

## **Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15**

### **Moving into Adulthood for Care Leavers Progress**

#### **Objective 1**

**Create more supported accommodation options, including some which can take young people with complex needs, including in emergencies.**

##### **1.1 Taster Flat**

The Accommodation Officer oversees the Taster Flat, with a series of four week opportunities for a range of young people over each year. Following the experience young people return to their foster or residential placement. An assessment of their time in the flat is then completed. This assessment informs of skills to develop and future accommodation options.

##### **1.2 Trainer Flats**

When young people are ready to consider independent accommodation the accommodation officer supports them in their consideration of moving into a 6 month council trainer flat. If this progresses well, the trainer flat can progress to be a full tenancy.

##### **1.3 Supported accommodation in SASH, Scarcroft Road and Southlands Road**

The accommodation officer maintains strong links with the providers of each of these moves onto semi independent settings to ensure that care leavers can be considered alongside other young people requiring accommodation

##### **1.4 Specialist landlords**

Occasionally the accommodation officer will liaise with specialist settings, when a young person has complex needs which may require additional support in or outside of York.

## **1.5 Skipbridge Farm**

A link with a local provider of “moving on” cottages located on the A59 has been established. The accommodation officer maintains the link with the provider and this has facilitated several placements which otherwise would have required a place at Howe Hill Hostel (or Peasholme or Arclight)

## **1.6 Housing Services**

The accommodation officer has a key link with housing services in relation to care leavers, who present as homeless unexpectedly (e.g. having lived out of area and then deciding to return to York; living with extended family and then being asked to leave: breakdown of accommodation with a partner; domestic violence etc) This designated link focuses upon the need for immediate accommodation for a care leaver and exploration of placement at Howe Hill, Peasholme or Arclight

## **Objective 2**

**Ensure the sustainability of the Staying Put scheme by recruiting enough foster carers to replace those whose young people stay put.**

2.1 Staying Put has progressed well, numbers continue to rise. Depending on foster carers room capacity it may take up beds that could be used for foster placements. Recruitment is ongoing with the family placement team.

## **Objective 3**

**Develop a more consistent approach to preparing young people for independent living by creating a programme that builds up their skills and can be used in a variety of settings. Adopt a more structured approach to the identification of young people’s skills and learning needs when they are moving to independent living, and include this in the planning process.**

3.1 The Pathway practice manager and the teenage foster carers support group have developed a document to enable foster carers to record a young person's skills, progress and identifying areas for further development. The document has been sent out for consultation by foster carers. It is expected that the document will be discussed at looked after young people's reviews. Foster carers will take the lead role in supporting young people to gain independence skills and prepare for independent living.

3.2 This assessment document serves as both a gauge of the skills a young person has reached and identifies areas that need to be developed. The information will feed into the young person's pathway plan. This then allows the opportunity to bring in support from other teams or agencies if required and prevents the young person leaving care without the level of skills they need. Consistency will be achieved by all foster carers using the document. The pathway accommodation officer will liaise with the social worker, fostering placement worker, independent reviewing officer and foster carers to co-ordinate the process. .

#### **Objective 4**

**Use the new provision at Howe Hill to build on and develop existing links with colleagues in housing, education and the voluntary sector, to increase the education, training and employment options available to care leavers.**

4.1 Howe Hill is a tier 1 accommodation provision. Howe Hill is staffed 24 hours a day. Young people are offered breakfast and evening meals. Partnership work with Howe Hill and the Pathway team is developing to meet the needs of care leavers. We are continuing to consult with housing colleagues and Howe Hill staff about moving young people on from Howe Hill to tier 2 provisions.

4.2 The Youth Education Workers offer a daily programme including education, housing management, independence & life skills. This is supported by the Pathway ETE officer and springboard worker. The

opportunity to gain independence skills has been extended to young people preparing to move on from foster care.

## **Objective 5**

**Further develop the opportunities for care leavers to access training and employment within the council, e.g. “employment with training”, and ensure that HR processes are supporting the access of care leavers to jobs and apprenticeships.**

5.1 The education, training and employment officer in the Pathway Team ensures that all training and employment opportunities for care leavers are identified and promoted to the young people. There have been several instances in which the prompt identification of opportunities within both council and other businesses, apprenticeships, employment with training and other employment have been achieved for care leavers.

## **Objective 6**

**Clarify the process by which over 21s can access Pathway support when eligible.**

6.1 A post 21 support protocol relating to further and higher education is now in place. This affords a clear referral process with a step by step guide. There is an assessment document to enable the pathway worker to ensure that young people, who wish to resume or commence further or higher education after their 21st birthday are afforded this opportunity. The pathway team is presently supporting 2 young people at York College who would otherwise not be able to attend. In addition there are 2 young people, who are completing their university education after their 21st birthday, with council support.

6.2 It is hoped that the number of young people, who will continue to revisit further or higher education, after their 21st birthday, will continue to increase. It is noted that many care leavers do not feel ready to consider these opportunities in the years between 16 and 21, therefore the support is offered to enhance their potential at a later stage.

## **Objective 7**

**Put in place better arrangements for the provision of health care to young people and care leavers who are no longer at school, and offer them choices in how they access health care and information.**

7.1 All young people are encouraged to be registered with a GP, dentist & optician. All young people are given information regarding how and where they can access sexual health advice and support. All young people are given information regarding how and where they can access health care for drug or alcohol issues. It has been noted by health commissioners that there is a gap in the provision health assessment support to young people aged 16 to 18 , who progress into non-school education settings (cf York College etc) This matter is being considered in any new commissioning considerations.

## **Objective 8**

**Ensure there is easy access to mental health and counselling services for care leavers and young adults up to the age of 25.**

8.1 Castlegate is the main point of contact for young people to access counselling services. Kate Gibbon provides a drop in fortnightly at Howe Hill for young people.

8.2 Some young people do access such services via their GP or health visitor. Young people may have established a link with a Child and Adolescent health service practitioner prior to their 18th birthday. In some instances, this contact has continued while future links are made with services for young adulthood. Provision for the emotional well being of care leavers 18-25 remains an area for greater consideration, with the pathway support workers providing a link where possible into existing services.

## **Objective 9**

**The Pathway Team will put in place a system of exit interviews for care leavers approaching 21 years, and use this information to improve the service.**

9.1 This process is in place, much of the feedback is very positive. The support young people have received from Pathway is recognised and appreciated.

9.2 Young people have had the opportunity to comment and influence the service they receive. The feedback also gives the Pathway staff the opportunity to be aware just how much their support is valued by young people.

9.3 Feedback has included young people's wishes for even more training and employment opportunities within the council.

9.4 The young people have commented that they are pleased that that the council and elected members take their role as corporate parent seriously.

## **Objective 10**

**Jointly with other agencies, create more accessible social, leisure, sport and cultural opportunities for care leavers, to equip them to enjoy living independently.**

10.1 The high cost of living means many care leavers live in difficult financial circumstances and cannot enjoy the City's wealth of resources, cultural and social opportunities. Although all care leavers are offered free membership at 'Energise' Gym they don't want to go on their own or maybe live the other side of York so getting there is difficult.

10.2 The Pathway Team run social events, cinema, bowling, summer trip, meals out, Christmas dinner at the Mansion House.

David Purcell, Practice Manager, Pathway Team

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