

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9th March 2021

Provisions for Care Leavers update

Reasons for the Report

1. The report is to provide the Committee with an update inform the Committee on the current work that is undertaken to support young people leaving care to ensure they make positive transitions into education employment or training and are supported with their housing needs. The report also aims to showcase the multi-agency working that is taking place to ensure that we are taking a preventative approach to supporting young people where possible.

Background

2. Annual report data indicated that becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or experiencing homelessness disproportionately affected young people leaving care. Data indicated that we were below our annual targets and further work was required to enhance the support of offer and to better understand our data.

Annual Report Data – 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020.

- The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care - 2019/20 = **54.1%** (40 / 74) (target 62%)
- The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care 2019/20 = **41.5%** (39 / 94) (Target 52 %)

- **21.4 %** of all care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year 2019/20

3. It was clear that in order to have a positive impact on care leavers the support needed to be in place as early as possible and we needed to work better with our partners in order to build a holistic package of support that could begin when children are looked after and are in statutory education.

Care Leavers Not in Education Training or Employment

4. **Current data** – a new data collection format has been implemented for this year in order to show a truer picture of sustained engagement in education training or employment (EET) for care leavers. New measures capture those care leavers who have had 3 consecutive months of EET during the past year (for both those who left care a year ago and those who left care 2 years ago.) Results for these new measures so far this year indicate an improved picture.

Those who left care last year – 67% (last years figure 54%) – (target 55%)

Those who left 2 years ago - 56% (last years figure 41.5) – (target 55%)

5. Further work is under way to better understand the data we capture so we can improve and enhance a targeted response. Below data sets show numbers of current care leavers both in education training and employment and not in education training and employment broken down by age.

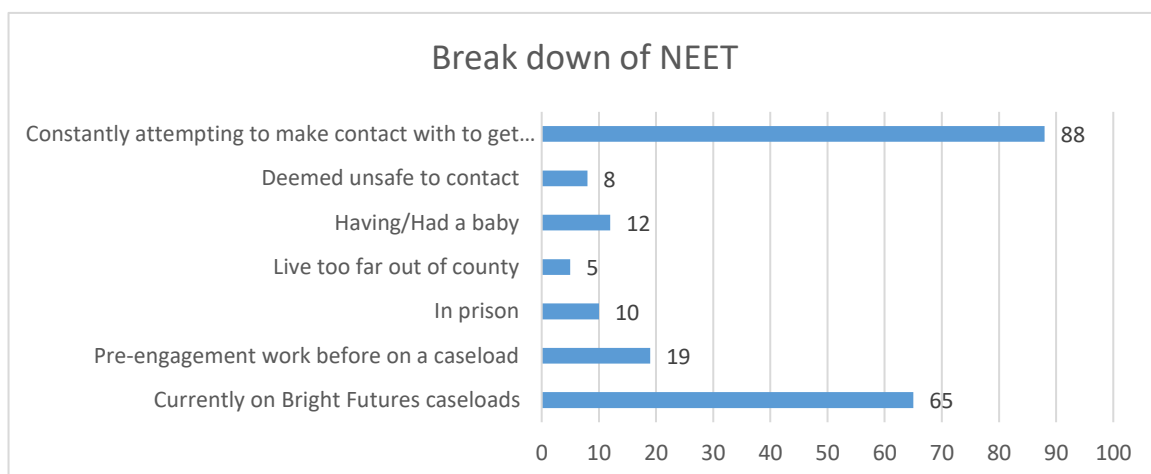
Category	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Grand Total
NEET	11	28	33	36	44	28	7	2	0	0	189	11
EET	65	69	60	55	38	18	17	7	2	2	333	65
total	76	97	93	91	82	46	24	9	2	2	522	76

% NEET	14%	29%	35%	40%	54%	61%	29%	22%	0%	0%	36%	14%
% in EET	86%	71%	65%	60%	46%	39%	71%	78%	100%	100%	64%	86%

6. Support available

- **PA Service** - The personal advisor service in Cardiff provides young people leaving care with advice, guidance and support to build on their individual strengths, in order to achieve their goals and reach their potential
- **Extended Entitlement** - extending the PA service for 21-25 year olds
- **Into Work Service – Bright Futures** - Bright Futures Project is an Into Work Advice Service bespoke employment and training support for looked after care experienced young people in Cardiff.
- **Into Work Service – Bright Start Work Placement Scheme** - The Bright Start Work placement scheme is a 6 month work placement.
- **Into Work Service – Miles Project** - - Some young people live in supported accommodation or a hostel. Due to these specific barriers, young people have access to the MILES Project as well as the Bright Futures Project.
- **Cardiff Youth Service – Youth Mentors** – Offering mentoring support to young people who are identified as not in education training or employment or who are at risk of becoming NEET
- **Adolescent Resource Centre** – Intensive therapeutic family support for young people who are deemed 'edge of care'

7. Into Work Service data provides an enhanced analysis of the current care experienced young people 16-24 who are NEET. (as of 31/01/21)





8. Partnership Approach

Joint Vulnerable Young Peoples Panel - A weekly multi-agency partnership meeting to communicate and share information, discuss strategies and plan a multi-agency response for young people in Cardiff we are most concerned about. The panel is a way to identify gaps in support and escalate to the most appropriate service or panel if necessary and a mechanism to step up / step down between key services if required.

Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy –The strategy is due to be published by April 2021 –This is a multi-agency strategy and we have worked closely with young people to ensure the principles and goals laid out in the strategy are meaningful to young people and can be easily communicated. The strategy aim is;

Preventing and intervening to address adolescent harm; promoting adolescent resilience and enabling young people to live safely in their families and/or communities wherever possible.

Young Homelessness

9. Children's Services are working closely with housing and communities to enhance and develop the accommodation available via the Gateway for young people including young care leavers.
10. Data from the young person's gateway (Dec 2020) shows the numbers of young people that have a CLA due; who have been accommodated over the past 8 months.

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
4	4	6	11	2	10	9	3	49

11. Forming part of the Adolescent Service we have a Homelessness Social Worker who specifically works with young people experiencing homelessness and undertakes Southwark Assessments when required. A Southwark assessment will assess the housing needs of 16/17 year olds and will identify if they need ongoing support from Children's Services and become looked after.

Between September 2019 and Dec 2020;

- 50 Children (16/17 year olds) assessed for their housing needs by Southwark Social Worker
- 33 of these given their options under the 'Southwark Assessment'
- 22 chose the housing route
- 11 opted for Children's Services intervention
- 17 remaining – work undertaken in order to remain with family (, 3 of these on care and support plans)

Issues

12. Gateway accommodation is at capacity – it can be difficult to place young people into the most appropriate accommodation. We are working to resolve this and additional capacity is being added via housing securing additional properties and streamlining the Youth Gateway process. Improved working relationships between the service areas has helped. We have dedicated 'champions' within the PA service who can support other staff across Children's Services understand and embed the gateway processes.

13. COVID has raised challenges for the work taking place with care leavers who are NEET – much of the engagement needed to take place online and work placements and training have been challenging to manage. Data from this period shows an encouraging picture with many new engagements and young people entering EET.

From January to October 2020 Bright Futures received **100** new engagements, of which **27** entered employment, **38** entered education, **38** started training and **14** started a Bright Start work placement.

14. We have identified that we need to make improvements in collating, sharing and understanding the data we have regarding young people who are NEET and who are care leavers. Service areas will all collect different data sets that are not easily comparable as they are on different data systems at present. There are also slightly different performance measures for each service (for example different age brackets, specific focus on looked after children or those leaving care.) We need to be able to track young people through their transitions to ensure support is in place where it is most needed and we can better identify gaps. We are currently working with the Youth Service to ensure that their NEET data and their Vulnerability Assessment Profiling tool identify all children looked after as requiring enhanced support.

Financial Implications

15. This report is for information only and does not, in itself, lead to any new financial commitments, with the activities referred to funded from existing resources. However, the report does reference capacity challenges, in relation to gateway accommodation. Should there be a need to invest in this provision, it would be expected for this to be met from within existing resources. Should that not be possible, a business case will need to be developed in advance of any investment taking place.

Legal Implications

16. There are no legal implications arising from this report

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- a. Identify any concerns and how the planned improvements can be identified and monitored over the forthcoming year
note the update provided

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD

Director of Childrens' Social Services

3rd March 2021