



Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee

24 April 2023

Report Title	Improving Employment Opportunities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers Task and Finish Group Recommendations Update
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
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Borough Priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 In June 2021, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny group received a report from a Task and Finish Group which explored work opportunities for care experienced young people.
- 1.2 The report contained a number of recommendations and an update on those as they relate to children's social work, including colleagues in the Virtual School.

2. **Recommendation for Decision**

Children's and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (i) **Note the progress of actions associated to the recommendations.**

3. **Purpose of this report**

- 3.1 To update members on the progress of actions associated to the recommendations.

4 **Background / Reason for the recommendations**

- 4.1 On the 23 June 2021 Cabinet approved the action plan and resolved that the response to the recommendations be submitted to the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee on 12 July 2021.
- 4.2 Since that time, services have continued to develop for our care experienced young people, with several very positive developments, in turn leading to performance which compares favourably to both statistical neighbours and national data.

Update information

The table below contains the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group alongside the relevant actions from the service to date.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Update</i>	<i>RAG Completion Date</i>
<p>To ensure aspiration is built into our care, the development by Children & Young Peoples Services of a standalone, aspiration-raising careers advice and guidance strategy for children we look after with a focus on Care Leavers was essential.</p>	<p>The St Helens Care Leaver offer includes information and guidance from a variety of arenas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Careers Advice and Career connect • Traineeships • Apprenticeships • T levels • Supported Internships • Pathways to employment • Access to local colleges • Higher education <p>The offer is introduced to the children we look after when a personal advisor joins them, which is on or before their 16th birthday and in year 11 of school.</p> <p>Practice is highly aspirational for our young people and the service incentivises success, for example by the funding of driving lessons being linked to strong attendance in education, employment and training.</p> <p>The Life skills programme has been developed and implemented which enables our young people to manage well in their home as well as in their workspace.</p> <p>In the time since the group made this recommendation, the Corporate Parenting Forum has approved a refreshed Corporate Parenting strategy.</p> <p>Within this, there are 5 workstreams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional Health and wellbeing 2. Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood 3. Safe and Stable Homes 	<p>The new process will be embedded by Sept 23</p>

	<p>4. Being Heard 5. Raising Aspirations</p> <p>Each workstream has an elected member attached and reports to the Corporate Parenting Forum appropriately. It is not felt that a separate strategy is needed given the focus of workstream 5.</p>	
<p>Children & Young Peoples Services review the local training of Social Workers and foster carers so that they can provide aspirational careers guidance to augment other guidance provided.</p> <p>Children & Young Peoples Services review the training and support for Social Workers and foster carers so they are better prepared to help foster children's understanding of financial life skills, including benefits, in preparation for becoming an independent person at the age of 18 yrs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint review of the Introduction to fostering training is underway and a team member from Futures is planned to deliver part of the session. • A newsletter now goes out bi-monthly to all foster carers which will feature opportunities, success stories and personal experiences by way of example. • Foster Carer Forums are now set for the year. Post 18 life will feature as a specific theme for a Forum, ideally co-produced by some of our young people. • The Vision, a group of care experienced young people, will be invited to lead a session with foster carers and supervising social workers to share what works well and what needs to happen. 	<p>June 23</p> <p>April 23</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Sept 23</p>
<p>Children & Young Peoples Services arrange for training and accessible information on financial life skills, including benefits to the children we look after and care leavers.</p>	<p>A wide range of information is available on the Care Leaver offer web page, which is augmented by links and comments on private WhatsApp and Instagram groups specific for our young people.</p> <p>In addition, the Hub has benefitted from a variety of drop-in sessions from a wide cross section of agencies, from DwP to St Helens College and a full programme will be developed for the new provision.</p> <p>www.sthelens.gov.uk/futures</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>To improve retention and progression rates for looked after individuals, school and college and training provider staff in the borough should be offered training/awareness raising sessions on the challenges of looked after children and care leavers, their additional support needs and techniques to encourage them to invest in education.</p>	<p>This area of work is led by the Virtual School who deliver regular training on all these areas as well as termly forums for Designated Teachers.</p> <p>A review of the training is currently underway, and providers are being consulted on what they feel they need, what has worked and where any future provision should focus.</p> <p>The Head of the Virtual School has very strong links with the Participation manager and opportunities to deliver co-produced sessions will be taken forward.</p> <p>The Head of the Virtual School leads the Raising Aspiration work stream, which will ensure a consistent approach.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

<p>The Council encourage its local partners (particularly in the NHS and other public/community sectors) to consider developing policies and resourcing to provide more work experience and employment opportunities specifically to our children we look after and care leavers.</p>	<p>Whilst there has been some work undertaken both within the Council and with partners, the number of opportunities taken up by our young people remains very low. This area of work will be a key part of future service planning and will be given additional impetus and focus by two of the work streams, Transitions to adulthood and Raising aspiration. Building on the Council leading during National Apprentice Week in February, work continues will colleagues across Children’s Centres, with further opportunities offered. In addition, there will be 3 apprentice opportunities in the new Family Hub.</p>	<p>Partially completed further work via CPF workstream 2023-24</p>
<p>Children & Young Peoples Services considers how young care leavers, who are single parents and without traditional family childcare support networks, can be supported with childcare so that they can access education and employment.</p>	<p>The Futures team has an established record of working both on the practical and financial provision of childcare for our care leaver’s children. For example, one young mother has been able to work part time as well as access counselling support to meet her needs whilst her baby was cared for.</p> <p>Futures team have worked closely with children’s centre managers to enable Care Leavers to access services with the 2-year offer with personal advisors also ensuring maximum benefit of that offer is made.</p> <p>All Pathway Plans and reviews consider parenting issues and tailor support accordingly. Young care leavers who become parents access a variety of support via our Local Offer, including childcare, access to children's centres and any additional support and counselling identified via their pathway plan. The parent is supported by the multi-agency team around the care leaver to enable them to maintain either their education or employment.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>That Members of the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee undertake a site visit to MD Creatives Pilot Scheme based at Tyrer’s when and if appropriate.</p>	<p>The Hub has now become well established and over 70 of our care experienced adults have visited. It has moved to a new building recently, but members are of course welcome to visit.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

5. Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 None

6. Conclusions

6.1 None

7. Legal Implications

7.1 None

8. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.1 None

9. Social Value

9.1 None

10. Sustainability and Environment

10.1 N/A

11. Health and Wellbeing

11.1 For our care leavers to be gainfully engaged in education, employment or training has clear positives for young people's mental and physical health and any support for the to achieve this is welcomed.

12. Equality and Human Rights

12.1 N/A

13. Customer and Resident

13.1 Implementation of this work will benefit our young people as well as those with whom they learn and work, across the Borough.

14. Asset and Property

14.1 N/A

15. Staffing and Human Resources

15.1 N/A

16. Risks

16.1 N/A

17. Finance

17.1 N/A

18. Policy Framework Implications

18.1 None

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

19.1. None

20. Background Documents

20.1 None

21 Appendices

21.1 None