

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, HELP, PROTECTION AND CARE**LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an update on the review and expansion of the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers aimed at those young people who have been looked after by Nottinghamshire and are aged 18 – 24 and identified as ‘care leavers’, receiving support, advice and guidance from the Leaving Care Service.

Information

2. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a requirement of all local authorities to develop their own Local Offer for Care Leavers, identifying what young people aged 18 – 24 can access around advice, guidance and support as a care leaver. This also placed a requirement on other departments within local authorities (housing, leisure etc.) and other agencies to contribute towards their corporate parenting responsibilities.
3. In 2019 the first Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers was produced working alongside the seven district and borough councils and other partner agencies who are part of the Looked After and Care Leaver Strategic Partnership Board. The Local Offer identified some key support areas for care leavers including Council Tax exemption and free leisure centre access.
4. In 2020, Nottinghamshire also produced an Achievement Local Offer to identify the commitment to care leavers achieving in their employment, education, and/or training (EET). This included the hosting of a business breakfast for local and national employers to commit and pledge support to offering more opportunities within the world of work, to children and young people who are care experienced.
5. There is a requirement under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 for the Local Authority to regularly review the Local Offer for Care Leavers. This started in the summer of 2023 with surveys and consultations with Nottinghamshire care leavers. Information was gathered via an e-survey to all care leavers aged 18 – 24 years, one-to-one discussions with personal advisers, focus groups and drop-ins, as well as structured feedback discussions with young people who have lived experience of particular subject areas (such as children seeking asylum, parents or parents to be, and those who have had involvement from the Youth Justice Service).

6. Consultation with the Children in Care Council (including the sub-groups) has taken place, as well as discussions and consultation with our key partners and agencies within the Looked After and Care Leaver Strategic Partnership Board, and input from local and national businesses as part of the Achievement Offer review.
7. Young people were asked about the current Local Offer and the impact it has had on them and what they would like to see within a reviewed and updated Local Offer. Some comments included:

"My home is really important to me. I've ticked so many [parts of the Local Offer] so it's [had] a huge impact. It's turned my life around... I don't know how else to explain it".

"It made moving into my own property a lot easier".

"[My PA] helped me sort out my home - I have a lovely place to live".

"They've helped a lot I struggle a lot with my mental health so some PAs I've had and the 21plus team have been amazing".

"[The Achievement Offer] enabled me to do a lifeguarding course which got me my job".

"It's helped me progress with my life and become a better man".

"It has made a big difference, because of my family situation, I don't really have a safety net so the support is second to none, some of the situations I've been in, I wouldn't [have] been able to get out off without the help of my social worker and leaving care worker, I have had support emotionally, financially, and career wise as well".

Updated Main Local Offer

8. The main Local Offer is the umbrella offer which includes continuing Council Tax exemption for care leavers until they are 25 years, the continuing free leisure centre offer, as well as access to Everyone Active Leisure Centres across the UK; it also includes updates about support for young people with neurodiversity, monthly drop-in sessions for young people to access support and advice and to keep in contact with former professionals who are important to them, and the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) funded Wellbeing Workers to support care leavers' emotional and mental health (via Barnardo's).

Extended Local Offers

9. As part of the review of the Local Offer, it was identified that there was a need for more specific Local Offers for care leavers. The extended Local Offers align with Ofsted's new Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.
10. The Achievement Offer has been reviewed and updated as part of the extended Local Offers. The extended Local Offers are:
 - a. **Achievement Offer** – aimed at care leavers aged 16 – 25 years in relation to their employment, education, and/or training and linking with opportunities within the world

of work. This includes support for young people to access career advice, explore their educational and employment pathways (through Personal Education Plans), employability briefings with local and national businesses, support to access Higher Education and university pathways, and building aspiration and achievements within the world of work (including apprenticeships).

- b. **21Plus Offer** – aimed at care leavers aged 21Plus and accessing support, advice and guidance from a specialist bespoke service. This identifies the young person's continuing access to their Home Establishment Grant to help them set up their home, advice and access to our Homelessness Prevention Personal Adviser, support in accessing universal and adult services depending on need, and continuing communication via e-newsletters, cook-books, drop-in sessions and positive proactive contact at least six times per year (requirement within the Children and Social Work Act 2017 is one contact per year).
 - c. **Parenting Offer** – aimed at care leavers who identify as parents or parents to be. Offering support to those young people who are making decisions about their future as a parent and the other support that can be accessed (including information about health and wellbeing). This includes support for care leavers from the Development Trauma and Attachment Team (DTAT) to explore their care history and recognise how this may impact on their parenting style and approach.
 - d. **Custody Offer** – aimed at care leavers aged 16 – 25 years accessing support, advice and guidance due to being in custody, released from custody or involved with the Youth Justice and/or Probation Services. This has been co-produced with the Youth Justice and Probation Services to ensure that there is multi-agency working and consistency in supporting young people in positively changing their pathway.
 - e. **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Offer** – aimed at care leavers who identify as coming to the UK as asylum seeking children and being in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council. This explores the options and sometimes restrictions they face due to their leave status in the UK. This also identifies the support that they can receive around emotional and mental health from the UASC Wellbeing Worker (via Barnardo's) as well as exploring their educational pathways, being part of the community and adjusting and adapting to life in the UK.
11. All the Local Offers will be available in print and electronic pdf format and the main local offer will be posted to all Nottinghamshire care leavers. The 21Plus Offer will be sent alongside the main Local Offer to all those young people aged 21 – 24 years. The *NottsNextSteps* application for electronic devices is updated to reflect the new and extended Local Offers, as well as web versions on www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk. Versions of the Local Offers can be made available in large print, audio or translated into other language(s) when required. The Local Offers have been shared with relevant partner agencies who attend the Looked After and Care Leaver Partnership Board and will also be shared with partners who have direct contact and access to Nottinghamshire care leavers.

Future Plans

12. There will be a further review of the Local Offers by 2027 which will consist of more consultation and feedback from care leavers as to what they find helpful, and what developments they would like to see so that they shape any future Local Offers.

Other Options Considered

13. None. There is a statutory duty within the Children Act 1989, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and Children and Social Work Act 2017 to provide the services and support to looked after children and care leavers until their 25th birthday.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

14. Nottinghamshire County Council has a responsibility to provide support, advice, and guidance to care leavers.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers the update on the Nottinghamshire Local Offer for Care Leavers and advises of any further assurance or activities required to provide the best possible outcomes to young people transitioning from care.

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Constitutional Comments (GR 27/03/24)

17. Pursuant to the Nottinghamshire County Council Constitution this Panel has the delegated authority to revive this report and to consider the recommendation contained within it.

Financial Comments (VC 04/04/24)

18. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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