

Leaving Care Service – Update - Care Leavers Forum and The ‘Local Offer’

- 1.1 This report provides an update on developments in relation to the Care Leavers forum and information on the draft Local Offer for Care Leavers as required under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.2 **Children’s Summary**

We want to make sure that children and young people who have been in care and who have left care are able to tell us about their lives and how we could work with them to help make things better by meeting with them on regular basis. We call this a forum and we want to make the forum fit the way that Care Leavers think this would work best. The Leaving Care Forum is like the Children in Care Council and we try to discuss things that matter to Care Leavers when they leave care, things like feeling alone, not knowing what to do if something happens and listening. This report will provide an update on what we have been doing to achieve this
- 1.3 The forum has helped in getting Care Leavers things like allowances to help them with bills, accessing sport and leisure activities and in helping others understand some of the worries about being a Care Leaver. We have struggled to get as many Care Leavers to attend this meeting as we’d like and you will see in this report that we have some ideas how we can make this better. We want to hear what it is like be a Care Leaver so we can see how we can help and make things better for other young people in the future.
- 1.4 We used to have a ‘proper’ meeting around a table, but now we want to do different things like put on social groups, do activities together and do things in a more relaxed way.
- 1.5 The Local Offer is something that we must do by law (under the Children and Social Work Act (2017) to tell Care Leavers about the things that we must help them with and things that we could help them with. We have until January 2019 to finish this but we have written a draft that includes Care Leavers views and we have included this as part of this report. It will tell you things like: how we will help Care Leavers understand their rights, support to help them to get into work, helping out with money and trying to help Care Leavers be as independent as they can be
- 1.6 We want this Local Offer to belong to Care Leavers, so it will be updated regularly and although the ‘Local Offer’ is not finished yet, we just wanted to show you some of the things we are doing.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the content of this report, including the issues Care Leavers are raising.
- 2.2 To note the development of the Local Offer and the challenges facing the Leaving Care Service in response to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 – attached as appendix.
- 2.3 To consider how the Corporate Parenting Committee can champion Derby City Care Leavers.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that Care Leavers views are influencing the development of the Leaving Care Forum and Corporate Parenting Committee are aware of these views and developments.
- 3.2 To ensure Corporate Parenting Committee are aware of the development of the Local Offer for Care Leavers.
- 3.3 To ensure Corporate Parenting Committee are aware of challenges and developments within the Leaving Care Service.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Leaving Care Forum.

Attendance at the forum remains a challenge with low numbers attending. Recruitment to a dedicated participation officer is currently in progress and will address this issue.

The key themes raised by Care Leavers in visits with Personal Advisor's (PA's) and from the forum suggest that the following issues are of key note: financial hardship, isolation, independent living skills, limited support networks and general support and advice issues.

Additionally, the Leaving Care Service is developing and implementing an activity schedule facilitated by PA's on a regular basis to promote Young Person engagement. These sessions will be informal, but will also be used to listen to the voice of Care Leavers and form part of the wider forum structure.

The Communication Allowance is now being provided to circa 60 Care Leavers and numbers are growing rapidly. This is providing us with a central record of up to date email and telephone contacts that can then be used for the dissemination of information but also consultative purposes.

IPSOS Mori is due to implement a period of consultation with Care Leavers in respect to the use of Local Area Co-ordination and will add to the consultative process for care leavers.

4.2 Children and Social Work Act 2017.

As of April the 1st 2018 the statutory requirements of the Children and Social work Act 2017 came into force. A number of additional responsibilities were placed upon Local Authorities as part of the act that directly relate to Care Leavers. One of these key responsibilities was to provide a 'Local Offer' to Care Leavers.

There is now a statutory duty to provide services to all Care Leavers up until 25 years old. This will have a significant impact upon the Care Leavers Service as caseloads are already in the high 20's to low 30's. Government forecasts seem to suggest a lower impact than what we expect. As such new burdens funding will not be sufficient to meet the demand of Care Leavers returning for a service or support the development of this service. HOS for Specialist Services Andrew Kaiser prepared a report in relation to this and agreement has been given by the Director of People to recruit additional Leaving Care personnel. However the finance to fund this is not in place, which means the Leaving Care Service, is not sufficiently resourced to meet the demands of this change. This is likely to have an impact on service delivery in the short term.

4.3 Local Offer.

Local Authorities have between 6-9 months to develop their 'Local Offer' from April 2018. This Offer will require robust support from the Corporate Parenting Committee, its members and other relevant stakeholders, for example, health, Department of Work and Pensions, immigration, education, council directorates, housing, and commissioned services, to create a City wide Corporate Parenting Offer.

Children in Care and Care Leavers are helping to design how this offer is progressed. A consultation exercise has been undertaken with Care Leavers and attached as appendix and the draft Local Offer of the progress to date is also attached as appendix.

The draft report shows the Local Offer at different stages and eligibilities. As the Local Offer evolves there is ample opportunity to innovate and develop the offer to make Derby City Councils Offer to Care Leavers, outstanding.

It is expected that the 'Local Offer' for Care Leavers will be completed by September 2018 and published thereafter subject to relevant approval.

4.4 Corporate Parenting.

The Local Offer needs to be complemented by a strong and focussed Corporate Parenting approach that champions Care Leavers and provides them with access and opportunity. The Local Offer once published will need support from Corporate Parenting partners to ensure that it remains a dynamic and innovative offer.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None, this is an update report regarding the Care Leavers forum and Local Offer.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	N/A N/A N/A N/A Suanne Lim Andrew Kaiser, Head of Specialist Services
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Gareth Dakin 01332 640302 - Gareth.dakin@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 - Implications. Appendix 2 - Local Offer (Draft) Appendix 3 - Care Leavers consultation.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Children and Social Work Act 2017 implementation will require additional resources

The DfE has outlined to Local Authorities that there will be burdens funding available to finance this work, however this will not meet the additional demands of the service.

Legal

- 2.1 The Local Authority will have a legal responsibility to provide an offer of support to Care Leavers up until the age of 25 regardless of whether they are in full time education or training from April 2018. The Local Authority will also need to have regard to seven 'corporate parenting principles' that will guide the way in which it provides its services to Children in Care and Care Leavers. The Local Authority will be required to publish their support offer to Care Leavers and to promote the educational attainment of children who have been adopted or placed in other long-term arrangements.

The Leaving Care Service is a statutory service as outlined in the Children Act 1989, Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Personnel

- 3.1 Children and Social Work Act 2017 implementation will require additional resources. There will be a need to recruit additional personnel as a result of the workload increases that the implementation of this legislation will bring. This will include front line Personal Advisors in the Leaving Care Team and also Business Support functions.

IT

- 4.1 There are no significant IT issues in relation to the Leaving Care forum or the Local Offer.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers often face multiple deprivations that can lead to life-long needs that are not met and dependency on statutory services. The extension of support can help to address this, if that support is organised and delivered in an appropriately structured way.

Health and Safety

6.1 None arising from this 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 risks to the Local Authority of not effectively implementing this legislation, which include legal and practice risks, including Care Leavers receiving a reduced quality of service, recruitment and retention issues and a potential adverse inspection outcome.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults - 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.