

8 June 2015

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

BARNARDO'S REVIEW OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEAVING CARE SERVICE

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides a summary of the key findings of a peer evaluation of the Leaving Care Service which was carried out by Barnardo's in January 2015.
2. The report also asks the Sub-Committee to advise if there are any additional areas of the Leaving Care Service they would like to consider in more detail in order to improve services for care leavers.

Information and Advice

3. In order to complete the peer evaluation staff from Barnardos had sight of relevant documentation, conducted a case audit and held focus groups with staff.

Key Findings

4. The key findings of the evaluation were as follows:
 - a) the approach to engaging young people in employment, education and training (EET) was viewed as positive with a number of innovative approaches identified such as the work of the Achievement Advisers
 - b) the persistent approach to working with disengaged young people was highlighted as was the use of data analysis to identify areas for development such as work with Children's Centres to engage young parents in group work
 - c) the service is delivered by a positive, passionate and motivated staff group who are very experienced and understand the client group. The efforts made to maintain contact with young people was highlighted as was the flexible approach of staff
 - d) the broad application of the principles of the Staying Put policy, which provides financial support to foster carers who continue to provide accommodation for young people over the age of 18 when they have left care, was viewed as very positive as was the approach to identifying and maintaining appropriate accommodation for young people
 - e) staff and managers had similar views about the service strengths and areas for development

- f) the Lead Member for Children's Social Care was noted as having taken a real interest in the needs of care leavers and has for example shadowed workers to get a clearer understanding of this.

Challenges

5. The challenges identified were as follows:

- a) evidence of a partnership approach to supporting care leavers or the Council using its influence to advocate on their behalf with partners was viewed as limited, for example care leavers are not accorded any priority in accessing Council apprenticeships
- b) there was no evidence found of specific health provision for care leavers at key points such as when transitioning into adult services or where moving across health boundaries
- c) there was a need for the wider Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee to be clearer on its role in monitoring performance in the Leaving Care Service and therefore driving improvement
- d) although the service has a very supportive approach to maintaining individual young people in suitable accommodation it was felt that at a strategic level there were real challenges with availability and accessibility made more difficult by the different approaches of the seven district council housing authorities.

Strengthening the service

6. As a result of the review a number of initiatives have been identified for on-going work and will be contained within the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2015 – 2018. These include:

- a Care Leaver's Health Audit which will be undertaken to inform health commissioning plans and is scheduled to take place by September 2015
- 16+ Accommodation Tender is currently at the submission stage and Leaving Care managers have been involved in the review of submissions
- the service is improving links with the Children in Care Council by ensuring that a Personal Adviser attends the Leaving Care Sub-Group and that the Children in Care Council is promoted at all the events organised by the Leaving Care team for young people
- the Traineeship Scheme continues to be promoted with young people.

Other Options Considered

7. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

8. The report asks the Sub-Committee to advise if there are any additional areas of the Leaving Care Service they would like to consider in more detail in order to improve services for care leavers (see paragraph 5c).

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. 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 only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, 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

That the Sub-Committee:

- 1) notes the key findings of the peer evaluation of the Leaving Care Service which was carried out by Barnardo's in January 2015
- 2) advises if there are any additional areas of the Leaving Care Service they would like to consider in more detail in order to improve services for care leavers.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 13/05/15)

10. Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (SS 15/05/15)

11. There are no financial implications arising directly 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.

Children's Social Care Staying Put Policy

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0633