



## **Corporate Parenting Board**

### **Children and Social Work Act Update January 2018**

**The Social Work Act 2017 confers new duties on Local Authorities including:**

1. Local Authorities must negotiate and publish their care leaver offer
2. Leaving care support to extend from 21 to 25

And

3. Introduction of Corporate Parenting Principles
4. Introduction of a Care Leaver Covenant

#### **1. Local Authorities must negotiate and publish their care leaver offer**

There is a new duty on local authorities to consult on and then publish their 'local offer' for care leavers, which sets out both care leavers' legal entitlements and the additional discretionary support that the local authority provides.

The Government's expectation is that each local authority will publish the local offer (subject to the consultation requirements) within six to nine months from commencement of the Act. The local offer will inform the support from the local authority, outlining links to universal services, partners and other agencies, across Health and wellbeing, Education, Training, Employment, Accommodation, Finance, Relationships, and participation in society.

#### **Our next steps:**

The Pathway Team will consult with our care leavers and the 'I still matter' group to co-produce a care leaver local offer that is meaningful and reflects the needs, views and wishes of the care leavers we are

responsible for. It is anticipated this will be brought to Corporate Parenting Board by September 2018.

## **2. 21-25 Support**

Section 3 of the Children & Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to offer Pathway Adviser support to all care leavers up to age 25, irrespective of whether they are engaged in education or training. This includes care leavers who return to the local authority at any point after the age of 21, up to age 25 and who request support.

### **Our next steps:**

DMT agreed an additional Pathway Worker post to support the anticipated increase in workload which is likely to be around 20 young people which is an increase of 25%. Our care leaver local offer will clarify the support our care leavers 21 to 25 will be entitled too but as a guide when a care leaver requests help, a Pathway worker will assess their needs and develop a pathway plan setting out what support the local authority will provide.

## **3. The Care Leaver Covenant**

There is wide recognition that care leavers have faced many challenges in their lives and are likely to need much more support than other young people in making the transition to adulthood. The Department of Education want Government departments and their agencies, relevant partners, charities and private sector organisations to contribute to the wider corporate parenting family.

The Department for Education is therefore introducing a 'care leaver covenant' that will enable organisations to make commitments to care leavers, within the spirit of the corporate parenting principles, in a way that is most appropriate to them.

An example given by the Department of Education is: a contractor will negotiate with organisations, companies and services, e.g IKEA or another large company offering discount or special offers for care leaver country wide.

## **Next Steps**

The contract for the covenant has been open to national bids and will be announced shortly.

## **4. Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Care & Pathway Planning**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines, for the first time in law, the role of corporate parent. The Principles are set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act. Local authorities must have regard to the principles when exercising their functions in relation to children in care and care leavers. They apply to the whole local authority and not just to Children's Services functions.

The guidance describes the role that councils play in looking after children as a unique responsibility and one of the most important things we do.

The corporate parenting principles are not requirements, as the detail of what local authorities must do to effectively care for children in care and care leavers is addressed through existing legislation, regulations and accompanying statutory guidance. The corporate parenting principles are intended to inform how a local authority carries out those existing responsibilities, whether that is about assessing a looked after child's needs or listening to and taking account of the wishes and feelings of care leavers.

The principles are intended to encourage local authorities to be ambitious and aspirational for children in care and care leavers and should be led by the Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services. The principles broadly fit with our Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2016-2020 and current practice which is outlined below.

## **The Principles**

1. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people

Examples:- Pledge to Young People. Free gym membership to all CYPIC and care leavers. Work around a Pledge with Yorkshire Police regarding non criminalisation of children in care.

2. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

Examples:- Voice and Advocacy Service including SMTIM, ISM and IMT groups. Children in care and care leaver participation in CYPIC reviews and Pathway plan reviews. SMTIM representation at CIC Strategic Partnership and Corporate Parenting Board.

3. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people

Examples:- Young people's interview panels for social work recruitment. Practice changes such extending taster flat to 6 weeks in line with care leavers views. Children in care input in health assessment video.

4. 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

Examples:- Guaranteed interview for care leavers for CYC apprenticeships. Children in care treated with priority for access to school places.

5. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people

Examples:- Supporting care leavers to visit Universities.

6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;

Examples:- Children in Permanent Placement team to offer stability of social worker to children in long term care. Placement Review to look at options around increasing placement stability.

7. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Examples:- Provision of Staying put allows those young people to remain in that household post 18 and develop skills at a gradual pace. Children in care can spend 4 to 6 weeks in a CYC taster flat to check out their skills and experience living on their own. When assessed as ready CYC also offers the opportunity of trainer flats for 6 months which supports the young person in preparation for taking on a tenancy at age 18.

### **Our next steps**

Ongoing work with departments within the Council and wider organisations, via the care leaver covenant, to embed new Corporate Parenting Principles. Corporate Parenting Board may wish to consider to what extent are the needs and priorities of children in care and care leavers reflected in local strategic needs assessments, local service provision, and development plans.

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