

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	10 July 2019
Title of Report:	Care Leavers and NEET Plan
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)
Lead Strategic Director:	Alison Botham (Director for Children's Services)
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To provide information about care leavers who are not in employment, education and training.

Recommendations and Reasons

Not applicable this is an update only

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable this is an update only

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This report meets the caring and safeguarding part of the corporate plan

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The implementation of the Social work act 2017 has placed duties and responsibilities on the council to provide, help, advice and assistance to care leavers to the age of 25 whereas previously it was to the age of 21. This means that care leavers who left the service can still return to ask for assistance. How many people will take up this offer is not certain therefore the resource implication cannot be predicted accurately.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

N/A

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

Care leavers are a vulnerable group and need to be supported emotionally and financially to access opportunities and to reach their potential.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Judith Harwood											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 08/07/2019											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Laing (Shared and signed off on the 1 st July by email to Neelam Bhadjwardi											
Date approved: 01/07/2019											

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Work on Pledge 48 is moving forward and will be demonstrating good results in the next 2 months. Following some initial problems that needed to be worked through in setting up systems to ensure that the offer is sustainable and effective the Pledge 48 project group is moving forward and achieving positive outcomes.

The issues raised at the beginning of the work (September 2018) made it clear that there needed to be a co-ordinated approach to the task across a number of partner agencies to achieve a sustainable offer for all young people in the care or leaving the care of the Local Authority. The multi-agency working group was established and has been making progress across the last 9 months. Progress to date includes:-

Recording

It was not possible to provide information on work experience opportunities taken up by young people in the care of the LA as none of it was recorded on an individual level. Working with the Virtual School the Work Experience is recorded on the young person's personal Education Plan (PEP) which goes with them on their pathway to employment.

Work Experience Opportunities

The Skills development team, working with members of the "I10 Club" are developing awareness of the need for work experience opportunities and how these can be offered in a sustainable and transparent way to all vulnerable young people especially young people in the care of the Local authority.

In addition the Care Leavers review panel have been working with education providers and employment engagement specialists to find opportunities to engage the young people in work experience. The panel has explored with partners how bespoke short courses can be linked with employment experience opportunities which can provide a stepped approach into employment for a small " hard to engage" group of NEET care leavers.

Care Journeys Project

The "Care Journeys" work with Barnardo's is now progressing and is aimed specifically at engaging with care leavers to achieve outcomes (across all areas of their life) which are better or at least the same as the general population. This programme will specifically aim at care leavers being in EET or volunteering. This work will also begin engaging with children in care from the age of 14 to ensure that discussions about their education and career aspirations take place at an early stage to mitigate against becoming NEET as care leavers

2. BACKGROUND

As Corporate Parent for children and young people in their care the Council has a statutory responsibility to provide advice, guidance and services to young people over the age of 18 who are or have been, in accordance with the guidance, previously in the care of the council.

The care order or the voluntary arrangement with parents to accommodate their child under S20 of the Children Act automatically lapses when the YP reaches the age of 18 and thereafter even though the council has a duty to maintain contact and to provide services to care leavers, they are, however, free to decide whether they engage or not.

Children in care up to the age of 18 are well supported by the Virtual School (VS). The VS in partnership with the educational establishment being attended and Careers South West are proactive in arranging work experience for year 13 as these young people are generally aged 18 and are either deemed as care leavers or will achieve that status very shortly. However, until the Pledge 48 Project

Group was established none of the work experience was captured and so we have not been able to report how many young people in care or leaving care have had opportunities to experience employment.

There are a range of work experience placements available to young people in the care of the Local Authority through their school or college and the Transition Support into Employment, Education and Training service delivered by CSW Ltd. However, there is a small percentage of young people who despite extensive efforts do not engage in work experience related activities.

3. DATA ANALYSIS (Figures provided are correct as at 31st May 2019)

There are 227 young people aged between 18 and 25 who are considered to be Care Leavers. It should be noted that this figure includes Care Leavers who are not resident in the city and may live some considerable distance from Plymouth.

56% (128) are in education employment or training (EET) 128 and 44% (99) are not in education, employment training (NEET). Within the NEET group there are 2 broad categories:-

- Unemployed due to ill health/disability 38 (17%)
- Unemployed due to other reasons 61 (27%)

Of the 61 young people who are NEET for “other” reasons a high number are not ready to engage in employment opportunities or their circumstances make it impossible for them to engage. The cohort that remains NEET and may be able to benefit from a work experience opportunity is in the region of between 15 and 20.

The Personal Advisers in the Care Leavers teams have regular discussions with all care leavers who are NEET and provide encouragement, explore barriers to employment and consider, with the young person, ways to overcome these. Currently, 13 care leavers, from this hard to engage group, are interested in taking up the offer of a work experience which includes the following: childcare, retail, maintenance, youth work, care work, hairdressing, mechanics and business support.

The names of the 13 young people are now being sent to Barnardos our partner organisation whose Care Journeys project team based in the city will work with each young person and with the Pledge 48 group with the aim of securing work placement in their preferred areas of interest. These will be tracked through the working group and reported to the Service Director on a quarterly basis.

The PAs will continue to encourage Care Leavers to engage in work experience opportunities and these will be added to the tracker and reviewed by the working group.

Apprenticeship related activity to date is as follows:

- 1 care leaver has applied for the apprenticeship in the Participation Service.
- 3 apprenticeships posts for care leavers are being progressed by Barnardos.
- 1 care leaver in the process of applying for a youth work apprenticeship with PCC.
- 1 care leaver is in an apprenticeship with Plymouth Community Homes.
- The virtual school is exploring the possibility of having an apprentice who has first-hand experience of being in care.
- One young person identified has stated an interest for work experience in Human Resources services. Negotiations with Head of HR are currently in place with the aim of securing this placement.

4. UPDATE ON PLEDGE 48 PROJECT PLAN

This update provides a report on progress with Pledge 48 and progressing to develop a sustainable offer in the LA and with their partners for young people in care and Care Leavers to have opportunities to participate in the world of employment

Progress to date

- Work experience (WEX) demand from the Virtual School has been established for those LAC who are 16-18. A mechanism for establishing WEX demand amongst Care Leavers has not yet been agreed following advice that the NEET Panel is not the appropriate mechanism to make referrals
- Following requests to Education, Participation and Skills staff a database of potential WEX opportunities has been developed that could be accessed based on the young person's interests & careers aspirations
- For the Virtual School cohort, enquiries have been made with Sports Development (although risks around the young person resulted in this placement not being suitable), Youth Centres & PCC Finance for a young person interested in accountancy.
- A sustainable mechanism / process still needs to be established for managing this more systematically across PCC
- Outside the Local Authority, we have engaged with Improving Lives with plans to present to their "I10 Club" employers in July to promote employer engagement with WEX & enhance employers understanding of working with vulnerable young people. Cross referencing the "I10 Club" employers with the CSW database showed that 40 of those employers were already providing WEX opportunities.

We have begun to explore with HR/OD the idea of digitalising the process (for further discussion with the Graham Wills/Digital team)

- Digital team could advise on how a digital channel can be established on the PCC website for young people to apply/express an interest in work experience
- Only specific options that departments can offer and resource are made available
- Young person makes contact
- Request goes straight to the person in the service who receives and co-ordinates the expression of interest
- Service deal direct with the young people (in accordance with the corporate guidance which we develop in conjunction with the co-ordinators).

We are exploring with One Plymouth the potential for a digital portal for work experience with this cohort as well as the wider work experience agenda. This will be presented at the Learning Skills and Employability Group in June with consideration given to developing further as part of wider CEIAG activity