

20 April 2015**Agenda Item: 07****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****LEAVING CARE 'FROM CARE 2 WORK' QUALITY MARK****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Committee that Nottinghamshire County Council Leaving Care Service has been awarded the 'From Care 2 Work' Quality Mark for Leaving Care services and provide information regarding this.

Information and Advice

2. From Care2Work is a national project managed by Catch22 which aims to improve employability outcomes for young people leaving care, by creating opportunities with national employers and sharing good practice between local authorities.
3. The From Care 2 Work (FC2W) Quality Mark recognises best practice and is awarded to local authorities and employers who demonstrate their commitment to building the employability skills of children in care and care leavers. It is a local authority's chance to demonstrate the quality of the employability support offered to young people in and from care, and have this endorsed through an independent standard.
4. Quality Marks are highly regarded as a non-legislative means of recognising best practice. In the report 'Education Matters in Care' the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers recommends the FC2W Quality Mark "should be a route by which local authorities can improve their offer to care leavers as well as their rating".
5. To achieve the Quality Mark, local authorities must show how they are meeting the four criteria for the award. These are Commitment, Opportunities, Support and Monitoring.

Education, Employment and Training (EET) for Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire

6. 62% of the 19 year plus age group are engaged in some form of EET, including 11 young people in higher education. Jobs include retail, hospitality, and carer roles. One young person has set up her own business as a dog groomer. Eleven Nottinghamshire care leavers are currently studying at universities across the country and courses include teaching, youth work, engineering, accountancy, communication and linguistics, media production, fine art and social care and health. One young person has recently applied for additional funding from the Authority to support her during her Master's Degree

studies in psychology. Over the past two years three young people have travelled to the USA, Africa and China to do voluntary work.

7. Of the 38% of 19-21 year old care leavers who were not in education, employment or training (NEET):
 - 3% are in custody
 - 10% is due to illness or disability. These are young people who can claim Income Support or Disability Living Allowance due to 'being signed off from work by a GP'. These young people are a mixture of young parents and those with emotional/mental health issues i.e. depression/anxiety/borderline personality disorder/Asperger's.
 - 3% are not known due to contact being lost with them. An example is a former Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker who has moved to London.
8. This leaves 22% of care leavers who are NEET for other reasons. This percentage has stayed fairly consistent over the last three years however it should be noted that this only represents 14 young people and reasons include:
 - multi-generational unemployment or disengagement from education and employment
 - lifestyle - some adult young people actively choose not to work or have chaotic lifestyles which means they cannot maintain accommodation, cannot sustain benefit claims, making decisions based on day to day demands, lack of planning, not seeing or taking account of consequences
 - larger numbers of young people are coming into care post 16 years of age
 - difficult to impact on those young people who have often been disengaged with education for some time already and living in unstable home conditions
 - qualification barriers to some EET provision such as Apprenticeships (need Level 2 equivalent mathematics/English)
 - some young people are not legally allowed to work due to their immigration status (three young people currently).
9. It is not possible to compare these outcomes with previous performance due to the changes made by Government to the data collection criteria, however information from the Who Cares Trust informs us that nationally one third of care leavers are not in education, employment or training compared with 13% of all young people.
10. The Achievement Advisers in the Leaving Care Service have identified a small group of hard to engage young people who are entrenched in unemployment due to their complex needs. These young people are at risk of benefit sanction due to non-compliance with Department for Work and Pension (DWP) requirements regarding job search. Discussions are taking place to improve DWP assessments of these young people and it is hoped that greater use of a joint assessment approach will support these young people in engaging with the DWP work programmes and prevent sanctions.

From Care 2 Work Quality Mark

11. Nottinghamshire Leaving Care Service was awarded the From Care2Work Quality Mark at the end of January 2015. This is awarded to local authorities who aspire to improve the employability options for young people leaving care.

12. Our submission included our work with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures and the NCC Apprenticeship Coordinator who are committed to alert Leaving Care services as soon as new apprenticeship opportunities come on stream and have agreed to accept written evidence of key skills following assessment by a local college in lieu of level two qualifications. This is in recognition that some young people will not have attained qualifications whilst of statutory school age. Futures also deliver annual workshops on applications and interviews for care leavers exploring work options.
13. To complement the apprenticeship opportunities, the Leaving Care Service (working with the Skills for Employment Service) offers a unique work experience opportunity within the Leaving Care Personal Adviser Service. This is a bespoke programme for those young people not yet ready to undertake a full apprenticeship.
14. There is additional support for care leavers who are entrenched in unemployment from the Inspire and Achieve Team at West Notts College and a commitment from the Procurement Team to build in employability opportunities for care leavers to the social value statement included in all new contracts from September 2014.
15. The Achievement Advisers are exploring the employability options that could be offered to Nottinghamshire care leavers by district councils by working with the district council volunteer coordinators. The concept of volunteering as a way to achieve employability skills is well established and young people have been successfully linked with the Worldwide Volunteering Scheme.
16. Achievement Advisers have identified young men in prison as a particularly challenging group and a project is in planning to support young men prior to release to break down barriers to accessing education, employment and training opportunities.
17. Accommodation needs of care leavers can impact significantly on young people's ability to maintain education, employment or training and Nottinghamshire is strong in this area with 75% of its care leavers in suitable accommodation. The principle of Staying Put is well established in Nottinghamshire and our policy allows young people to remain in their foster placement post 18 years during the academic year in which the young person turns 18 in order to minimise the impact of different funding arrangements at this crucial time.

Other Options Considered

18. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

19. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. 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

- 1) That the Committee notes that the Leaving Care Service has been awarded the 'From Care 2 Work' Quality Mark for Leaving Care services.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Children's Social Care

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Dawn Godfrey
Group Manager, Social Work Services
T: 01623 520223
E: dawn.godfrey@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (SS 18/03/15)

22. 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.

Summary of From Care 2 Work

Education Matters in Care: All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers – July 2012

Staying Put policy – December 2014

http://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staying_put.html

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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