

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2 October 2023

Personal Advisors Service Update: Support For Care Leavers

Reasons for the Report

1. This report has been prepared to provide the Committee with an update regarding the Personal Advisors Service and support provided to care experienced young people. The report aims to inform the Committee on the current work that is being undertaken to support young people leaving care, to present information on the service over the past 12 months as well as future developments.

Background

2. The Personal Advisor service is a fundamental service providing support, advice and guidance for young people aged between 16- 25. It is a statutory requirement outlined in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
3. The function of the service is to support care leavers with all aspects of the transition from care towards independence. Leaving care can be a complex and problematic process and that this is a significant factor, especially in the transition towards adulthood and independence. The Personal Advisor therefore supports the young person in undertaking and reviewing their Pathway Plans and ensuring the plan meets its purpose and achieve the aims and objectives for individuals.
4. The Personal Advisor has a duty to co-ordinate the provision of services to ensure that the young person's needs are being adequately met. This includes the young person's health and wellbeing and provision of services accessible to them. Education, training, and employment; Pathway plans must have an explicit focus

on career planning, taking into account the young person's aspirations, skills, and educational potential. Financial capabilities and money management and finally Immigration status of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and former UASC. Planning transition to adulthood for UASC is a particularly complex process that needs to address the young people's care needs in the context of wider asylum and immigration legislation and how these needs change over time.

5. Care experienced young people should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent.
6. The service has recently moved into Adults, Housing and Communities under the management of the Advice Service. Aligning the service to provide a holistic and cohesive approach of being able to address the needs of the young person with more of a wrap around of services. This includes the Into Work team, Money Advice services and embedding closer links with Housing. The Young Person's Multi-disciplinary Team is accessed for those young people with more complex needs to prevent homelessness and Transitions Service can be accessed more readily and prevent delays in needs being met.
7. The Basic Income Pilot is also being undertaken with 98 young people across the service. The entry to the pilot has now ended but it will continue to progress until 2025. The service is working closely with the Money Advice Team in ensuring that all the young people have met the advice worker to discuss their individual circumstances to be able to make informed choices on entering the pilot. The service will continue to support the pilot in facilitating interviews with young people and ongoing surveys.
8. Wellbeing and mental health have been a reoccurring theme since coming through the pandemic. Lots of young people found isolation had impacted upon self-esteem and confidence. During the summer months the service received funding via Porsche and were able to put on activities to promote wellbeing, engagement and self-esteem. A total of 14 young people participated in Quad Biking, Aqua Park at the bay, and Canoeing on the Wye
9. The service celebrated Care Leavers week last October with activities including a visit Boulders, bowling and Ninja Warrior. The young people attending the

activities have service participated in consultations session in preparation for this year.

10. The service has also completed 'Getting Cooking' courses with 3 young people which were accredited and in turn they were awarded with cookery utensils and a voucher. The sessions were well received and with additional funding will continue to run over the course of the year.
11. There has been a noted increase in the number of young people accessing further education and university. The service has started working with universities in developing a work stream to ensure care experienced young people have access to all the additional services across different universities. This also includes access accommodation back in Cardiff during holidays times if they wish to return to the city.

Next Steps

12. The service will becoming embedded within Adults, Housing and Communities and strengthen relationships with partnerships.
13. The Leaving Care Padlet to be implemented within the service to allow young people easy access to services available to them. This can be accessed when needed and outside of working hours.
14. Develop parenting support groups for our young parents. Offering parenting group sessions and both separate mother and father groups.
15. To embed Extended Entitlement within the service. Under existing legislation in Wales, local authorities are required to proactively keep in touch with all care leavers until they reach age 21 unless they are in fulltime education were this is extended until 25. However, this is due to be amended and therefore the service is piloting the extended entitlement at present to capture data and evidence of what this service could look like in practice.

Financial Implications

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to not the Personal Adviser Service update and to make any observations or comments improvements that could be made to the service.

Heyley Beynon

Operational Manager Advice, Housing and Communities

18th September 2023