

Care Leaver Progress Report

SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board on the following:

- Overview of the current numbers, ethnicity, gender and needs presented by Care Leavers
- Unsuitable accommodation of Care Leavers
- Successes and challenges for the Leaving Care Service

1.2 **Contextual Background.**

The Leaving Care Service consists of 1 Team Manager and 10.2 full time equivalent staff. The Leaving Care Service has recently moved service areas and now comes under the Specialist Services umbrella and is overseen by a Deputy Head of Service for Children in Care, the Head of Specialist Services and the Service Director for Children's Integrated Services. The Service is based on the 3rd Floor of the Curzon Street, Connexions Base.

The role of the Personal Advisor is statutorily defined in the Children and Leaving Care Act 2000.

As of 4 December 2017, there are currently 168 care leavers open to the Leaving Care Service. The breakdown is as follows:

- 96 are male representing 57% of the Care leaver population
 - 68% are White British
 - 11% are Dual Heritage – White/Black Caribbean
 - 4% Black or Black British – African
 - 4% Asian or Asian British
 - With 13% consisting of other ethnicities.
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- 72 are Female representing 43% of the Care Leaver Population.
 - 71% are White British
 - 10% are Dual Heritage White/Black Caribbean or African
 - 4% are Dual Heritage White/Asian
 - 4% are Asian/Asian British
 - 4% are Black or Black British African
 - 3% are Black or Black British Caribbean

- With 4% consisting of others
- 30 Care Leavers (22 Male and 8 Female) have an identified disability representing 18% of the Care Leaver population.

There is no data available that will accurately identify the number of Care Leavers in receipt of Mental Health Services. However there are a number of Care Leavers who do have poor mental health, both acute and enduring. The Leaving Care Service responds to these needs on an individual basis and in line with what information the Leaving Care Service is entitled to know given their adult status.

Accommodation

1.3

Care Leavers in suitable accommodation is over 90% and this is relatively stable. This compares favourably with national data of circa 85-88%.

16 Care Leavers currently live in what is defined as unsuitable accommodation; this represents 9.5% of the Care Leaver population. 7 of these 16 Care Leavers are in unsuitable accommodation due to their detention in custody. 2 of the remaining 9 Care Leavers have not maintained contact despite assertive attempts by the service. Of the other 7, their accommodation status is either withheld from the Leaving Care Service or they are staying with friends or family in accommodation that is not considered suitable. The Leaving Care Service does keep in touch with these young people and undertakes periodic assessments of their situation to try to affect change.

Successes and Challenges across the Leaving Care Service

1.4

Successes

- The Leaving Care Service and outcomes for Care Leavers were judged to be “Good” by Ofsted in March 2017. They found there was a stable and committed staff team, who put Care Leavers first.
- The service has developed an independence training course which is scheduled to start in January 2018
- Personal Advisors become consistently involved with Children in Care at a much earlier point, so to prepare them and plan for their transitions out of care.
- Derby City Council Currently supports 14 Care Leavers attending University.
- There is a steady increase “Staying Put” placements (retained with foster carers); currently 30 Care Leavers continue to reside with their foster carers in Staying Put Placements.
- The service has developed a pathway with adult services Shared Lives Carers who can offer lifelong support to some of our most vulnerable care leavers.

- 7 Care leavers accessing Derby City Council apprenticeships.
- Care Leavers Celebration Event in November 2018 which was hosted and supported by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Safeguarding.
- Finally, Derby has been successful in securing funding for 2 years from the Department of Education Innovation Programme Fund to extend the successful adult social care initiative Local Area Coordination for up to 20 Care Leavers. The programme is scheduled to commence in February 2018 and will benefit from 4 additional Local Area Coordinators who will work alongside the existing coordinators in the city. These will be based within the 4 highest Care Leaver destination wards of Arboretum, Derwent, Alvaston and Sinfin. The primary objectives of the programme are to achieve sustainable outcomes for Care Leavers and in particular;
 - Decrease social isolation
 - Develop informal relationships they can trust and rely on for support
 - Create independence and reduce dependency on services other than those which everyone else uses
 - Promote stability within accommodation and feelings of security
 - Increase emotional health and wellbeing
 - Develop better sense of control of finances
 - Sustain attendance in Education, Employment or Training
 - Facilitate individuals knowing what they want out of life and achieve it or have a plan to get there
 - Ability to know how to access information

Challenges.

- Increasing numbers of Children in Care, circa 15-20% in 2017 will result in an increase in the Care Leaver Population that will place further resourcing pressures on the service.
- The enactment of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, places a duty on Local Authorities to extend Care Leaver Provision for all Care Leavers until the age of 25 and whilst the government has said there will be additional funding to meet these new demands the details are currently unclear
- Be able to support care leavers in accessing mental health services post 18. Complicated by the fact that many also have a drug issues that can prevent young people from accessing mental health services. Trying to manage the impact of drug usage by Care Leavers and how this impacts upon access to services and accommodation.
- Providing a wide enough number of accommodation options, especially for the few complex cases that do not meet criteria for adult services but nevertheless have significant issues. Preventing evictions for Care Leavers

from shared and supported accommodation.

- The creation of an effective Care Leavers Forum. There needs to be a creative response to the Care Leavers Forum that is responsive to the needs of care leavers. The current format of the Care Leavers Forum is not fit for purpose and suffers from extremely low representative numbers. The Care Leavers Forum does not benefit from an independent participation officer and lead and this impacts on its effectiveness.
- Current Business Support arrangements require review in order to achieve a more streamline and effective service and enable the Personal Advisors and the Team Manager develop the service.

1.5 On the Horizon

There is currently a proposal being considered by Chief Officer Group outlining implications of exempting Care Leavers from Council Tax. This is strongly supported by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Safeguarding. A number of other local authorities have already implemented this as part of their Corporate Parenting offer. The proposal also outlines a Communication Allowance to support them in keeping 'connected' and to open up avenues to reduce social isolation, loneliness and consultation.

From April 2018, the implementation Children and Social Work Act 2017 will require an element of service redesign and improvement in order to meet the challenging requirements and statutory changes and will be built into business planning for the next 12 months.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board to note the contents of the report and make any recommendations as necessary.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The work of the Leaving Care Service continues to be critical in improving outcomes for Care Leavers. The Service has undertaken and achieved a high level of success over the past 12 months which has been reflected by the good Ofsted outcome. The service will continue to review its practice in order to meet the new requirements of the pending Children and Social Work Act from April 2018.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 None provided

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 N/A

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Service Director Children's Integrated Services
Other(s)	Andrew Kaiser, Head of Specialist Services

For more information contact:	Gareth Dakin, Deputy Head of Service 01332 641340 Gareth. Dakin@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no financial implications brought about by the findings contained within the annual missing report.

Legal

- 2.1 The Local Authority has a responsibility to protect children from significant harm (CA 1989) and to provide services to children who are considered to be vulnerable including children who go missing

Personnel

- 3.1 There are no personnel implications brought about by the findings from the annual missing report.

IT

- 4.1 A missing person email address has been set up for all out of authority providers, including foster carers, to use to report missing children. This automatically sends alerts to social workers, IROs and the new apprentice for missing children.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Children missing from home and care are often multiply disadvantaged.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 There are significant health and safety risks brought about by the content of the annual report. .

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None arising from this report

Risk Management

- 9.1 There are both risks to the children themselves and risks for the Council of not properly monitoring and assisting this group of significantly vulnerable children.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 Links to the Corporate plan are through:

Protecting vulnerable children, young people, adults and older people:

Making sure that we take action to safeguard vulnerable adults and children that require higher levels of support including; our looked after children and vulnerable adults with learning disabilities. This will involve early intervention and prevention wherever possible.