

To: CPAC

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Contact:

Re: Overview of the Young Adults Service – CPAC Briefing

Report for information: For members of CPAC to review, scrutinise and have up to date knowledge of the Young Adults Service

1. Purpose of Briefing

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide elected members and CPAC attendees an overview of the Young Adults Service.

2. The Young Adults Service

- 2.1 The Young Adults Service (YAS) is part of the wider Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS). The role of YAS is to support children in care aged 16 to 18 and then to continue to support them as young people and Care Leavers aged 18 to 25. We work to ensure that every young person is afforded the best possible start to their adult life through the provision of support and guidance to young people leaving care. YAS provides services and support to ensure that Care Leavers are supported and prepared as they move into adulthood.
- 2.2 YAS is currently actively supporting 487 young people. 80 are children in care, aged 16 to 18. 407 are care leavers aged 18 to 25. We have a further 152 young adults we are keeping in touch with who are aged 21+ who we refer to as returning care leavers. The allocated 487 young people are supported by Team Managers, Social Workers, and Personal Advisors, and the additional 152 overseen via duty.
- 2.3 We have grouped YAS into 6 "family" pods. Our model of working is that when a young person transitions to YAS from the Children in Care team at the age of 16, they enter into one of our family pod teams with the support of a social worker. The young person is introduced to the other members of the team and becomes part of that family pod. When the young person reaches 18 and when the time is right for them, the young person's support is transitioned from their social worker to a personal advisor. This personal advisor is within the same family pod and so the young person stays within the umbrella of the same family pod. This provides consistency of management oversight and good continuity of support. Furthermore, it supports us to know our children and young people well, enabling us to work with them for a period up to 9 years. This lends itself to ensuring the best quality of support during very difficult transitional phases into adult life.
- 2.4 A young person will remain under the umbrella of the family pod from the age of 16 through to 21 and up to 25 if required. From age 21, young people who are settled and making good progress, transition to our keeping in touch level of support (known as returning care leavers). This means that we reach out to them once per year to check on their progress and additionally they are able to contact us for support at any time to talk to us, seek advice and guidance and support for any matters that are occurring for them.
- 2.5 Like all councils, Haringey has a responsibility as our Care Leavers' corporate parents. This support encompasses education, employment, housing, being prepared for independent living and personal development. This is detailed with Haringey's Local Offer for Care Leavers.

3. Current accommodation and housing offer

- 3.1 At 16 most of our children in care live in foster homes. We aim to ensure that these foster homes support our children and that the foster carers are committed to supporting our children to the age of 18. Such placements are described as long-term foster placements and offer a sense of permanency and stability to our young people.
- 3.2 Some young people between the ages of 16 and 18 find that living in a foster home is not their preferred option and the option of living in shared supported accommodation can be considered.
- 3.3 Before young people reach the age of 18, through looked after reviews and pathway planning agreements are made for accommodation plans post 18.
- 3.4 Some young people and foster carers, with Haringey's encouragement and support choose to convert the foster home into a staying put arrangement. The carer continues to receive financial support from YAS and the young person continues to live in their home until they are ready to move out. Moving on from staying put arrangements is usually planned to take place before a young person is 21. Normally this is through going to university or through securing permanent housing via Haringey Housing. We currently have 20 young people living in staying put arrangements.
- 3.5 Some young people choose to move out of foster home and move to shared supported accommodation. If this is university then young people fund this with their student finances. If this is not at university then YAS support young people to claim housing benefit which is paid to the landlord. YAS top up rent and pay for keyworker support.
- 3.6 Some young people aged 18 having moved to shared supported accommodation, already have good independent living skills and maturity and are ready to be supported to register for housing via Haringey Housing. YAS arranges for young people to have priority bidding status which means that Haringey care leavers are at the top of the priority list to secure accommodation.
- 3.7 Other young people at 18 having moved to shared supported accommodation are not quite ready for independent living. Keyworker and PA support is essential at this point to support these young people to develop the skills that they need to be able to live independently.
- 3.8 There is an offer via the young people's housing pathway of supported accommodation, which a few of our Care Leavers have been able to access. This offers low-level supported accommodation that assists young people to develop their independent living skills before moving on in 12 to 24 months to their own Haringey Housing permanent accommodation. This is a good offer, however, it is limited and is open to all young people not just Care Leavers. A supported accommodation option that is ringfenced for Care Leavers within Haringey would improve the post 18 support we could offer to Care Leavers to learn strong independent living skills with a view to moving to full independent living in their own accommodation via Haringey Housing. This is currently being considered as part of the Hornsey Town Hall development that is documented as a recommendation within the Care Leavers Programme.

4. Independent living skills

- 4.1 The Young Adults Service offers support to young people to develop their independent living skills which builds on skills that young people have learned earlier in their lives. Foster carers and keyworkers work with our young people to develop these skills.
- 4.2 The Young Adults Service offer a 3-day training workshop for all young people called Money House. This programme prepares young people with money management skills. It covers managing tenancy agreements, avoiding eviction, online safety and scams, budgeting and spending habits, benefits, banking, planning for the future and energy efficiency. This is a great programme that is valued by participants.
- 4.3 For young people with complex needs the Housing First programme supports 10 care leavers with intensive support to sustain tenancies, prevent repeat homelessness and improve health and wellbeing. 8-10 hours of intensive, open ended, wraparound, personalised support is offered each week between 9am – 9pm Mon – Sun.
- 4.4 It is recognised that despite the good offer above we want to do more. It is considered that a tool kit to better record and visualise a young person's progression towards being ready for independence would assist us to take a significant step forward towards supporting our young people to achieve robust independent living skills sooner.

5. Education, Employment and Training

- 5.1 The Young Adults Service has developed excellent links with the Civil Service Internship Programme, with 39 young people securing positions from 2018 to 2025. Likewise, Haringey's young people have attained excellent levels of educational attainment. In 2023/24 Haringey had 42 Care Leavers at university and 12 graduated. In 2024/25 we currently have 38 and 7 potentially to graduate.
- 5.2 The Young Adults Service has an excellent relationship with the organisation Drive Forward and with Haringey Works who support our young people to prepare CVs, prepare for interviews, explore apprenticeships and other educational, training and employment opportunities. Additionally, we have 4 care leavers employed within the family business (Haringey Council) and a task and finish group are working to explore apprenticeship and work experiences opportunities across the council. Our ambition is to have ringfenced opportunities in every directorate for our Care Leavers.
- 5.3 We do excellent work and there are good achievements of our young people, however we always strive to achieve more. The Care Leavers Programme sets out recommendations which include widening work placements and internships, offer dedicated outreach and recruitment campaign focused on care leavers, and an employment sustainability plan with accompanying resources to support care leavers employed by the council.

6. Corporate Parenting and the Local Offer

- 6.1 The Haringey Local Offer for Care Leavers is good (Ofsted 2023), some highlights being
- care leavers exemption from council tax up to the age of 25 for those living in Haringey,
 - offer of priority banding when bidding for social housing,
 - £3000 allowance for setting up home when moving to into own tenancy
 - higher education bursary
 - rent support during holidays for university students
 - staying put offer
 - access to Haringey leisure centres
 - cover of the £20 admin fee for Care Leavers TfL discount travel card
 - provision of free prescription certificate annually to age of 25
- 6.2 Whilst this offer is good, Corporate Parenting, and Corporate Grandparenting to the children of our Care Leavers, is a responsibility of the whole council. We are therefore working to ensure this fully understood and acted upon across the wider council and it is a priority area to strengthen through the care leavers programme.
- 6.3 The council have supported the "Show Us You Care Too" campaign which called for Care Experience to be adopted as a protected characteristic as recommended in the Independent Review into Children's Social Care.
- 6.4 Whilst the adoption of Care Experience as a protected characteristic has not been enshrined in law, many councils, including Haringey continue to support this. Therefore, we are making the following recommendations:
- Recommend all future decisions, services and policies are assessed through equality impact assessments which determine the impact for care leavers alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.
 - Recommend all directorates to actively seek out and listen to the voices of care leavers when developing new policies thereby putting care leavers at heart of decision making through co-production and collaboration throughout the organisation as a whole.
 - Recommend care leavers are included in any annual publication of information relating to people with protected characteristics in service and employment.
- 6.5 Additionally, we wish each directorate of the council to consider developing their own specific offers or interventions for Care Leavers so that our local offer to our Care Leavers and pledge, can take a significant step forward. This could be in cash or kind, take the form for example of work experience placements, mentoring opportunities, added value contracts ie IT phones, broadband, laptops etc.

7. Transitions to adult services

- 7.1 We have been working closely with adult services and more recently with the new transitions team to ensure that Care Leavers are supported to access the adult services support that they are entitled to receive.
- 7.2 As a result of this work, we have been able to reduce the numbers of young people waiting for adult assessment, and now only have 5 young people who are over the age of 18, awaiting their adult assessment of their support needs.
- 7.3 The transitions team are working in partnership with us to now ensure that adult assessments are carried out prior to the age of 18. This enables their care and support plan for post 18, is clearly established with agreed adults funding to commence from their 18th birthday. Our transitions team are currently working with 10 of our young people aged 17.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that that the proposals outlined in the Care Leaver Programme needs and gaps analysis are agreed by this committee, as this will support addressing the gaps identified within this report.

9. Next steps

- 9.1 CPAC to consider the recommendations of the Care Leavers programme to review, scrutinise and either endorse, amend or reject the proposals, which includes a cross-council pledge incorporating care experience as a protected characteristic in practice.