

12 December 2016**Agenda Item: 7**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

LEAVING CARE SERVICE UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Sub-Committee with an update on the Leaving Care Service. The service is part of the Throughcare Service and provides advice, support and guidance to young people who have left the care of the Local Authority and are over the age of 18 years.

Information and Advice

2. Young people may receive services from the Leaving Care Team from the age of 18 to 21 years. Should young people remain in higher education or wish to return to education, they may be entitled to services up until 25 years of age. Statutory duties regarding this group of young people are contained in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and service delivery is subject to guidance and regulations from the Department for Education.
3. There has been no change to the team structure or specification since the previous report to this Committee on 13 June 2016. The service is made up of 13 full time equivalent (FTE) Personal Advisers (not Social Work qualified) and two FTE Achievement Advisers who provide advice regarding education, employment and training. There are two teams based in Meadow House and Sir John Robinson Way covering the north and south of the county. There are two Team Managers (qualified Social Workers) and a part time Service Manager.
4. There are 315 young people open to the Leaving Care team. During the last quarter, Team Managers reported sustainable caseloads across the service. There is a slightly higher number of young men accessing the service; 52% of the total.
5. The team are working with 26 young people who were unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This represents 8% of the total number of young people open to the team. Countries of origin include Afghanistan, Eritrea, Albania and Syria. 82% of the 315 young people open to the team are White British. The remaining 10% are Black British, Asian British or Mixed Heritage.
6. The figures contained in this report are taken from the Business Objects reports dated 28 October 2016.

Education, Employment and Training

7. The team continues to work hard to support young people into education, employment and training (EET). Of the young people aged 18 years and above who are engaged with the service, 61% are involved in some form of education, training or employment activity. Post 18 education accounts for most activity with the remainder being engaged in training schemes and apprenticeships.
8. 30% of the young people who are not engaged in EET are unable to work or attend college due to illness, parenthood, custody or not being entitled to work in the UK. The remainder are identified as not engaged due to other reasons. These young people will largely be claiming Job Seekers Allowance.
9. The Achievement Advisers are building positive links with local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) staff to support their work in ensuring young people comply with expectations in terms of their benefit claims and work programmes. We ensure that all careleavers claiming benefits are identified by DWP staff so that any additional support needs are identified. Sanctions and consequences for non compliance with benefit rules and expectations can be severe and lead to hardship. There is a key role for leaving care staff in helping young people to understand their responsibilities as well as their rights in this regard.
10. The Achievement Advisers report an increasing number of young people in care turning 18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and future work in the LAC service will need to focus on EET activity for the 16 to 18 year old age group if long term outcomes for careleavers are to be improved.

Accommodation

11. The availability and affordability of suitable accommodation continues to be a challenge for young people leaving care. The Supported Accommodation model is proving to be very successful in maintaining some of the most challenging young people in transitional accommodation. The model is gaining credibility in other parts of the country and a Leaving Care Team Manager will be joining colleagues to speak about our experience of the model at a Housing Conference in London in the New Year.
12. Many young people are not ready for their own tenancy at 18. Young people who need support are very mixed in terms of need and are challenging providers with a wide range of social, behavioural and emotional needs.
13. In the last quarter, 39 care leavers over the age of 18 were referred to the Supported Accommodation Panel and 23 of these were provided with accommodation. (Source – Family Service Homelessness and Commissioning Service Manager). These are often the most challenging young people and much Personal Adviser time is spent working with housing providers to sustain these placements.
14. The need for supported accommodation is reflected in the high number of young people who have used it. 56% of care leavers will have had a period of time in supported accommodation ranging from supported lodgings, Staying Put, residential care or transitional supported living.

15. 25% of over 18 year olds are in their own independent accommodation. Housing availability and affordability is an issue with shared accommodation becoming the norm nationally for young people. District Councils are moving towards this type of offer for single people needing social housing. Young people leaving care and the professionals who advise and support them need to be prepared for the future in this respect.

16. 10% of care leavers were at home with family or living with friends. The remaining 9% are in custody, residential care or accommodation provided by universities.

Other Options Considered

17. This report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. This report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, 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, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That the update on the Leaving Care Service be noted.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Children's Social Care

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Michelle Lee
Children's Services Manager, Leaving Care
T: 01623 433433
E: michelle.lee@nottsccl.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

1. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (TR 17/11/16)

2. As this report is for noting only, no Financial Comments are required.

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.

Leaving Care Service update – report to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on
13 June 2016

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

C0903