand the duties required of the Leaving Care Service. | |
| 2 | To make the Board aware of the proposals for service redesign of the Leaving Care Service. | |

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Nottingham City Council has a duty to provide services to those young people defined as Care Leavers under the Statutory Guidance; The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations; Volume 3, Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers, The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

1.2 Research and practice shows that young people who have been in care will have the best chance to succeed as adults if those providing transitional care and support take the following principles into account:

- Is this good enough for my child?
- Provide a second chance if things do not go as expected.
- Is the support package tailored to a young person's individual needs?

These are the principles that Nottingham City Council's Leaving Care Service uses to underpin the service they deliver to our Care Leavers. The service ensures that each young person has a Pathway Plan that outlines the support to be provided which is tailored to meet their individual needs and is reviewed regularly to ensure their transition into adulthood is successful.

1.3 The Leaving Care Service provides a range of services to young people defined under the Leaving Care Act as 'Qualifying', 'Eligible', 'Relevant' or 'Former Relevant', the definitions for which are set out within statute and relate to the amount of time that a young person has spent in care and their age at the point they left care.

1.4 Nottingham City Council has a duty to provide and sustain young people defined as Care Leavers with suitable accommodation. The Act defines suitable accommodation as the following:

- That which is reasonably practical and suitable for the young person concerning their needs.
- That which the responsible Authority finds satisfactory concerning the character and suitability of the landlord/provider.
- Accommodation that complies with Health and Safety legislation.
- That which takes into account young people's views, training, education and employment needs.

1.5 As the majority of young people approach their 18th birthday, they will be working towards gaining their own tenancy. The Leaving Care Service works closely with Care Leavers to support them to identify suitable accommodation. There is a robust housing protocol in place, which enables Care Leavers to be a priority for housing, with the aim being to ensure our young people are provided with good, safe, quality accommodation. In addition, in specific cases, a direct offer of accommodation is made by NCH to a Care Leaver, rather than the typical bidding process for accommodation. That said there are challenges in identifying accommodation some young people, particularly those with support needs. This is in part a reflection of the wider challenges of demand v capacity for social housing.

1.6 Personal Advisors work closely with NCH Housing Patch managers to ensure young people are provided with the necessary support to sustain their own tenancies. NCH will share information if young people are struggling and there may be a risk to their tenancies. NCH provides support to young people regarding finances and is well accessed by young people. Where young people are facing particular difficulties the leaving care service will meet with other agencies to try to identify plans to address these.

1.7 There are a number of young people 'Staying Put' post 18 years of age in their former foster placements, residential homes (if appropriately registered) and within

semi-independent residential placements who are not ready to manage and maintain their own tenancies.

- 1.8 Current performance with regards to Care Leavers and suitable accommodation stands at 89.7% (Q2 for 2019/2020). One of the issues affecting this performance is that young people in custody are not counted as being in suitable accommodation. For 2018/2019 our figures were 93%.
- 1.9 The Leaving Care Service employs a qualified Social Worker, whose role it is to identify those young people who would qualify for Adult Social Care Services. The post title is that of a Transitions Worker and the post has proved beneficial in ensuring that our most vulnerable Care Leavers access the appropriate Adult Social Care Service in a timely manner, and if they are not eligible, identifying other support services.
- 1.10 All young people eligible for a Pathway Plan are allocated a Personal Advisor (PA). These are not necessarily qualified workers but have the necessary skills and expertise to work with Care Leavers. This includes providing information and support in relation to finances, housing, health, education, training and employment. There are currently 76% of Plans within timescales of the six month required reviews. They are the key professionals for co-ordinating Care Leaver support. New Statutory guidance determines that local authorities now retain a role as corporate parent to care leavers up to the age of 25 years (previously Care Leavers would have a PA up until 21 years of age unless in Higher Education). Young people are now able to continue to receive support when they reach age 21, or to request PA support at any point after age 21 up to age 25, even if they had previously indicated they did not want support.
- 1.11 In addition, new statutory guidance requires local authorities to consult on and publish a Local Offer for its care leavers. The Local Offer was published in November 2018 and provides information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local authority, including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support. The Local Offer sets out what support all local authority departments will provide (not just Children's Services). We have recently compared our local offer with other authorities. This proved more difficult than anticipated as a number of services offered are discretionary and often eligibility criteria were not clear. That said our offer is broadly comparable to that of other authorities.
- 1.12 The number of young people engaged in training, education, employment and training (EET) is crucial in ensuring young people succeed in transitioning successfully into adulthood. The Leaving Care Service employs an Employability and Training Support Coordinator who works alongside other Personal Advisors, EET Providers, voluntary organisations, Futures and internal Departments to ensure young people are engaging with education, training or employment. For Q2 2019/2020 our figures for those engaged in EET was 56.6%.
- 1.13 The Leaving Care Service have launched an in-house employability programme that supports Nottingham's most disengaged and vulnerable care leavers to make positive steps towards training and employment. The programme is recognised by the DWP as a genuine, progressive job seeking provision for care leavers. The programme provides bespoke opportunities that aim to build a young person's confidence and give them the support that they need to develop the good habits and skills that are essential to sustaining mainstream training or employment. Each

bespoke programme gives young people the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience under the guidance of a mentor, provided by an ever increasing network of community partners and internal Nottingham City Council services.

1.14 In addition, the Leaving Care Service has become a registered centre for the delivery of ASDAN courses and all young people have the opportunity to achieve employability qualifications (from entry level to level 2).

1.15 The Leaving Care Service is working hard to ensure the participation of Care Leavers in delivering appropriate services. A Care Leavers group known as 'Your Voice' continues to meet quarterly, bringing a wide range of young people together to discuss experiences and issues that care leavers face during the transition to living independently. The group is closely linked to the Children in Care Council, with care leavers regularly feeding back on the work undertaken by the group, to other young people who are approaching leaving care. The Your Voice group has previously participated in meetings with Councillors regarding access to housing and supported accommodation; education, employment and training and the 'Have Your Say' survey findings. Representatives from the Your Voice group regularly participate in recruitment, advisory and assessment panels across Children and Families (key examples include the recruitment for Head of Service and Personal Advisor roles, and helping to assess presentations by student social workers on the Grow Our Own programme.)

1.16 Our 3rd annual Achievement Awards will take place on the evening of Thursday 17th October 2019 at the Council House, celebrating the successes of our care leavers. Young people will continue to receive recognition for their achievements across 6 categories; Education, Employment, Apprenticeships, Employability, Contribution to Service Improvement and Outstanding Achievement. In addition to receiving awards for their hard work, young people and their guests enjoyed celebrating their success with a 3 course meal and live entertainment by local artists who gave up their time to perform for free. The event will be sponsored by a number of our key partners who provide support and opportunities for our care leavers to enter and progress in EET.

1.17 The Ofsted Inspection in Oct/Nov 2018 identified that the quality of the Leaving Care service has improved since the previous (pilot) inspection. The inspection report comments that

An increasingly experienced team of personal advisers provides dedicated support to care leavers and uses a range of creative efforts to keep in touch with those vulnerable young people who are harder to engage. A responsive duty service ensures that young people's well-being and wider needs are swiftly addressed. This provides opportunities to develop more trusting relationships with care leavers, and, in turn, to engage them more fully and improve their circumstances.

Specialist workers in the Leaving Care team provide additional capacity and support to personal advisers in order to reduce risks for care leavers and better meet their needs. The transitions social worker ensures that young people with additional needs receive support into adulthood. Good use is made of the 'Shared Lives' scheme to provide extra help to vulnerable care leavers who stay with their former foster carers. This provides continuity of care and stability. The dedicated children in care police officer successfully supports restorative justice interventions, and there have been impressive reductions in offending rates over the last two years.

1.18 Since the inspection there has been a long-period where one or other of the managers in the team have been off work for health and or personal reasons. There has also been two PAs with long periods of health related absence. This has impacted on our ability to further develop the service. As of September 2019 all staff are expected to be back in work and we are looking forward to building on the improvements identified during the inspection.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 The Board have a corporate duty to understand and promote the services that Nottingham City Council has to undertake legally, to promote the outcomes and opportunities of its Care Leavers.

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

No

An EIA is not required because:

(Please explain why an EIA is not necessary)

Not required as the report does not contain financial proposals or decisions.

Yes

Attached as Appendix x, and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

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 The Children Act, 1989; Guidance and Regulations, Volume 3, Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

9.2 The Children (Leaving Care) Act, 2000.

9.3 Children and Young Persons Act, 2008.

9.4 The Children and Social Work Act 2017.