

## Update Report – Children in Care and Care Leavers Website and App

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Following the development of Our Promises for children in care and care leavers as well as our Care Leavers Local Offer, we have been reviewing how we can make this information accessible to children and young people so that they can access information more easily.
- 1.2. A key part of this work is the development of the website so that children in care and care leavers can access key information easily. We are also exploring the possibility of implementing an app to increase ease of access to the information at the request of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 1.3. This report seeks to provide an update on the work to date and confirm future actions.

### 2. Website Development

- 2.1. The council website is being updated with key information including:

**Our Promises** – these are our promises to our young people in respect of how we will support them in their education, keeping them safe, keeping them health and keeping in touch. They are split across three age groups (5-11, 12-15, 16-25) with each promise being drawn together in age appropriate language. These promises were developed with children and young people.

**How to get involved - Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum** – these pages provide details of how children in care and care leavers can get involved with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum, including the introductory video shown to the Board last year.

**FAQs** – Frequently asked questions from children in care and care leavers and the answers to those questions.

**Education, Employment and Training** – this page links to the [Walsall Virtual School Website](#) which contains information about the additional educational support that is available for care experienced children and young people. It contains information for parents, carers and professionals as well as a specific section with resources for children and young people at age appropriate levels. It also links to the Education, Employment and Training page on the Care Leavers Local offer.

**Care Leavers Local Offer** – these pages contain lots of information for Care Leavers, including where to seek advice and support and links to other websites on the topics of:

- **Who is a care leaver**
- **Your Personal Advisor**- information about what a personal advisor is and their role
- **Pathway Plans** – what a pathway plan is and how often it is reviewed
- **Housing** – what different housing options may be available to care leavers including staying put or seeking their own tenancy
- **Education, Training and Employment** – what options for education, employment and training may be available including lots of helpful links to jobs sites and apprenticeships.
- **Money Matters** – different types of financial support that may be available to care leavers including access to Junior ISA's, annual festival payments, birthday gifts, first

document support, setting up home grant and education financial support as well as helpful links to government websites relating to potential benefit entitlements.

- **Health and Wellbeing** – information about how care leavers are supported to look after their emotional and physical health as well as useful links.
- **Relationships** – information about how we will support care leavers in developing and maintaining relationships.
- **Participation in Society** – information to support care leavers to be active members in society including registering to vote and links to other organisations that care leavers may want to participate in such as the National Youth Advocacy Service.

2.2. At the time of writing this report, these pages are being finalised and quality assured prior to publication. The link will be circulated to Board members as soon as the pages are published and demonstrated as part of this report at the meeting.

### 3. Development of an app

- 3.1. As well as the development of the website, we are also exploring the implementation of an App for children in care and care leavers.
- 3.2. There are a number of Apps on the market that provide information for children in care and care leavers. Examples of two providers we are currently talking to are [Mind of My Own](#) (also see Appendix A) and [Focusgov](#) (see Appendix B and C)
- 3.3. We have been having conversations with these companies to understand the functionality that their apps provide and how this could be deployed in Walsall. We are also talking to them about the costs and the timescales in being able to set up their products to ensure that we are seeking value for money.
- 3.4. In addition we have been making contact with other Local Authorities who have implemented the apps to understand their experiences and whether children and young people have been making use of the apps.
- 3.5. We are also speaking to ICT council colleagues to see whether it would be possible to develop an app internally, potentially linking up with other projects aimed at children and young people which seek to do the same.
- 3.6. Finally before any final recommendations are made in relation to purchasing and deploying an app, we will share our findings about what is available with children and young people via the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum to ensure that any recommendation meets their needs and requirements.
- 3.7. We are aiming to bring a final proposal and recommendation to the Corporate Parenting Board on 04<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

#### Author

Helena Kucharczyk

Head of Performance Improvement and Quality

✉ [Helena.Kucharczyk@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Helena.Kucharczyk@walsall.gov.uk)