

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
20 FEBRUARY 2018
CARE LEAVERS OFFER AND SUPPORTED
ACCOMMODATION

Report from: Ann Domeney - Assistant Director, Children and Adults

Author: Rachael Horner - Partnership Commissioning Programme Lead for
Looked After Children

Carl Burton – Interim Children’s Programme Lead

Summary

Changes in national policy and legislation require the Council to reassess the existing services provided for those young people who are leaving the care of the Council. Published in July 2016 the ‘Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence’ details the requirements of the Local Authority to support those young people leaving care.

The above is legislated under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 calling for more innovative and effective services to be developed and delivered for care leavers. Providing more practical and emotional support, a stronger offer and to empower care leavers to design services for themselves. To achieve the latter a strong level of engagement, with care leavers will be required, where they are integral to the design and innovation of new or existing services. The overall aim being to support care leavers for the challenges of living independently, support those that are young parents and embed a culture of corporate parenting responsibility. Ensuring the best possible service is developed and the Authority is compliant with the requirements of the new legislation.

This paper provides an assessment of the potential demand created by the new legislation and recommendations for taking the work forward on the development of a full and comprehensive Care Leavers Offer. It is requested the report be noted and the recommendations considered.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The policy area this falls within is the ‘Looked after Children’s Strategy’ and falls within the Children’s Service Budget.

1.2 This report and its recommendations are being put forward and considered by Cabinet on 6 March.

1.3 The Health and Wellbeing Board has previously requested that it be provided a report on accommodation provision for care leavers.

2. Background

2.1 Changes in national policy and legislation require the Council to reassess the existing services for those young people who are leaving the care of the Council.

2.2 Published in July 2016 the 'Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence' details the requirements of the Local Authority to support those young people leaving their care. There are 5 key outcomes detailed in the legislation:

- 1) Young people should be better prepared and supported to live independently.
- 2) To improve access to education, employment and training.
- 3) For the young people to experience stability in their lives, and feel safe and secure.
- 4) Improved access to health support.
- 5) For the young people to achieve financial stability.

2.3 The above legislation follows on from the 2013 – Care Leaver Strategy founded within the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Young Person Act 2008 and the Children and Families Act 2014. The responsibility for the evaluation and monitoring of services offered to Care Leavers remains with Ofsted via their 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services: Single Inspection Framework.

2.4 Nationally the outcomes for Care Leavers have been proven to be significantly poorer than those of young people of the same age within the general population. Many young carers struggle to make a positive transition to independent living and struggle to gain sustainable employment, training and/or further education. Many care leavers are vulnerable to exploitation and at risk of being criminalised. Statistically care leavers are more than 4 times more likely to go to prison than university, with many ending up homeless and without any support.

2.5 In 2015 Ofsted stated that care leavers in Medway benefit from high-quality individual support from their Personal Advisers. Noting that, from often low starting points, care leavers make considerable progress towards being able to live as independent adults. Supported by a stable and highly motivated leaving care team, rating the overall service as good, which is a significant achievement.

2.6 The new legislation calls for more innovative and effective services to be developed with and delivered for care leavers. Empowering care leavers to

design services for themselves will increase the strength of the Offer and provide more practical and emotional support. The aim being to support care leavers in readiness for the challenges of living independently, support those that are young parents and embed a culture of corporate parenting responsibility.

- 2.7 The central requirements for Local Authorities set out in the legislation are to create and publish a Care Leavers Offer covering the main outcomes stated above and to provide personal advisor support for all Care Leavers up to the age of 25yrs. The legislation previously only made provision for all care leavers up to 21yrs unless in full-time education, where the duties extended to the age of 25yrs.
- 2.8 The level of support required for those falling under the extended duties is for information, advice and guidance only with the young person being able to request support at any time up the age of 25yrs, even if previously they have declined and/or received help.
- 2.9 Current records indicate that the Children’s Access to Resources placement team is making between 34 and 61 Supported Accommodation placements for over 16 year olds annually. Of the 29 current total active placements, 19 are care leavers. Placements tend to be fairly short term although there are some individuals with highly complex needs who need longer periods of support.

Year placement made	still in placement	LESS THAN MONTH	LESS THAN 6 MONTHS	6-12 MONTHS	OVER YEAR	Grand Total
2015	3	1	12	11	28	61
2016	3	7	12	6	3	34
2017	21	3	12			42
2018	2					2
Grand Total	29	11	36	17	31	139

- 2.10 Although there is a procurement Framework in place it is not meeting the needs of our young people. There are therefore a high number of spot purchased providers at present and 85% of all young people in Supported Accommodation (SA) are in spot purchased placements. Most providers are local to Medway and two thirds of SA placements are within Medway. The upcoming procurement exercise will be looking to stimulate the market to provide some more innovative and wide ranging solutions to the provision of accommodation for our young people.

3. Options

- 3.1 The option to do nothing is not a viable option, as it is a legislative requirement that the Local Authority creates and publishes a Care Leavers Offer by June 2018. If not completed the Local Authority would not be compliant with current legislation.

- 3.2 What Medway's Offer to Care Leavers covers and contains therefore needs to look at the demand and requirements that will be placed on it.
- 3.3 In addition to the statutory requirement to develop the Offer to Care Leavers, there is also a requirement to secure placements for semi-independent Supported Accommodation for over 16 year olds including some care leavers. The existing contractual Framework is planned to end as of November 2018. The re-procurement process will commence following Cabinet therefore to ensure sufficiency of placements and compliance with procurement legislation.

4. Estimated Future Demand and Requirements

- 4.1 Looking to the new legislative requirements the likely impact on cost and service support can be extrapolated from the current levels of activity and percentage breakdown and/or ratios.
- 4.2 There are currently 370 care leavers 18-25yrs that Medway hold responsibility for. Of the total cohort it has been estimated that the need levels of the young people are as follows, with red being the highest level of need, then amber and green respectively.

Category of Need	Age								Total
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Red	5	3	5	4	13	4	8		42
Amber	38	25	25	26	22	35	27	3	201
Green	8	12	6	16	31	38	15	1	127
Grand Total	51	40	36	46	66	77	50	4	370

- 4.3 If the same pattern of entry and exit into and from care remains consistent with the previous 3yrs, it has been estimated that the overall cohort of care leavers is set to increase to a maximum of 376 within this year dropping to 312 by 2020 (**See Appendix 1**). It is noted however that the number of entrant's into care is highly variable and therefore likely to fluctuate year to year. One key factor to this variable however is that of early help and prevention, which if performing well, will prevent children and young people coming into the care system and so effectively reduce the demand on services for this cohort.
- 4.4 With the age rise to 25yrs requiring a **Personal Advisor (PA)** potentially an additional 189 young people would require access to a PA. If calculated against what would be deemed an ideal case load of approximately 20 cases per FTE, potentially this could equate to a requirement of an additional 9.5 FTE. An increase of this level will also have an associated impact on the existing Care Leavers Service structure as it could not currently sustain an increase in personnel of this level under its current form due to the supervisory requirements.
- 4.5 In considering the **accommodation** needs of Care Leavers, Appendix 2 shows the breakdown of current care leavers by age, need level and current

status. As the table shows those in high need have the lowest percentage level of independent living status, with those in low need having the highest level percentage of independent living.

- 4.6 If calculating the potential demand for supported accommodation is calculated on the level of need and existing requirements as shown, then approximately 27% of the Amber cohort is in utilisation and/or need of supported accommodation and arguably 100% of the red cohort would potentially require this form of support. This is especially true of those young people exiting custody. This would equate to approximately 115 young people who potentially may require supported accommodation.
- 4.7 A fully developed **Care Leaver's Offer** is required to be published. This will require the Authority to declare its intentions for supporting care leavers and which services are applicable to which cohorts. This in itself will mean the Authority creating marketing materials and the production of guidance for the young people, the cost of which will be borne by in-house resources. The information will need to be web-based and as such offer a service in its own right, so potentially further reducing the need for 1:1 support services. The publication of the offer would fulfil the criteria of the legislation that all young people leaving care are aware of the offer of support available, including any financial entitlement. A full draft of the proposed Care Leavers Offer can be seen in **Appendix 3**.
- 4.8 The legislation also states an intention of the development of **apprenticeships** for young people who have or are in the process of leaving care. This would need to be carefully considered by the Council with respect to the current development work in this area. It is possible however that apprenticeships could be a way of sourcing additional support in the implementation and on-going development of the Care Leavers Offer.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The legislation requires a robust and high level of engagement with Care Leavers and key stakeholders to ensure services are fit for purpose, they meet the needs of the young people and are sustainable. In support of the development of the Offer existing care leavers were consulted with via a questionnaire which was issued in December 2017. A full analysis of the consultation is available upon request.
- 5.2 In total 35 care leavers responded to the consultation which asked them questions regarding the following areas of interest, to determine current needs, levels of confidence and their current situations;
- Demographics.
 - Young people should be better prepared and supported to live independently.
 - To improve access to education, employment and training.
 - For the young people to experience stability in their lives, and feel safe and secure.

- Improved access to health support.
- For the young people to achieve financial stability.

5.3 The results of the questionnaire will enable services to be developed that best serve their needs and support young people to live independently. The main conclusions from the consultation are as follows:

- Respondents feel confident in making the transition to independent living and that the support of a Personal Advisor is important to them. The need to have regular contact and consistency of personal advisor is also a prominent feature. As is having the support available to them up to the age of 25 years.
- The financial situation of the respondents appears to be varied with a big differential in the income levels experienced by the young people. Benefits feature heavily in the source of income, thus any changes to benefits would adversely affect young people who have to live independently.
- In terms of the ambitions of the respondents these were uniform across all respondents, with stability, security, establishing a good career or employment and settling down to begin a family, being the key factors mentioned.
- The interests of care leavers are wide and varied but health and well-being were prominent themes within the responses given. This being the case greater access to health services would appear to be important to the respondents.
- The respondents appear to feel safe and secure in where they live and only a minority have either been cautioned or have received a criminal conviction.

5.4 From the above it is possible to conclude that having the support and consistency of a Personal Advisor is potentially a major factor in being able to support young people leaving care in their transition to independent living. The young people appear capable and resilient but still value a point of contact they can trust and access if they are in need of support, advice and/or guidance.

6. Supported Accommodation

6.1 Following Cabinet consideration of the Offer to Care Leavers and the business case for Supported Accommodation, the process for re-procuring the Supported Accommodation Framework will commence. This is the Framework contract through which semi-independent accommodation for young people over 16 is procured. While it is driven by the need to accommodate 16-17 year olds, it will also be the mechanism through which some care leavers are accommodated. Although the internal consultation

process has not been finalised, currently the ambition is to approach the market with the specification described below.

- 6.2 The specification of the provision of Supported Accommodation must consider the potential varying support needs of the young people over 16 years old both in and leaving care. To adequately meet these needs a mixed economy of housing options will be required. Subject to market engagement and the procurement process, these have been identified and broken down into 5 main categories which are as follows:

A: Emergency Crisis Care – this is accommodation available immediately in support of young people in crisis who need a temporary housing solution to enable a full assessment of needs and next steps to take place. The placement per person should last no-longer than 96 hours and every individual should be supported 24/7. Intakes can occur at any time of the day or night.

B: Stabilisation – this is accommodation which enables the stabilisation of young people who are of a relatively high level of need. Each respective placement should have a time span of 3-6 months with onsite support available 24/7, relative to accommodation issues only. The support for the individual will be a minimum of 20hrs per week.

C: Development and Training - this is accommodation which supports the training and development of the individual in preparation for moving to independent living. Each respective placement should have a time span of 6-12months with support offered to the individual at a minimum of 10 hours per week. Some on-site supervision will be in place to oversee building issues only.

D: Semi-independent living: - this is accommodation which supports the training and life-skill development of the individual in preparation for moving to independent living. Each respective placement should have a time span of 9-18months, with support offered to a minimum of 5 hours per week.

E: Therapeutic: - this is accommodation for high risk young people with long-term support needs and or those exiting secure accommodation. Therapeutic services will be available and each respective placement will be determined on a case-by-case basis, supporting the needs of young people who have long-term identified needs and/or those that are resistant to the above forms of support. There is no time limit beyond that of statutory duty with regards to the length of each residency.

- 6.3 Please note support for the individual is relative to both accommodation and emotional, behavioural and general well-being, except for category E which is focused on the emotional, behavioural and well-being of the individual only.
- 6.4 The volume of units required per category is being estimated. Each of the potential facilities would need to be in differing and varied geographical areas of Medway.

7. Advice and analysis

- 7.1 Young people clearly value the role of Personal Advisor and given the feedback from the consultation and the fact the Leaving Care Service achieved a good rating from Ofsted it is recommended that additional capacity is considered to enable the meeting of the legislative requirements of offering Personal Advisor support to all up to the age of 25yrs.
- 7.2 If young people leaving the care of the Local Authority are to successfully transition to independent living, a wide variety of support is required along with supported accommodation where and when appropriate.
- 7.3 Given the above it is advised the Care Leavers Offer is accepted, with a view to being implemented from April 1st 2018 in line with the legislative requirements.
- 7.4 Further to this, the Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to give full endorsement of the development of services to care leavers engaging support from all departments, as appropriate, in development of continuously improving services and outcomes to those who are most vulnerable.
- 7.5 Consideration is also being given to a proposal for the use of Aut Even in the development of supported accommodation and that overall the proposed suite of supported accommodation is agreed for procurement, to be in place for November 2018 when the existing Framework contract comes to an end.
- 7.6 With regards to the Diversity Impact Assessment the overall findings are that services and the offer will need to be inclusive and enhanced to be increasingly effective and efficient in supporting care leavers to live independently and thrive in their local communities, promoting inclusion and diversity at all times.

8. Risk management

- 8.1 The risks associated with this business case are as follows:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate Risk	Risk Rating
Inability to procure the required suite of supported accommodation	Low and/or inadequate response from the market providers to the Authorities requirements for supported accommodation	Market Engagement with providers to determine the level of response from providers and identify any major concerns or barriers to achieving the required accommodation and support.	C2
Failure to ensure all care leavers are in suitable	Failure to meet statutory requirements for Care Leavers accommodation which could result in a	Ensure capacity is sufficient to ensure compliance to statutory requirements	B2

accommodation	failure of the associated Ofsted Inspection		
Care Leavers Offer	Failure to meet statutory requirements	Ensure Care Leavers Offer is agreed and published	C2

9. Financial implications

9.1 As stated previously, it is not possible to determine the exact financial implications of the changes in the legislation and provision of services required. It is clear however there will be potential significant implications for the budgets associated with supported accommodation and Personal Advisor support, given the potential increase in the level of demand for services. It does not appear there will be sufficient capacity in existing resources to meet the anticipated increased demand.

10. Legal implications

10.1 Compliance is required to the noted legislation, as detailed in 2.2.

11. Recommendations

11.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- i) Note the development of the Offer to Care Leavers and to comment on ideas and initiatives that they can contribute towards developing a robust and comprehensive Offer from all partners, as described in the report.
- ii) Note the imminent re-procurement of the semi-independent Supported Accommodation service and upcoming engagement with the Market.
- iii) Note and consider its contribution to the development of apprenticeships for young people who have or are in the process of leaving care.

Lead officer contact

Rachael Horner - Partnership Commissioning Programme Lead for Looked After Children

Telephone: 01634 332640 E-mail: Rachael.Horner@Medway.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Care Leaver forecast numbers

Appendix 2 - Care Leavers need levels and current status

Appendix 3 - Care Leavers Offer