

SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

OUTCOME FOR CARE LEAVERS

Action Plan

Rec No	Recommendation	Initial Response November 2013	2nd Response January 2014	Outstanding Actions
1	The Executive be requested to undertake a review into the possibility of starting the preparations for leaving care process earlier in a young person's life and report back to the Panel in 6 months with progress, if accepted.	We would support this recommendation. There are advantages and disadvantages to consider with this approach. Some local authorities have a 15+ Service or a 13+ service and some have an entirely separate Leaving Care service. This can avoid the change of social worker at the crucial time of GCSEs and can allow for a social worker to stay with the young person for a longer period of time from 13/15 years of age through to 17/18 when they leave care or to stay with the same social worker until they leave care. Changing earlier does not reduce the number of social workers in a child's life as the change still takes place. One disadvantage of starting earlier or keeping the same social worker from birth to 18 is in relation to the particular social work expertise required for care leavers which is more focused on accommodation, education/employment/training/, benefits, independence, etc, etc. Social workers of younger children tend to focus on and have expertise in areas of child protection, court process,	<i>Through a National Care Leavers Benchmarking forum of which we are members we have access to over 50 care leaving services. We are collating the information to see what ages they start preparations for leaving care. We are also collecting the views of young people and independent reviewing officers to hear how and when they would prefer to start the preparations for leaving care. The 16+ service is also going to look at developing independence guidance for our looked after children before</i>	On-going work. Benchmarking figures. Views of young people. Develop the new guidance.

		schools, looked after children. However, we will thoroughly review the option of the transition to a 16+ social worker being decided as part of the Statutory Reviewing process where education, exams, can be considered rather than the simple issue of they are almost 16 yrs old.	<i>they reach 16. This will include such things as expectations for 13, 14 15 yr olds which can be achieved with foster carers or residential staff. This guidance can then be recorded as part of the care planning process and preparing for independence.</i>	
2	The Executive be requested to undertake an investigation into whether Council guidance/good practice could be produced on the maximum number of units provided in semi-independent dwellings when companies approach the Council to establish new supported housing.	We would support this recommendation. Substantial research was undertaken when the commissioning process looked at the new semi-independence framework. We looked at other local authorities, private providers as well as voluntary organisations to see what was available on the market. However, a year down the line we believe it is worth reviewing our contracts and their success in line with the particular needs of Doncaster and our Doncaster young people. It may well be that those requirements from one year ago have changed or the experience of the young people using these new providers could change our view. Part of the review would undertake the wishes and feelings of the young people in those accommodation providers as well as the thoughts of other significant people i.e. foster carers, members, etc. In addition to this review there is already ongoing work around the local authority's obligation on 'sufficiency' which is being led by our colleagues from ImPower . Although this work is predominantly for looked after regulated placements (foster care and children's homes) we have asked that semi-independence and care leavers are part of this work.	<i>We have again asked other local authorities what works for them through our national benchmarking forum. We have also started to ask our young people their views on the existing frameworks for semi-independent dwellings now these properties have been running for almost one full year. We are also gathering replies from our existing providers on their views of the success in relation to the number of beds in their establishments. Our accommodation Provider Partnership is being reviewed and scored. We also have a new scheme we are piloting with St Leger Housing. This involves St Leger offering part furnished properties to our 16+ young people with enhanced arrangements and benefits. The</i>	On-going work. Benchmarking Figures. Views of young people. Existing provider views. St Leger pilot project.

			<i>managers of the two services have already met, 12 young people have been identified for the pilot and the project is underway.</i>	
3	The Executive be requested to investigate whether additional support, guidance and signposting can be offered to young people leaving care, who have additional needs but fall short of meeting the Adult Services care criteria.	We support this recommendation and in fact had identified that this was an issue before the Panel report. Specific managers involved in these areas have been contacted and spoken to with a view to undertaking a task and finish group to look at improving this area. The managers are from children's, adults, disability service and education. We plan to meet with Adult Services to draw up good practice guidance and process in order to improve the provision for those specific young people. This is at an early stage but aim to have a revised protocol in place by March 31st.	<i>The service manager for this team has initially spoken with managers in the relevant areas, Adults, learning disability, Education, commissioning, disabilities, etc. We had a professionals meeting on the 28th January with various managers from the above areas to scope out this work. The conclusion of the meeting is that the commissioning team are going to scope a new accommodation framework which would provide appropriate support for this cohort. The adult Transitions team are to liaise with the 16+ team to ensure information/referrals are sent to them when the young people are 15 in order to give at least 2 years preparation for young people with additional needs. The two managers are meeting on the 11th February. We are also going to look at drawing up</i>	Adults commissioning to scope out accommodation for this cohort with children's commissioning. Service Manager to meet with manager from Transitions Team on 11th February to progress early identification and referral of this cohort. Service Manager of 16+ arranged to meet with 16+ Team on 6th February to begin consultation with case holders and young people on this issue.

			<i>a policy which identifies this cohort and addresses the thresholds for accessing adult services for these care leavers.</i>	
4	Contact between the Foster Care Team, 16 Plus service and foster carers be developed to bring about improvement in service provision and relationships between young people and the service, where this is appropriate.	We support this recommendation. It was agreed that some of the information and knowledge within the 16+ team could be better shared with our colleagues in Fostering. Some of the comments made were clearly about a lack of understanding around transitions, the legislation, choices available, and the roles of the personal advisors. The service managers and team managers have already met and discussed ways forward to improve our working together and keeping foster carers involved and aware. We are looking at joint meetings for managers and workers, some joint training, open sessions for foster carers to attend 16+ advice workshops, a 16+ booklet and guidance to be available to fostering workers and carers including contact names and numbers. We have also discussed more involvement for carers around the care planning & pathway planning process (including residential staff).	<i>The service managers and team managers of the 16+ & Fostering services have continued to meet to discuss better ways of working together. Through the Children in Care Service Improvement Plan the managers are becoming more aware of each other's services. The Fostering Team Manager has attended the 16+ team meeting and his received excellent feedback. We have also identified a front line worker who is at temporarily working part time in both areas and we are going to use his particular experience and knowledge to improve our services. We have also identified and we are in the process of recruiting an advanced practitioner who will be tasked with being part of the fostering training programmes in respect of understanding leaving care services. The service manager 16+ has met with the Impower</i>	On-going work. Embed management meetings between the services. Open day/evenings for Foster Carers to visit 16+ team for information. Joint training between the services. 16+ booklets for fostering service and foster carers.

			<i>lead on fostering to look at the number of IFAs with 14-16 yr olds in placement so we can ensure better better service provision.</i>	
5	<p>The Executive is asked to:</p> <p>investigate the possibility of care leavers being guaranteed interviews and work shadowing with the Council; and</p> <p>report to the Panel in 6 months on this issue and how the Employability Plan is working in practice and being embedded into the pathways for care leavers.</p>	<p>We support this recommendation. This piece of work is already underway and has been for some months. The Employability Plan which was started back in June 2013 and has the "From Care2Work" kite mark has work experience/shadowing as one of its main strands. The Employability Plan is supported by and involves all four directorates and has heads of service leading on the four main strands. The project is expanding all the time and we will be pleased to update the panel in 6 months. The employability plan has already been shown to Scrutiny Panel. In addition 12 senior managers have received training to become Mentors for care leavers and Looked After Young people to support them through this process.</p>	<p><i>This piece of work is continuing to grow. It is for all looked after children and Care Leavers. So far 15 young people have been offered or undertaken work shadowing/experience, training, and apprenticeships, since the employability plan started. All four areas of work experience mentoring, apprenticeships and pre apprenticeships are being progressed and continue to be lead by Snr Managers across the council. One young person currently on an apprenticeship at CCQ has been very positive in her feedback and she is actively involved in the 16+ participation. The Doncaster website which offers work experience has a section to state their care status so we can better track the numbers. The first training session took place on the 30th January for senior managers within the council to be mentors for our children in</i></p>	<p>On-going work.</p> <p>Continue to implement, expand and embed the employability plan.</p>

			<i>care and care leavers. Our apprenticeship strand has also included the Assistant Director in Environment and Regeneration who is in charge of several hundred apprenticeships being planned for the all Doncaster young people.</i>	
6	<p>The 16 Plus team be requested to:-</p> <p>provide Doncaster college and other appropriate education establishments with a list of young people leaving care who require education packages tailored to their future; and</p> <p>continue building on current links and partnership arrangements with Doncaster College and other education establishments.</p>	<p>We support this recommendation. Much of this work has already been done or is underway. The Doncaster College representative has attended our 16+ team meeting; they have also met with the 16+ managers in addition to attending the formal 'Better Education for Children in Care' group chaired by the Assistant Director. Data and information is now shared between the college and 16+ team via their named representative and our own education/employment/training personal advisor. These meetings have already taken place and we intend to formalise this with a Service Level Agreement which will also form part of the Employability Plan.</p>	<p><i>This work is already complete in terms of process and activity. We have yet to draw up a formal service level agreement but the work and links are already established.</i></p>	<p>Create and sign off the service level agreement by April 2014</p>
7	<p>Promote the mentor programme for young people and encourage its value within the Doncaster Community and with Council employees to encourage the offer of positive guidance and friendship.</p>	<p>We support this recommendation. The Mentor Scheme is one of the four strands of the Employability Plan. As described above it has the support and involvement of all four Directorates and has a named Head of Service lead. Role (job) descriptions are being created alongside guidance and training for those who take up the mentoring role and the first 12 Senior managers from a variety of service areas received Mentor</p>	<p><i>The promotional work is already done. A Head of Service lead has been driving the mentoring programme which is part of the employability plan for some time. All meetings have taken place, information was sent</i></p>	<p>This is part of the employability plan and will continue to be progressed as above.</p>

		<p>Training on the 30th January. Young people have been involved in the discussions in terms of what they would like to see. This piece of work is well underway and we expect to have it embedded in the formal offer to care leavers by the time we report back to the scrutiny panel.</p>	<p><i>round the council. Individual employees have been indentified, training dates are set and the young people are in the process of being identified. The first training session for mentors took place on the 30th January with the second session booked for the 13th February. This is for 18 council officers who are heads of service and assistant directors.</i></p>	
8	<p>Information on care leavers outcomes be integrated into future quarterly performance monitoring reports to Scrutiny including numbers, age profile, pathway plans in place, type of accommodation and employment and education figures.</p>	<p>We support this recommendation. The 16+ team already keep all this information and data as part of its normal working practice. Equally we already provide such data on a regular basis to various groups such as our performance team, education colleagues, department heads and indeed to Government. We have also recently included the 16+ performance indicator statistics to our internal performance monitoring meeting chaired by the assistant director. We are therefore happy to provide this information to Scrutiny.</p>	<p><i>As described this information is already available. We have yet to agree the process for making it available to Scrutiny quarterly reports. These reports will also now be presented and open to challenge from the CPB on an annual basis.</i></p>	<p>To clarify what information is required for the monitoring reports, also where and when they need to be sent.</p>

END