

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

17 May 2018

Report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services

Care Leavers Support Service Consultation – (Young People)

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Cabinet of new guidance and legislation outlining the duties for Local Authorities to support Care Leavers.

To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a consultation with children in care, care leavers and relevant stakeholders to inform the development of the care leaver's service.

2. Information and Analysis

New guidance and legislation

Keep on Caring

In July 2016, the Government published the Policy Briefing on "Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence". *Keep on Caring...* outlines the strategic plan proposed by the Government to better support care leavers as they transition to adulthood. The document emphasises the role of local authorities as corporate parents' responsible for ensuring positive outcomes for young people. The strategic plan focuses on 5 key outcomes:

1. Young people leaving care are better prepared and supported to live independently.
2. Improved access to education, employment and training.
3. Care leavers should experience stability in their lives, and feel safe and secure.
4. Improved access to health support.
5. Care leavers should achieve financial stability.

An important theme within the document is the amount of variation in the quality of services provided by local authorities. The strategy offers 3 target

areas to strengthen support for care leavers and reduce the impact of geography on young people's outcomes. The areas are:

1. Developing new ways of supporting care leavers.
2. Making corporate parenting everyone's responsibility.
3. Driving system improvement.

The strategy builds on several pieces of legislation, including the Leaving Care Act (2000), the Children and Young Persons Act (2008), the 2013 cross-government care leaver strategy, and the 2014 Children and Families Act, all of which gradually expanded the responsibilities of local authorities in supporting children and young people in care.

Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 aims to improve support for looked after children in England and Wales, especially for those leaving care.

Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to a set of corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers (former relevant children).

The corporate parenting principles set out seven fundamental needs for looked after children and care leavers, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical & mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Section two of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to consult on and publish a local offer for their care leavers. The local offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers in the local area where they live. It should

include information about their statutory entitlements, as well as any discretionary support that a local authority might choose to provide.

Section 3 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017 has introduced a new duty on local authorities, which requires them to offer Personal Adviser support to all care leavers up to age 25.

This includes care leavers who return to the local authority at any point between the ages of 21 up to 25 and request Personal Adviser support, even if they had previously indicated that they did not want it.

Local authorities are required to proactively offer the support on at least an annual basis to their care leavers. The offer of Personal Adviser support should also be listed in the local authority's published 'Local Offer' for care leavers.

Consultation proposals

Derbyshire County Council's Children's Services Service Plan prioritises the need to ensure that we are a good corporate parent for children in our care. This includes making the care leaver offer available to children in our care up to the age of 25 and continuing to shape the offer for supporting children in our care up to the age of 25.

Given the local authorities priorities and national developments as outlined above, it is an appropriate time to review current service provision and for consultation to be undertaken.

A Cabinet Paper has been submitted for 26 April 2018 (minute number:?) *[to be added once minute number allocated]* seeking a one-year extension to the current service to allow time to model our future care leaver provision in line with the findings of this consultation.

It is recommended that the consultation takes place over an 8-week period to allow sufficient time for a broad range, and a sufficient number, of children in care, care leavers and other stakeholders to participate in the consultation.

An on-line and paper questionnaire will be developed to capture key information from Children in Care, Care leavers and stakeholders.

The questionnaire will seek to identify satisfaction with current support services, as well as identify future opportunities to improve services in line with the requirements of the Children's Social Work Act 2017 and *Keep on Caring*.

Alongside the questionnaire, focus groups will be undertaken to gain a more detailed understanding of matters such as participants' views on current services, how care leavers' needs are met, and future service provision.

It is proposed that the consultation occurs between 28 May 2018 and 22 July 2018, and that the consultation findings and officer recommendations are reported to Cabinet in September 2018 to enable appropriate decisions to be made.

3. Financial Considerations

Following analysis of the consultation findings, further decisions will be taken regarding the future commissioning arrangements for a care leaver's service.

4. Legal Considerations

The Council has a duty under the Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 to support and promote the welfare of eligible care leavers by providing support services. The Children Act 1989 Guidance, as amended in 2015, provides advice to the authority as to how these duties should be exercised. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to consult on and publish a local offer for their care leavers.

5. Equality Considerations

It is intended to undertake an equality impact assessment during the consultation period.

6. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder; equality of opportunity; health; environmental; property; social value and transport considerations.

7. Key Decision

No.

8. Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in this report?

No.

9. Strategic Director's Recommendations

That Cabinet notes new guidance and legislation outlining the duties for Local Authorities to support care leavers.

That consultation takes place with children in care, care leavers and other stakeholders as set out in this report.

Jane Parfremment
Strategic Director for Children's Services

APPENDIX 1**CONSULTATION TIMELINE**

Date	Activity
28 May 2018	Launch consultation seeking views of children in care, care leavers, parents/carers and relevant stakeholders
22 July 2018	Close consultation (8 weeks)
23 July -3 August 2018	Analysis (2 weeks)
20 August 2018	Senior Management Team paper