

Title of the Report: Young People Engagement.

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the response to the actions raised at the Corporate Parenting Board held 3rd September 2018.

- Include an appendix to monitor young people's views and include feedback on issues raised;
- Provide an update in relation to the individual with disabilities seeking a college placement;
- Provide an update on the provision/need for a benefits advice/drop in service to the meeting;
- Revisit the issue of council tax for care leavers moving out of borough and report the outcome.
- Out of hours support to care leavers.

Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:

To provide the Board with an update and the response to the report presented to the Board in September 2018.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Board notes the response in respect of each issues raised.***

Background papers:

None

Corporate Parenting Pledges

Our Pledge to Care Leavers

- We will improve the transition into adulthood so that all young people leaving care are better prepared and supported to live independently.
- We will improve access to education, employment and training and help you with your career plans.
- We will help you to experience stability in your lives, and feel safe and secure, including help to find and keep a stable place to live.
- We will provide improved access to health support, and go to medical appointments with you if you are worried to go alone.
- We will help you learn about budgeting and what bills to pay to help achievement of financial stability.
- We will respect you as individuals, not judge you on the past, and we will believe in your future.
- We will listen to you, hear what you say and spend some time with you away from the office

Resource and legal considerations:

The appointment of a dedicated officer was agreed in 2018 and the Children's Champion was appointed in May 2018.

The response to drive improvements plays a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

Citizen impact:

The services and the improvements play a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall The Council and its partners as Corporate Parents make critical contributions to improve outcomes.

Environmental impact:

None

Performance management:

The Children's Champion is working with the range of children looked after and care experienced young people to refresh and reconstitute the Council4Kid. A report on the work plan of the Children's Champion has been developed and presented to the Director of Children's Services on 6 September 2018 and to the Corporate Parenting Board Steering Group on 9 October 2018.

Reducing inequalities:


The report sets out the response to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families

Consultation:

A consultation survey with children looked after and care leavers commenced in August 2018 and its findings have now been evaluated and will be presented to the Director of Children's Services in November 2018.

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Report: Response to the actions arising from the last Board meeting held on 3 September 2018.

Action 1 Include an appendix to monitor young people's views and include feedback on issues raised;

It is proposed that the Children's Champion presents a quarterly report to the Corporate Parenting Board on the views and feedback from young people and the response to each of the issues raised. Each report will be supported with an action log and monitored by the Respect and Influence Work stream.

Action 2 Provide an update in relation to the individual with disabilities seeking a college placement:

The college provision identified was not able to provide this young person with an assessment as they did not have the capacity to offer this term.

His desire is to be in employment or training and in line with his interest in information technology, alternatives have been progressed though both Endless Possibilities and the Employment and Education lead for Adults Social Care to explore work placement in the Council. His package of support has been reviewed to meet his needs and his support package is being increased under continuing health care.

His plan is being reviewed by Beverley Fearn, Team Manager of the Transition and Leaving Service in conjunction with adult services.

Within the service there are currently 9 young people with disabilities who are in education or training.

Action 3 Provide an update on the provision/need for a benefits advice/drop in service to the meeting

Neil Hollyhead, Senior Housing Strategy Officer has offered the support of a benefits trained young person's officer to pilot a service at the TLC Hub and we will review its effectiveness with young people and staff. Timescales for commencing this are under consideration.

In addition to this it is important to note that all Personal Advisors work closely with and have received training about Universal Credit from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP). Managers meet with the DWP regularly so we can work better for the benefit of our young people. There are named managers and staff at the DWP who support the service and young people with their benefits and claims.

The service utilises Council's Welfare Rights Officers located in Money Home Job Service based at the Civic Centre who offer support to young people. Access to advice and support can be

secured directly by the young person or with the support of their Personal Advisors.

Action 4 Revisit the issue of council tax for care leavers moving out of borough and report the outcome.

Wider research with other local authorities has identified that council tax exemption is open to care leavers resident in the local authority area. Senior Manager will progress the possibility of reciprocal arrangements across local authorities under the development of Care Leaver's Covenant.

Locally, work is in progress to consider the cost to children's services if this offer is to be matched to care leavers living outside of the borough before any decisions can be made and will report to the Director of Children's Services in November 2018 followed by a report to the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2019.

Action 5 Out of hours support to care leavers

The Emergency Duty Team is the first point of contact out of hours for care leavers in an emergency or in crisis. The team is supported by staff who have access to resources to meet those needs.

Care Leavers living in supported accommodation or living independently have access to support from the providers or via floating support commissioned by Walsall, this is tailored to their individual needs.

In addition where young people require additional support, social workers and personal advisors will provide bespoke support outside of core hours in line with the young person's needs and this includes weekend and evening visits and contact.

Report

1.0 Introduction

Under the new Ofsted framework introduced in January 2018, all councils are subject to a basic inspection lasting between one and two weeks every three years. Shorter focused visits will take place between these inspections to identify good practice or catch local authorities before standards drop.

1.1 Focused visits concentrate on a theme and take place between full inspections which occur every three years. They offer inspectors the chance to look at specific areas of practice and identify what is working well as well as areas of concern.

1.2 A focused visit from Ofsted took place on 25 and 26 September 2018 looking at the local authority's arrangements for care leavers, including the preparation of children in care for the transition to adulthood. This found that the local authority has good awareness of the key strengths and areas for improvement within the service.

2.0 Outcome of the focused visit : Inspectors noted that Walsall children's services has made progress in all areas with recommendations from the last Ofsted inspection in June 2017 that relate to care leavers

2.1 During the visit inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including case discussions with social workers and personal advisors. They looked at local authority performance management and quality assurance information and children's case records They met with the Head of the Virtual School and the Post-16 Strategic Lead and Housing managers. Housing. Most importantly they met with children in care and care leavers

2.2 The focused visit was positive and highlighted areas of strong practice. Inspectors found that Walsall is keeping in touch with the vast majority of its care leavers, who are in most cases living in suitable accommodation. Increasing numbers of care leavers are actively engaged in education, training or employment.

2.3 The report stated:

"There is a growing corporate sense of responsibility for care leavers. This, in conjunction with the energy and vision created by the new executive director of children's services and her senior team, is resulting in improving outcomes for care leavers,"

2.4 The report states:

- Children leaving care and care leavers benefit from a highly committed and stable staff group of social workers and personal advisers, who know their children well.

- The vast majority of relevant children and care leavers have a timely and effective pathway plan.
- Workers speak highly of their managers and the quality of supervision and support they receive from them and their peers.
- Senior leaders are visible to the service and workers understand corporate aspirations for care leavers and the role they play in achieving these.
- Supervision records are of a consistently high quality, with reflective discussions and restorative actions supporting practice. They are focused on improving children's experiences and outcomes.
- Care leavers increasingly benefit from good education, employment and training (EET) opportunities. A range of well-embedded and systematic approaches ensure that all care leavers' EET needs are understood and responded to in a tailored way.
- A focus group of children and young people has met regularly to inform the design of the refreshed children in care council.
- Children and young people spoken to are increasingly aware of the CICC, and new members have been recruited. Walsall has ambitious plans to actively encourage care leavers to participate and share their views
- Care leavers spoken to feel safe and secure where they live.
- The importance of good mental health and the emotional well-being of care leavers is given appropriate consideration in planning processes by social workers and personal advisers.

3.0 The areas of further improvements are :

- Care leavers to be helped to understand the significance of their health history and to receive a written copy of their health passport.
- Quality assurance arrangements to better inform practice improvement and service development.
- Ensuring that care leavers have clear and consistent understanding of their rights and entitlements which is accessible in written and virtual information.

3.1 The identified actions were already area where work was ongoing and are reflected in the Ofsted Action Plan and timescales to achieve these in the next 3 months.