

Report for: Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee: 17 January 2019

Title: Unemployment and how looked after young people and care leavers are supported in to employment, education and training



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Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/A

Report for information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Like any good parent, we want to help all care leavers reach their full potential, whether that is going to college or university, taking up an apprenticeship or getting a skilled job. This requires a range of approaches, supporting those with high potential to achieve, as well as removing barriers for those who have either fallen behind or need extra support to remain in education or training.
- 1.2 Children who come into care later have often had broken educational histories, unassessed special educational needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties. This results in the need for greater help for longer in every aspect of their lives including education.
- 1.3 In addition to this, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who have often faced significant trauma and can initially struggle to settle into education on arrival in the UK, face the additional barrier of English as a second language. The timing of their arrival is also a factor in terms of college intake for ESOL and can delay timely entry on to courses. Further, there are additional barriers later in life in accessing university places or work depending on immigration status and legal barriers to such opportunities.

- 1.4 Nationally, there is a significant gap between the educational and employment achievements of care leavers and young people in the general population. In 2016/17 a reported 40.2% of care leavers aged 19-21 years were not in education, training employment (NEET). A relatively comparable figure from ONS data shows that the current NEET rate among 18-24 year olds is 13% (ONS: Young people not in education, employment or training). Additionally, around 51% of the total student population progressed to higher education in 2016/17 (DFE: Destinations of Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils). However, only 6.1% of care leavers were reported to be in higher education.
- 1.5 It is known that care leavers who are facing additional barriers such as disability, being a new young parent, struggling with a mental health condition, or are in prison often make up the predominant cohort of NEETs.
- 1.6 One of the key messages from Ofsted inspection reports has been that in around half of local authorities inspected, not enough support was being provided to help care leavers to find and sustain education, training or employment.

2. Haringey's context

- 2.1 In January 2018 there were 515 young adults allocated in the service – a significant increase from 407 as at March 2017. This number includes those up to 25 years old who have subsequently returned for a service post the legislative changes in April 2018.
- 2.2 In terms of educational, training and employment, the service has continued to have significantly marked success with higher than average numbers of care leavers attending university. This year we have 62 care leavers studying at university.
- 2.3 The service have a dedicated university email address to keep in touch with our care leavers, so we can send regular updates on funding opportunities, part-time work and assistance.
- 2.4 In spring 2018, one to one support was offered to all Care Leavers in their final year at university to apply and access work and realise their aspirations and potential. In May 2018, Drive Forward¹ also conducted a survey with all final year YAS university students (Total 18 – spring 2018) to see what they would find helpful for YAS to offer in terms of taking the next step into employment.
- 2.5 As expected there continues to be growing numbers of care leavers returning for support to enter university later in their care journeys.

¹ Drive Forward provide practical and emotional support to care leavers, helping them develop key skills, confidence and motivation for work, education or training

- 2.6 In recognition, however, to support those wishing to enter university straight from secondary education we are encouraging our young people to remain in staying put arrangements with their foster carers to support and ensure positive outcomes. We currently have 23 care leavers in staying put arrangements.
- 2.7 In June 2015 the NEET Panel was launched after full consultation with our partner EET providers. This was in recognition that we needed to do something different to link our harder to engage NEET care leavers with an extensive range of community education, training and mentoring providers. The panel meets monthly to review referrals for EET activities, and has gone from strength to strength in terms of provider attendance.
- 2.8 We have direct access to over 25 EET providers familiar with young people who are also care leavers. We work in partnership to provide a tailored support package to assist the young people to move through their employment or educational aspiration at their own level and pace whilst being supported through the process.
- 2.9 Young people can attend the panel with their worker and discuss their aspirations directly with providers and this has proved to be invaluable when assessing the right match with an EET provider. In the main, direct referrals however are still presented by practitioners who request support to help their young people to access EET.
- 2.10 In addition to education, employment and training we have access to the additional provision of motivational, emotional and holistic support for those young people who require it, alongside or to support participation of a chosen activity.
- 2.11 Between Jan-July 2018 there were 41 referrals to the panel - of these 24 young people were successfully engaging in an EET activity as a result.
- 2.12 Alongside the panel the service has initiated closer tracking of all EET for each individual and a concerted effort has been made to ensure Pathway Plans are targeted and SMART ensuring achievable outcomes which are in line with care leavers identified aspirations. We believe we will be able to improve our tracking further with the introduction of additional tracking EET returns within the care leavers visit template.
- 2.13 In 2018, the DWP awarded the service with £90k to enable us to provide intensive 1-2-1 support to care leavers to increase their employment opportunities and work readiness through our partnership with the Drive Forward Foundation. This service was officially launched in April 2018 but provided YAS with the opportunity to ensure the continued close working with DWP and Drive Forward (the care leavers' hub) to ensure onsite Employment consultation, work coaching and 1-2-1 employment training and advice and drop in services.
- 2.14 Since its official launch 35 referrals have been made for a variety of employment support, of which three have been in sustained work, and a further

four have been offered roles (three executive roles) within the London offices of the Civil Service.

- 2.15 Alongside university and employment, the service continues to support young people in a range of education provision. All 19-23 year-olds are entitled to free education and training to achieve their first full Level 2 or Level 3 qualification, and all adults are entitled to free English and maths up to Level 2. Care leavers are a priority group for financial support through the 16-19 Bursary Fund administered by FE colleges, to help with the costs of studying and to help support care leavers' retention in learning. Young Adults ensure all care leavers are maximising bursaries where eligible.
- 2.16 However, young people who are in further full time education (i.e. up to a level 3) and are over the age of 22 are not eligible to claim Income support as they fall outside the age criteria applied by Income Support. They are not eligible for Job Seekers' Allowance as they are not looking for or available for work. In turn, because they are not in receipt of benefits, they are ineligible for housing benefits or student finance for living expenses as they are not in Higher Education (HE).
- 2.17 Ineligibility for the whole range of welfare benefits requires the financial support of our Young Adults Service (YAS) so the young person will have funds for basic living and rent expenses and not incur mounting debts or leave their educational courses to seek work or sign onto benefits.
- 2.18 To remedy this the YAS is funding care leavers' subsistence for the duration of their course, applying to charities to help to fund rent costs, funding rent costs where necessary and assisting the young people to seek part time work.
- 2.19 The service remains committed to ensure care leavers are able to access apprenticeship schemes. Our figures remain relatively low. However, since the introduction in August 2018 of a new Care Leavers' Apprenticeship Bursary to provide extra financial support it is likely we will be able to increase the numbers and support more care leavers to access opportunities.
- 2.20 In addition to this, funding has been agreed with our Housing colleagues for three new apprenticeships within their repairs service. The aim of these three apprenticeships is to recruit directly from amongst our care leavers and if successful to do so annually. We have already identified one care leaver for such an opportunity and are that there are a number of trade vacancies which care leavers may also be able to access.
- 2.21 In October 2018, the launch of the new Care Leaver covenant took place. The Covenant will help care leavers navigate the work opportunities available and support them in fulfilling their ambitions. The Covenant, run by Spectra First, is part of the government's ambition to improve care leavers' outcomes so they go on to lead happy and successful lives. The pledges on offer include work placements with organisations such as Liverpool FC Foundation, the Science Museum Group and Rolls-Royce to help them get their first step into a career. This is the government's vision to support 10,000 work opportunities for care leavers over the next 10 years. Our partners in Tottenham Hotspur are

taking the lead on this for Haringey with Spectra and we will be meeting with them shortly to progress this for our care leavers.

3.0 **Conclusions**

- 3.1 As a result of the range of activities and strategies within the service those in EET is increasing. This has been borne out in our November 2018 data which confirms of the 232 care leavers aged 19-21 and 82 17-18 year olds in receipt of services: 52% of the 19-21 years olds and 77% of the 17-18 year olds were known to be in EET. This is in line with statistical neighbour figures.
- 3.2 As indicated Haringey continues to have higher proportions of young people in higher education than our statistical neighbours and compares favourably with the national position.
- 3.3 This increasing result was also recognised in the recent Ofsted inspection, in that they found that Haringey's Care leavers are supported to enter EET opportunities, and that the service approaches is assisting to reduce NEET figures.