

Children and Young People Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Care Leavers EET

June 2021

Children and Young People Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
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Foreword

We are pleased to present the final report of the Children and Young People Select Committee following its review of Care Leavers EET.

Although outcomes for young people in Stockton were in line with national averages, the Select Committee were tasked with examining whether the Council was doing enough and what more could be done to further improve performance and outcomes for care leavers.

It has been illuminating to hear from Council Officers working with children in our care and Members were amazed by the commitment, care and dedication of these officers and the breadth of support provided. The Committee have also found it fascinating to explore approaches being taken by other Councils and particularly the innovative ways of brokering opportunities for young people as they make the difficult transition into independent living.

The Select Committee's recommendations seek to help children in our care become work ready and maximise their opportunities through strengthened partnership working and increased access to work experience and job opportunities.

Our thanks are extended to all those who contributed to our work and to the Council Officers who supported the Select Committee during the scrutiny review.



Councillor Carol Clark
Chair



Councillor Barbara Inman
Vice Chair

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

This review supports the Council Plan priority

- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm

Improving EET opportunities meets our Corporate Parent responsibilities for Care Leavers.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

We currently have 229 Care Leavers and this number will continue to rise alongside recent rises in the number of children entering our care.

Of these young people 66% are EET and 34% are NEET

On further breakdown of these figures, there are 161 of these young people who are aged 18 yrs. and over and 68 are aged between 16/17 yrs.

The percentage of NEET for 16/17 yr. olds is 9%

The percentage of NEET for 18+ is 44%

Whilst any plan to improve services won't necessarily produce direct savings, the benefit, however, will be seen on an individual basis and a reduction in reliance on the wider public services and accessing acute services such as mental health service or antisocial behaviour/police services.

Although outcomes for young people in Stockton were in line with national averages, the review would examine whether the Council was doing enough and what more needed to be done to further improve performance and outcomes for young people.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- What is the current data and intelligence around our care leavers who are not in education employment or training (NEET)?
- What options are there to improve our performance?
- What support is there currently for this cohort of young people?
- What gaps in services are there so that a business plan can be developed to improve multi-agency and cross partner agency working?
- What best practice is there nationally?
- What do young people think about the support they have received?
- How well are Council Services working together and working with other agencies?

- What support is there for care leavers supporting families?
- What additional support is there for care leavers with a disability?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, key partners.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

Seven months:
 Scope and Project Plan agreed – 11 November 2020
 Evidence gathering – December 2020 - March 2021
 Draft Recommendations – 21 April 2021
 Final Report – 19 May 2021
 Submission to Cabinet – 24 June 2021

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

Data and reports from Leaving Care, Data and reports from Virtual Schools, Data and reports from Youth Direction, Case Studies, Central Government data/documents

National research – Living Wage – Joseph Rowntree

New information:

Further case studies, feedback from C&YPIOC from Let’s Take Action and NEET group, research and best practice from other Local Authorities who are reducing NEETs and improving EET outcomes

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

SBC Officers

Other Local Authorities

Young People/ Care Leavers

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Background/ Context
 Local and National Picture
 Importance of EET
 Outcomes for Care Leavers

Best Practice

Young People/ Care Leavers perspective both EET and NEET and with a disability

Executive Summary

Although outcomes for young people in Stockton were in line with national averages, the review examined whether the Council was doing enough and what more needed to be done to further improve performance and outcomes for young people.

The Select Committee's key findings were as follows:

- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 places a duty of Local Authorities to assess and meet the care and support needs of children moving from care into living independently
- At the time of the review, there were 242 care leavers and of these young people, 66% were EET and 34% were NEET.
- For those over 18, the NEET numbers increased with 92 EET (57%) and 69 NEET (43%)
- Out of the full NEET cohort, a much smaller number of young people are work ready. Other factors such as mental or physical health, homelessness, pregnancy etc. make it harder for them to enter employment or training. At the time of the review only 10 of the 69 NEET cohort were work ready
- In Stockton for March 2021 there were 6947 young people aged 16 – 19 and up to age of 25 with an active care plan. 5634 were in EET and 497 were NEET
- Outcomes for young people in Stockton are roughly in line with national averages
- Comparative data for March 2020 and March 2021 for the Year 12 and Year 13 cohort shows a small increase in NEET and Not Known compared to National and Regional data. In learning data for Stockton shows a slight increase but still slightly less than the Regional and National data
- The aim of the Leaving Care Service is to improve outcomes for young people as they leave care and make their transition into adulthood. Personal Advisors work across all domains of a young person's life (not just in relation to EET) helping with accommodation, finance, health issues, family contact, social/economic needs and with the development of independent living skills
- The Virtual School works with other services to support care leavers through ongoing challenge and support to all educational settings. The Virtual School funds two Senior Participation Advisors based within Youth Direction to work with Children and Young People in our Care (CYPIOC)
- The NEET and Progression Team in Youth Direction work to reduce the numbers of young people in NEET through impartial information, advice and guidance. The cohort of young people is tracked and monitored to ensure they are known to the service and offered appropriate support. Senior Participation Advisors work with over 100 young people made up from CYPIOC from Stockton Schools and Colleges and those in NEET
- Children's Service and HR work together to explore and promote opportunities for Children in Our Care (CIOC). All Council jobs are promoted to CIOC but specifically apprenticeship opportunities and they are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum essential criteria. Despite, this the Council have not received many applications from CIOC. Since 2017, the Council have recruited to 90 apprenticeship opportunities. Of the 90, four were from CIOC. Requests for work experience are considered on an ad hoc basis
- National and Regional funding provides some support to employers towards apprentice schemes. The Middlesbrough and Teesside Philanthropic Foundation have £85,864 to support of minimum of 16 CIOC secure an apprenticeship
- Support for employers is essential when opportunities are offered to care leavers
- More work experience would be useful to introduce care leavers to the working environment
- Partnership working can increase the number of opportunities available for care leavers
- It was important that staff resource was made available to identify opportunities for care leavers and develop links with agencies, colleges and employers and provide support to both the young person and employer
- Therapeutic approaches can help a young person become work ready, equipping them with the skills to cope with challenges and setbacks

- A survey of young people in Care and Care Leavers who were NEETS received positive feedback about the support they were receiving but reinforced the need for contact tailored to their individual needs

Conclusion

Although outcomes for young people in Stockton were roughly in line with national averages, the Select Committee concluded that more needed to be done for Children in Our Care as they make the difficult transition into independent living. The Select Committee recognised that Children in Our Care do not enjoy the inherited opportunities and access to family help and support. Often struggling to overcome issues with mental and emotional health and low aspirations, these children can feel locked out from achieving success.

The Select Committee's recommendations seek to do more to help Children in Our Care become work ready and maximise their opportunities through strengthened partnership working and a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and job opportunities with local employers and partner agencies.

Recommendations

That the Council:

Enabling Young People to be work ready

1. Improves transitions from pre to post 18 services and explore distinct approaches to provide coping mechanisms for our young people who are care leavers moving from education to employment or further training.
2. Redefines its approach and commitment to getting a young person in care or leaving care into education, employment or training by retraining and refocusing the workforce.

Creating Opportunities

3. Explores appropriate local and national incentives available for employee and employer when employment is gained.
4. Strengthens its commitment to seeking out and increasing access to interview opportunities to young people who are care leavers.
5. Ensures education, employment or training is at the forefront of Children's Services and partners' work with all children and young people, and in particular a strong focus on young people leaving care.
6. Has a corporate commitment to creating a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and apprenticeship opportunities within SBC for young people leaving care.

Brokerage Opportunities

7. Has a Borough-Wide commitment to creating a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and job opportunities with local employers and partner agencies for young people leaving care through the creation of a dedicated brokerage resource which will focus on pro-actively finding, placing and maintaining young people in education, employment and training.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report presents the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of the Care Leavers EET.

1.2 Although outcomes for young people in Stockton were in line with national averages, the review examined whether the Council was doing enough and what more needed to be done to further improve performance and outcomes for young people.

1.4 The Committee examined the following key lines of enquiry:

- What is the current data and intelligence around our care leavers who are not in education employment or training (NEET)?
- What options are there to improve our performance?
- What support is there currently for this cohort of young people?
- What gaps in services are there so that a business plan can be developed to improve multi-agency and cross partner agency working?
- What best practice is there nationally?
- What do young people think about the support they have received?
- How well are Council Services working together and working with other agencies?
- What support is there for care leavers supporting families?
- What additional support is there for care leavers with a disability?

1.5 The Select Committee has taken evidence from Council Officers (including the Leaving Care Service, Youth Direction, HR, Business Engagement and the Virtual School), Coventry City Council, North Yorkshire County Council and a leading homelessness charity. A survey of NEET young people was also carried out.

2.0 Evidence

Legislative Framework

- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers (2015)
- Keep on caring: supporting young people from care to independence (2016)
- Extending Personal Adviser support for all care leavers to age 25 (2018)
- Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers (2018)
- Local Offer Guidance (2018)

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 - Summary

2.1 The Act's main purpose is to help young people who have been looked after by a Local Authority move from care into living independently in as stable a fashion as possible. To do this it amends the Children Act (c.41) to place a duty on Local Authorities to assess and meet need. The responsible Local Authority is to be under a duty to assess and meet the care and support needs of *eligible* and *relevant* children and young people and to assist *former relevant children*, in particular in respect of their employment, education and training.

2.2 Key features and definitions are:

Eligible children are those in care aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for a period to be prescribed. The age at which spells in care start to count towards eligibility will also be prescribed.

Relevant children are those aged 16 and 17 who meet the criteria for eligible children but who leave care. Regulations may exclude certain groups, such as children who return home permanently and children who receive respite care. Local Authorities may, for example, take highly dependent children for short periods to give their carers a break. This group would remain the responsibility of their families and would not be eligible for the new arrangements even if their periods of respite care added up to the prescribed period for eligibility.

Former relevant children are those who before reaching the age of 18 were either eligible or relevant children.

The responsible local authority to be whichever one last looked after an eligible or relevant young person. That Local Authority will retain its responsibility wherever the young person may be living in England or Wales. At present responsibility falls to the authority in whose area they live. This has given rise to disputes over responsibility between Authorities which the new arrangements are intended to avoid.

A duty to keep in touch. The responsible Local Authority to be under a duty to keep in touch with all its care leavers who qualify for these new support arrangements, including those aged 18-21 and beyond in some cases.

Pathway Plans. All eligible and relevant and former relevant children and young people must have a Pathway Plan. This will take over from the existing care plan and will run at least until they are 21, covering education, training, career plans and support needed, for example to move into supported lodgings. Regulations may be made about Pathway Plans and their review. It is envisaged that they will be reviewed every six months or more frequently as needed.

Personal Adviser. All eligible, relevant and former relevant children and young people must have a Young Person's Adviser (referred to in the Act as a personal adviser) who will help to draw up the Pathway Plan and to make sure that it develops with the young person's changing needs and that it is implemented. When the young person leaves care and until they are at least 21 the Young Person's Adviser will be responsible for keeping in touch with them and ensuring that they receive the advice and support to which they are entitled. Regulations may provide that children in other groups might also have Young Person's Advisors.

Vacation support. The responsible Local Authority must assist care leavers in higher education, or in residential further education, with vacation accommodation where this is needed.

Assistance with employment. The responsible Local Authority must assist a former relevant child (and may assist other care leavers) with the costs associated with employment to the extent that his welfare requires it.

Education and training support. The responsible Local Authority must assist a former relevant child (and may assist other care leavers) with the costs of education and training up to the end of the agreed programme, even if that takes the young person past the age of 21, to the extent that his welfare and educational and training needs require it.

General assistance. The responsible Local Authority must assist a former relevant child (and may assist other care leavers) to the extent that his welfare requires it, either in kind or, exceptionally, in cash.

New financial regime

2.3 The Act simplifies the arrangements for financial support of young people leaving care. Previously, young people who left care at 16 could claim welfare benefits. Depending on their circumstances these might have been Income Support, Housing Benefit or income-based Job-Seekers Allowance.

2.4 The Act places Local Authorities under a new statutory duty to support these care leavers and at the same time removes entitlement to these means-tested benefits from *eligible* and *relevant* children.

2.5 These measures are intended to ensure that vulnerable young people receive the care and help they need to grow into independence. Local Authorities provide far higher levels of support than simply cash, especially when they work across Departments to fulfil their role as corporate parents. They will be able to ensure that young people in and leaving care are suitably accommodated, supported and advised according to their needs, rather than simply given money and obliged to fend for themselves.

Leaving Care Status

2.6 At the time of the review the numbers of care leavers and their categories was as follows:

- Eligible Care Leaver (16/17 and a CIOC) - 78
- Relevant Care Leaver (16/17 and left care) - 4
- Former Relevant Care Leaver (18+ and left care) - 155
- Qualifying Care Leaver (not completed 13 weeks CIOC) - 5

2.7 An Eligible Young Person:

- Is looked after
- Is aged 16 or 17, and
- Has been looked after by a local authority for a period of at least 13 weeks, or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks since the young person reached the age of 14 and includes at least one day after the age of 16 years
- All the provisions of being a CIOC
- Assessment of the young person's needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate to provide to the young person
- A pathway plan which is kept under regular review
- A personal advisor
- Not able to claim benefits except lone parents and those who qualify for certain benefits due to a disability, in which case they may be entitled

2.8 A Relevant Young Person:

- Is not looked after
- Is aged 16 or 17 and
- Was an eligible young person before they ceased being looked after
- The local authority will attempt to 'keep in touch' with the relevant young person
- Assessment of the young person's needs with a view to determining what advice, support and assistance it would be appropriate to provide to the young person
- A pathway plan which is kept under regular review
- A personal advisor

- Safeguard and promote the relevant young person's welfare by maintaining them, providing suitable accommodation and providing assistance in order to meet any needs in relation to education, training or employment
- Relevant young people are not able to claim benefits except lone parents and those who qualify for certain benefits due to disability, in which case they may be entitled
- Former relevant young people are entitled to claim benefits at age 18 if they are not in full time education, training or employment

2.9 A Qualifying Young Person:

- Is aged between 16 and 21
- Is not looked after
- Was looked after at some point from the age of 16
- Is not an eligible or a relevant young person
- When reaching the age of 18 was the subject of a Special Guardianship Order and was looked after immediately prior to the making of that order
- Was privately fostered at some point from the age of 16
- The local authority to advise, assist and befriend
- Assistance in relation to securing vacation accommodation if the young person is engaged in higher education and aged under 25
- Financial assistance if assessed as necessary and appropriate to help meet educational or training needs

The Stockton Picture

2.10 At the time of the review, there were 242 Care Leavers and of these young people 66% were EET and 34% were NEET.

EET and NEET Figures

- 242 Care leavers
- 81 aged 16/17
- 161 aged 18+

Of those 18 plus, 92 were in EET (57%) and 69 were NEET (43%*)

*National Average – 39%, Children looked after in England (including adoption), National Statistics, DfE, 2019

2.11 Of the 69 NEET aged 18 plus:

- 15 are pregnant / young parent
- 16 have health issues
- 7 are in custody
- 2 are unable to work due to legal status
- 11 are leading chaotic / anti-social lifestyles
- 8 are unmotivated and difficult to engage
- 10 are work ready and seeking EET

NEET Percentages

Description	161 Care Leavers 18+	69 NEET aged 18+
Pregnant / Young Parent	9%	22%
Health issues	10%	23%
Chaotic / anti-social lifestyles	7%	16%
Custody	4%	10%
Unmotivated and difficult to engage	5%	11.5%
Unable to work due to legal status	1%	3%
Seeking EET	6%	14.5%

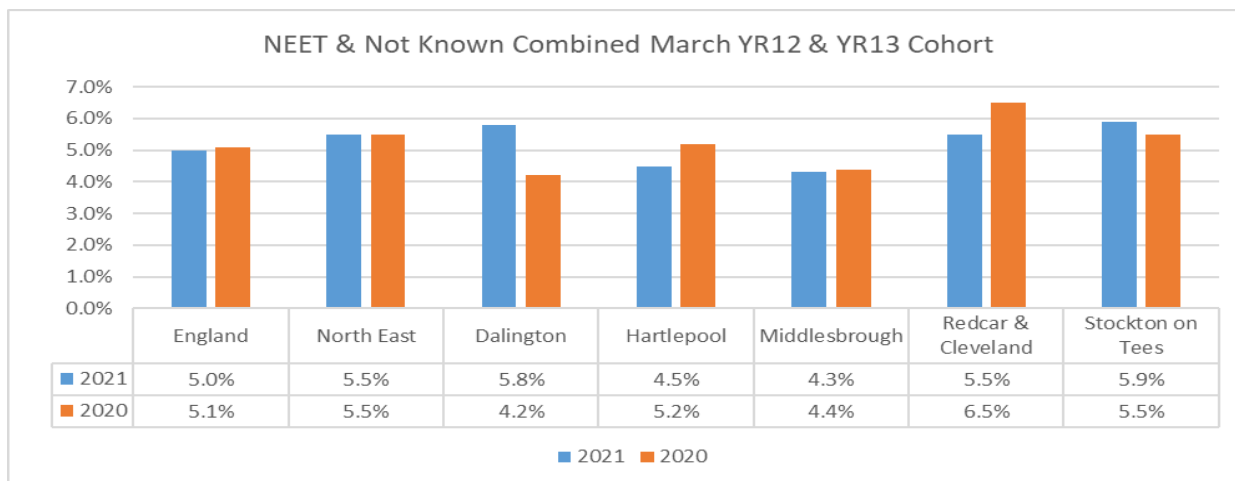
2.12 Out of the full NEET cohort, a much smaller number of young people were work ready. Other factors such as mental or physical health issues, homelessness, pregnancy etc. made it difficult for them to enter employment or training but the team were still working to prepare them to enter employment.

2.13 In Stockton for March 2021 there were 6947 young people from the ages of 16 to 19 and up to the age of 25 with an active EHCP. 5634 were in EET and 497 were NEET.

2.14 For March 2021, in the Year 12 and Year 13 Stockton cohort there were 4233 in the following destinations:

- 3423 in Education
- 353 in Employment
- 176 in Training
- 30 on Re-engagement courses
- 238 are NEET
- 1 in Other Custody
- 12 are Not Known

2.15 The Comparative Data for March 2021 and March 2020 for the Year 12 and Year 13 cohort data shows an increase in NEET and Not Known compared to Regional and National data for the month. (Sourced from NCCIS March 2021). This is illustrated below:



NEET and Not Known Data for March 2021/2020:

2.16 Stockton NEET 2021 was at 5.6% compared to 5.5% in 2020 showing an increase of 0.1%. Stockton Not Known 2021 was at 0.3% compared to 0% in 2020 showing an increase of 0.3%

2.17 Stockton NEET & Not Known combined for March 2021 was 5.9% compared to 5.5% in 2020 showing an increase of 0.4%

2.18 The North East Average for NEET & Not Known combined was 5.5% showing Stockton as being 0.4% higher with the average for England at 5% with Stockton 0.9% higher.

2.19 Out of all the Local Authorities, Stockton were ranked joint 110th for their combined total with the lowest recorded as City of London at 0.0% and the highest Blackpool 8.1%

In Learning Data March 2021/2020 – Cohort Year 12 and Year 13:

2.20 In learning data for Stockton was 91.9% in March 2021 compared to 91.6% in 2020 an increase of 0.3%. The North East average was 92.2% showing Stockton being lower by 0.3% with the average for England at 93.2% with Stockton being 1.3% lower.

2.21 Out of all the Local Authorities, Stockton were ranked joint 114th with the highest being City of London at 100% and the lowest being Knowsley at 87.4%





2.22 The Socio-Economic Importance of Care Leavers being EET includes:

- Increased job satisfaction leading to better mental and physical health
- Lower unemployment correlates with lower levels of crime
- Higher rates of participation in employment
- Higher level of employment
- Faster transitions back into work
- Increased levels of upskilling and retraining
- Enhanced individual skill and knowledge base
- Improved national skills base
- Workforce is more adaptable to changes in technology and working practices
- Greater lifelong learning

Leaving Care Service

2.23 The aim of the Service is to achieve improved outcomes for young people as they leave care and make their transition to adulthood. At the time of the review, of the 242 active care leavers, 82 were under 18 and 160 were over 18.

2.24 Leaving Care Personal Advisors provide support for 32 young people (16 to 25 years) as follows:

- Transition to adulthood
- Domains
- Pathway Plan
- Safeguarding and crisis intervention
- Partnership Work
- Advocate / Corporate Parent
- Barriers

Some of the caseload is co-worked with a social worker.

2.25 The main aim of the Personal Advisor (PA) role is to help care leavers make the transition to adulthood and to help them meet their full potential. PAs do this across all domains of a young person's life, not just in relation to EET helping with accommodation, finance, health issues, family contact, social/emotional needs and with the development of independent living skills, as well as assisting with EET.

2.26 The work starts at 16 with attendance at care planning meetings and education meetings. PAs write and review a young person's pathway plan, which is a document which details all aspects of a young person's life and assists with planning for that young person, whilst gathering their wishes. A pathway plan looks at all domains of a young person's life.

2.27 PAs complete a lot of planned and routine work, but also crisis manage as situations arise and carry out a lot of safeguarding and unplanned work.

2.28 PAs liaise with individuals and agencies relevant to young people's lives. Common partners are Social Workers (SW), resources, housing, the job centre, Youth Direction, education establishments and parents/carers.

2.29 PAs advocate on a young person's behalf but also look to empower young people to make their own decisions. A lot of the work is about removing barriers to entering EET in the first place, making sure other areas of a young person's life are positive, progressive and supported, allowing them to move in to successful EET placement.

2.30 Support specific to EET includes discussing options with young people and helping them make plans. We make referrals and work with partners such as Youth Direction, colleges, universities, job coaches and adult SWs, Steps and young people are supported to maintain attendance at their placement.

2.31 Higher education is a key area and support is provided with the costs of university accommodation, administering a bursary and book allowance, helping young people with the UCAS process and identifying holiday accommodation if needed.

Virtual School

2.32 The aim of the Virtual School is:

Services and schools in Stockton-on-Tees work effectively together to ensure that all looked after and previously looked after children and young people are supported, encouraged and challenged to aim high, to enjoy and to achieve.

To improve the academic success and life chances of all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children and Young People from 0-25 years within Stockton-on-Tees

2.33 The Virtual School works with other services to support care leavers through:

- Ongoing challenge and support to all educational settings
- Strong partnership with Care Leavers Team and Youth Participation
- Use central funding from Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to fund 2 part time Specialist Youth Participation Officer for CYPIOC
- PP+ also used to support resources e.g. 1-1 Tuition, laptops. (COVID)

2.34 Specialist Youth Participation Officers:

- Provide additional and different support to CYPIOC
- Provide continuity of support from Year 9 onwards
- Attend PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings from Year 9 onwards
- Relational approach
- Support Destinations/ Transition from Year 11 to Post 16 education, Training or employment
- Provide bespoke packages in line with pupil needs
- Support interventions where necessary
- Attend VS Termly 14-19 Working Party
- Support on Year 11/13 results Day

2.35 A Termly VS 14-19 Working Party is attended by VS, Youth Participation, Social Care, Key Personnel from Post 16 including Teesside University. The Working Party monitors progress of pupils in EET/ NEET and supports Year 11 Destinations/ Transition.

Youth Direction - NEET and Progression Team

2.36 The aim of the NEET and Progression Team is to reduce the number of young people in NEET by supporting them by various means into Education, Employment and Training. To achieve these outcomes, impartial information, advice and guidance is offered by professionally qualified staff. The cohort of young people is tracked and monitored to ensure they are known to the service and offered appropriate support.

How we are measured:

2.37 Youth Direction are measured on young people in Year Groups 12 and 13 (those that left school in 2020 and 2019 aged 16 to 18) and any young person with an active EHCP up to their 25th birthday. The data is based on those that are resident in Stockton. This is a statutory duty for every Local Authority. From this cohort Youth Direction are measured on those in NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), those In Learning (in Education, Employment & Training) and the Not Known cohort (those that we have been unable to contact and are unable to obtain a current destination such as NEET, College, Employment etc.)

2.38 Management Information data is submitted to the Department for Education every month on these headline measures. Although the statutory duty was removed to work with young people aged 18 – 19 years old (Year 14+) for those without an active EHCP, a decisions was made by Stockton Borough Council for Youth Direction to continue to work with these young people. All young people aged from 16 – 19, no matter what their individual circumstances, receive a full information, advice and guidance service from the Youth Direction team.

Recording of Information:

2.39 Youth Direction have a bespoke database which holds the records of all young people that live in Stockton aged 16 to 19 and up to 25 for those with an active Education & Health Care Plan. All interactions that are made with a young person or on their behalf are recorded on this system which allows the submission of the required monthly management information to the Department for Education. Each young person has additional characteristics on the IT system to show if they belong to certain vulnerable group categories such as In Care, Care Leavers, Teen Parent, Pregnant, SEND, Young Carer etc. This helps us to identify specific groups to ensure they are offered and receive the support required to progress into a positive outcome.

Senior Participation Advisors

2.40 Senior Participation Advisors work with Children and Young People in Our Care (CYPIOC) and several young people in the Leaving Care category. Based within the Youth Direction within the NEET and Progression Team, posts are funded through the Virtual School. Being based within Youth Direction allows the team to keep their knowledge up to date on Education and Training opportunities within the local area.

2.41 There are approximately 170 young people made up from CYPIOC in Stockton Schools, Colleges and those not in education training or employment (NEET). In addition, when requested, or the need arises, the team may also work with an out of area (OOA) young person who is looking to return to Stockton to ensure they have some form of education, training or employment and consistent support when they return to the Borough.

2.42 The role requires the team to work closely with and have good relationships with any organisation connected to the lives and development of the young people including Social Workers, Leaving Care Team, Schools, Colleges, CAMHS, SEN Team, Parents, Carers, Youth Offending Team, Residential Homes and Youth Direction colleagues. It is essential that the team have a full picture of the young person. This helps to raise their aspirations, maximise their potential and ensure their aims are realistic, appropriate and achievable. Young people have a range of academic abilities. Whilst a high number of young people access universities, a sense of failure can also be common and the team work hard to ensure that young people set goals that can be realised.

2.43 Building up strong relationships is key. Often the young people have little trust so it is important that the team spend time building positive, professional interaction. This begins as soon as possible in year 9 (age 13/14) before moving on to support them when they are 18. At 18 a triage meeting is held with the team manager to decide whether they need to be maintained within the team's caseload where this would be more beneficial to that young person. Each case is considered on an individual basis and this ensures a personalised and considered approach. CYPIOC find that when they reach the age of 18 a lot of services are withdrawn and so every effort is made to be flexible to give them consistent, sustained support moving forwards.

2.44 As a general pattern, once a young person is part of the team's caseload, they will be seen again in year 10, usually just once but more often than not there will be additional meetings put in place if they, the school or Virtual School request. In Year 11 they are met more regularly as they start to consider post 16 options and transition. Again, this intervention needs to be personalised according to the level of support required by each young person. The team are both Level 6 Qualified in Careers Education Advice and Guidance which enables them to offer impartial information, advice and guidance. This role includes setting up taster sessions in colleges or training providers; organising visits; support with interviews; and all the time considering what support may be needed to ensure a successful transition and making sure this is in place and sustained. Often, the role also requires detailed brokerage and discussion with the college or training providers. This provides the opportunity to ensure that planned programmes of study are arranged and that there is an appropriate level of understanding of any issues that may materialise as the young people embark on their programme of study. This may mean assisting to set up support packages, or in some cases bespoke provision.

2.45 The team attend Personal Education Plans termly for all CYPIOC and this provides an opportunity to ensure the young person is on target and receiving the appropriate education and any additional support and, challenge where necessary. For the final PEP in Year 11, the post 16 provision provider is asked to attend to aid a smooth transition.

2.46 Results day is always busy, ensuring that all young people get on the correct course, with the correct support package ensuring they access the college bursary's, as well as any uniform or KIT they need. At the end of an academic year all results are collated and progression recorded across all years.

2.47 Support continues through enrolment, induction and then as the new programme of study begins and beyond. Again, some need more support and encouragement than others.

2.48 If a young person is at risk of becoming NEET it is vital that the team quickly get involved. This can include a variety of interventions. For example, creating some 'time out' space for a student at college, being an advocate or challenging decisions made by a school or college where we feel a punishment is inappropriate etc.

2.49 Low aspiration is often encountered. Some believe they have little to be proud of and little to contribute. The effects on their mental health, sense of worth and often consequent need to 'make a name for themselves' – even in a negative sense are a challenge.

2.50 Role modelling is another part of the work; good facilitation and training provision at this stage can often be crucial aspect as they reach adulthood. It is important for everyone to feel a sense of achievement to give them confidence to move forward. Youth Direction and Virtual School have helped to deliver projects such as Matty's Bistro which is an applied learning programme delivered by working professionals within real life catering facilities and practical projects making benches and general repair and maintenance at allotments.

2.51 When working with NEETS is it important to give credit for "soft" outcomes, for example turning up for an appointment, engaging in services or even leaving the house. Often there are many barriers to overcome before a young person can consider starting education, employment or training.

2.52 The team attend a range of multi-agency meetings including the Accommodation Panel.

2.53 At the time of the review, Senior Participation Advisors were working with 112 young people, with the level of contact depending on needs at the time:

NEET (43):

- Building rapport, relationship and trust
- Level 6 Careers Guidance trained
- Young people led and impartial – empower them to make their own decisions NOT shoehorn them into opportunities
- Monthly contact – more if needed
- Attending meetings associated with young people
- Accompanying to appointments
- Advocating on their behalf
- Small budget– e.g. toiletries, food, bus fare, etc.
- Making sure they are ready for employment / training – bank account, ID, NI Number, CV etc.
- Bespoke programmes

In Learning (69):

- Preventive work
- advocating and attending meetings with young people (Annual Review, PEP, disciplinary meeting), professional challenge

EET Clinic

2.54 The aim of the EET Clinic is to support those who are In Care or a Care Leaver who are NEET to progress into a positive outcome such as Education, Employment or Training. Support is also provided to those in Year 11 who have not been offered a place in learning or training and those in EET but may be at risk of leaving early or not progressing on to the next year. For the EET Clinic, two meetings are held:

- First meeting is for Advisers to look at individual cases who are ready for EET and review previous cases.
- Second meeting is for Partners to help support and offer further information to help the young person progress in to EET and review previous cases.

HR – Council Opportunities for Children in our Care

2.55 Children's Services and Human Resources work together to explore and discuss opportunities for CIOC. These include:

- Work Experience
- Council Job Opportunities, including Apprenticeship Opportunities
- Continued Employment Support

2.56 Human resources work closely with colleagues in Children's Services to actively promote and identify opportunities for our LAC. Discussions take place regarding individual cases to support identified Work Experience requirements.

2.57 All Council jobs are promoted to LAC but specifically apprenticeship opportunities. If the Council are notified of any applications from LAC applicants, they are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum essential criteria for the role. This is reliant on the LAC's support worker in Children's Services being aware of their application.

2.58 The Council recognise the additional challenges that our LAC may face due to their backgrounds and without the traditional family support enjoyed by other young people. We ensure our LAC are supported during their employment. Where problems are identified, HR work with Children's Services, the employing manager and apprentice training providers to ensure appropriate additional support is in place to help them succeed.

2.59 On the job short term, work experience can help individuals understand what it is like to work in a certain role, to help them make career decisions and to improve career prospects.

Work Experience:

2.60 The Council currently considers any requests for Work Experience on an ad hoc informal basis – the Council do not currently provide any formal Work Experience schemes. Requests would usually come into HR or go direct to Service Areas and a decision is made by each area as to whether or not they can accommodate the request, depending on operational activity at the time. The Council has considered requests from individuals, schools and colleges in the past, and has received one request from a LAC which we were able to support in Community Services in Highways.

Apprenticeship Opportunities:

2.61 Since 2017 when the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced, the Council have advertised and successfully recruited to:

- 90 Apprenticeship Opportunities across a range of Council Services
- 40 new Apprenticeships recruited as part of an Apprenticeship Programme who all started their employment in September 2019

2.62 Council Apprenticeship opportunities can range from Electricians, Plumbers, HGV Fitters, Gardeners and Parks Operatives, Catering Assistants, Adult Care Workers, ICT Officers, various business Administrative apprenticeships, and Civil Engineering employees. Unfortunately, the Pandemic had an impact on the Council's ability to deliver a programme in 2020 but it is hoped that new opportunities can be offered in 2021. Of the 90 opportunities created over the last 4 years:

- 33 have gone on to secure long term employment with the Council
- 35 are ongoing with their Apprenticeship Qualification
- 22 either did not complete their apprenticeship or resigned from employment during the qualification

2.63 To support LAC into employment with the Council (including apprenticeships):

- The Council promote our apprenticeship vacancies through Children's Services
- The Council guarantee an Interview for LAC – if meet minimum Essential Criteria for post

2.64 Over the last four years:

- The Council haven't received many applications from LAC for our vacancies
- Appointed four people to Apprenticeships (from the 90 advertised)
- In September 2018 the Council created three specific apprenticeships which were restricted to LAC in Children's Services

Unfortunately, of these four, three resigned part way through their apprenticeship qualification, and one did not seek or gain longer term employment on completion of the apprenticeship.

2.65 There are Incentive / Bursary Payments available which the government pay to Employers, Training Provider and since May 2018 also LAC who support LACs on an Apprenticeship. The money should be used to support in their work / education and cannot be used towards salary costs. The purpose of the bursary payment for LAC is to provide additional financial support to make apprenticeships a more viable option for young people looking to find work after leaving care.

- For Employers / The Council = £1,000
- For Training Providers = £1,000
- For Apprentice LAC 16/24 = £1,000

(Paid in installments, £500 after 90 days, £500 on completion)

Business Engagement and Funding Available

Government Incentive Payments

2.66 From 1 April employers will receive up to £3,000 for each apprentice employed. £1,500 paid after 90 days and £1,500 paid after 365 days.

Tees Valley Combined Authority Apprenticeship Support Grant

2.67 Available to SME's identified by Tees Valley Combined Authority as being in one of their Priority Sectors

- Apprentices Aged 16-18 – Grant of £3,000 is available
- Apprentices Aged 19+ – Grant of £2,000 is available

2.68 For any employers who do not fall into one of the Priority Sectors, the following Grant is available:

- Apprentices Aged 19+ – Grant of £500 is available
- Grant paid in full after 13 weeks. Will only fund three apprentices in a rolling 12-month period.

Stockton Youth Employment Fund

2.69 Secured from Public Health Funding and subject to businesses receiving other grant funding, this provides £1,000 to Stockton based businesses that employ a Stockton resident aged 16-24 to undertake an apprenticeship or a job with training. £500 is paid after four weeks and £500 after 26 weeks.

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

2.70 CITB grants support employers who provide day to day training for their workforce. They contribute to the cost of training and qualifying the workforce in construction-related subjects:

- The **attendance** grant rate for starts from 1 April 2020 is £2,500 per year.
- The **achievement** grant is £3,500 on successful completion of the Apprenticeship.

Progress 2 Work – Middlesbrough and Teesside Philanthropic Foundation

2.78 A sum of £85,864 is allocated to support a minimum of 16 Children in Our Care secure an apprenticeship. Research by the Prince's Trust highlights some key issues that this initiative will address, including:

- the correlation between those young people who do not have a family role model and those who are struggling with mental and emotional health
- 44% of young people from a poorer background said that they didn't know anyone who could help them find a job
- those from poorer households, feel locked out from achieving success
- 26% of young people from poorer backgrounds think that "people like me do not get good jobs", compared with 8% of their peers
- young people from poorer families are less likely than their peers to have had help writing a CV, filling out a job application or preparing for an interview
- those young people from the poorest families are less likely to have the inherited opportunities, such as access to work experience and support with job applications, which help many of their peers to get on in life
- Funding combines a cocktail of all of the different funding described previously to provide contributions to salary costs over 12 months
- To date 14 young people supported in a variety of occupations including:
Mechanical Engineer, bricklayer, groundworker, art technician, chef, administration, joiner

Apprenticeships for Young People in Our Care – Youth Direction and Regeneration and Business Administration

2.79 The Select Committee received presentations about the experience of taking on apprentices in Youth Direction and Regeneration and Business Administration. Although there had been different experiences and challenges, it had been a very positive and worthwhile experience with the apprentices often bringing in a fresh, young ideas. The experiences reinforced the need for:

- Clear expectations at the outset
- Although a Corporate Parent, the young people needed to understand what the Council expected from them as an employer
- Having the right person to supervise/ mentor them
- The need to treat them as young adults, albeit with a lot to learn
- Reinforcing respectful relationships with the young people being treated as equals
- Individualised approaches were important
- Clear work plans and tasks
- Achievements need to be celebrated
- Feedback and training were key
- Manageable numbers in each service area

2.80 Looking forward it was felt that work experience would be beneficial to introduce care leavers to the working environment and it was acknowledged that there were a lot of employees who were passionate about helping and volunteering opportunities to be mentors to young people.

Coventry City Council: Partnership Working to Increase the Number of Care Leavers in Education, Training and Employment

2.81 The Select Committee received a presentation on the partnership working approach adopted by Coventry City Council to increase the number of care leavers in education, training and employment. Activities included:

- University Go! - Coventry Virtual School along with Warwickshire Virtual School and in Partnership with the University of Warwick and Coventry University have a programme for Looked After Children who achieved good results in their Year 6 SAT's and Looked After Children who have been identified as having the potential to go on to Higher Education. This programme helps to inform Young People, along with their Carers, Social Workers and Teachers that they have the potential to attend Higher Education when they leave school, and to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the many different routes into Higher Education. The aim is that the Young Person will stay on the programme through years 7,8 & 9 accessing a variety of trips, visits and activities, to build confidence and raise their aspirations.
- Tracking of young people – recognizing that care leavers do not always follow traditional routes to university and ensuring we allow them to come back to education in different ways.
- Celebrating the achievements of our care leavers – annual care leavers conference and celebration events.
- EET panel – bi-monthly panel which reviews young people who are NEET, this is partnership between job shop, DWP, Through Care, apprenticeship team, adult education, virtual school and Prospects. This panel works collaboratively to ensure high quality opportunities available to care leavers
- Other taster events e.g. summer programmes with e.on and Severn Trent

2.82 Local Offer Highlights included:

- All care leavers can earn incentive payments each week for positive engagement in education or training.
- Make sure that suppliers are directed to our equality, diversity and inclusion policy which promotes the importance of prioritizing care leavers for opportunities and encourage them to sign up to the national care leavers covenant. This is part of care leaver covenant procurement guidance.
- Provide mentoring opportunities for care leavers from Directors and senior managers within the Council – already started
- All care leavers doing apprenticeships within Coventry City Council will be paid the national living wage
- We will do all we can to ensure all apprentices secure a permanent role at the end of their apprenticeship

2.83 Coventry had a high number of care leavers attending university. Although the financial support and incentives were fairly modest, the wider support was very important (e.g. help with getting to Uni, support in the holidays, funding for graduation photos/gowns etc.) As care leavers were successful in accessing university, this also gave more encouragement to others that they could also achieve.

2.84 Similar to Stockton, post 18 NEET numbers increase. It was noted that some young people

come back into EET at a later stage so was important that support remained open

2.85 It was recognised that opportunities in the hospitality sector had suffered as a result of the pandemic but other opportunities had arisen, for example, in the Care Homes, the NHS and some Covid roles.

North Yorkshire County Council: Opportunity Brokers

2.86 The Select Committee received a presentation from North Yorkshire County Council on their approach to creating opportunities for young people through Opportunity Brokers.

2.87 An Opportunities Team has been set up in 2017 as a pilot funded through Partners in Practice funding. The Team consisted of various additional support roles to assist Leaving Care Workers. With some adjustments, the team was mainstreamed in 2020, including permanent roles for two Opportunity Brokers.

What they do

- Create opportunities for young people
- Opportunities can be anything:
 - Positive Experiences
 - Finding work experience placements
 - Support to apply to college / university
 - Exploring pre-employment support
 - Support to apply for jobs
 - Interview preparation
 - Creating roles with employers

How they do it

- This is their main focus
- They are knowledgeable in this field
- They don't have a case load of young people so don't get caught up dealing with crisis situations
- They develop links with agencies, colleges and employers
- They have the time to visit employers to sell the idea to them about employing a care leaver
- They have the time to support care leavers to attend interviews, first days etc.

NYCC Support

- Created ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers in NYCC
- Ensured apprenticeships lead to permanent positions with NYCC
- Utilised DWP Kickstart scheme to create 30 roles within NYCC
- Direct link with our Health & Adult Services to prioritise care roles for care leavers in NYCC residential homes and day centres
- Work experience available in wide range of NYCC departments
- Guaranteed interviews for care leavers who meet minimum requirements for NYCC roles.
- 3 Month intensive work experience scheme within our Youth Justice Team for graduate care leavers interested in working in Youth Justice

External Support

- Direct links with University of York and York St John through On Track programme

- Links with larger employers who offer work experience, insight days and skill sharing (Sky Betting & Gaming, The Chocolate Works, Anglo American)
- Celebrating Success – annual Care Leaver Conference and Awards Ceremony, in partnership with University of York, on campus
- Access to funding pot from University of York for ad hoc purchases for young people relating to EET.
- Bespoke donations for experience days, depending on young people’s interests

Reboot West Project: 1625 Independent People

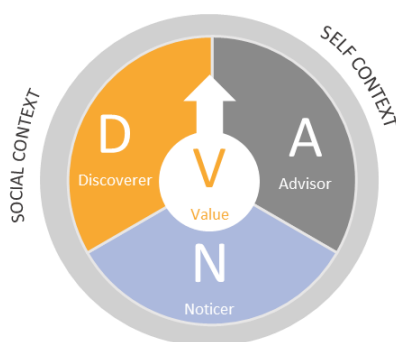
2.88 The Select Committee received a presentation from a leading youth homelessness charity, 1625 Independent People, on their Reboot West Project based in the South West also working with care leavers. The Charity was working with over 2,500 young people aged 16-25 and was operating strong local partnerships and adhering to best practice in the sector. Accessing external funding streams, the history of the Reboot project was outlined.

2.89 The Reboot Approach comprised three Core Elements:

- Expert and tailored EET coaching – 1 to 1 and in groups
Providing resources (clothes/laptop), seeking opportunities, applying, attending, sustaining, progressing. Relationships with employers and education providers.
- Holistic – using DNA-V to harness young people’s strengths
Discovering new values, strengths, through play and exploration.
Notice own thoughts and feelings creating space for choice and control.
Use own advice as a helpful motivator to navigate situations efficiently, effectively and safely.
- Responding to crisis/setbacks
Consistent relationship and available through challenges
Supporting setbacks as learning experiences and part of a journey (not back to square one)
Normalising adverse experiences

Using DNA-V

Discoverer = behaviour
Noticer = feelings
Advisor = thoughts
Values = guide us in how we live



2.90 DNA-V is the youth version of the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) model and helps young people to explore what their values are and to relate mindfully to difficult thoughts and feelings to help them achieve personal goals aligned to what is important to them. It helps them to develop psychological flexibility.

2.91 All Reboot Coaches receive training in ACT and DNA-V, receiving ongoing clinical supervision to develop their understanding and to help them integrate the approach. Although there is a strong evidence base supporting the effectiveness of ACT in a clinical setting, there is less evidence to support its application in a community setting. The evaluation of Reboot will provide important learning about the successful use of the model in this setting

Review Assessment and Outcomes

2.92 Review assessments are carried out every 3 months. Outcomes are verified by YP, HMRC, colleges, etc. and include:

- Education: YP accessing and sustaining education placements and achieving qualifications
- Volunteering: YP entering and maintaining voluntary work / experience
- Employment: YP entering and sustaining paid work
- Stability: Self-reported wellbeing and social stability (reviewed quarterly)

Partnership Working

2.93 Support is delivered in partnership with the young person's Local Authority Personal Adviser (PA). For care leavers, the PA is a key contact for the Coach, both for referral and in addressing barriers that emerge. Coaches are co-located within the same building as the local authority leaving care team or supported housing team. PAs and supported housing workers are trained in ACT.

2.94 Strong links are fostered with Local Authority employment and skills teams, WECA and local DWP young people and care leaver leads to promote young people's access to EET support and work/training opportunities, including apprenticeships.

2.95 Employers, training partners and industry experts are engaged to maximise young people's access to sector-specific advice as well as supportive work experience, training and job opportunities. Partners are also offered training in ACT

Onward Journey Post Reboot

9.96 The same worker provides support to the young person for up to 3 years. Over time reducing levels of support are agreed with the young person gradually and with planned endings. The young person will have other consistent relationships and know where to go for future support and be equipped with skills to cope with challenges and setbacks. The young person can also get in touch whilst the project on-going.

NEET Survey

2.97 A survey for young people In Care and Care Leavers who were NEET was conducted to gain their views on the service provided by Youth Direction. Survey results are set out at Appendix 3. Of the 8 NEETs in Care and 18 NEETs who are Care Leavers, 19 agreed to complete the survey. Seven did not complete the survey as contact could not be made or due to their personal circumstances.

2.98 All young people had been offered help by an Advisor from Youth Direction. The help received included help with finding jobs (top answer), training and college courses, followed by help with interview skills and techniques, then transport to interviews, open days and start dates followed by having someone to talk to and listen to them with any issues they had. One mentioned he felt like someone cared even if it was for a quick chat. Several had received help with bursaries, getting ID, one had support with feelings of anxiety, so a referral was made to a specialist service, helping with food parcels, personal items, housing and voluntary work. All found the information and support useful with most young people scoring the service very highly.

2.99 In response to the question *What could we do better; do you have any suggestions for improving our service?*, most young people replied that nothing needed to be improved. One person was happy that the new Employment and Training Hub was now open, another said they had missed having the Hub open, and a few said they prefer seeing the Advisors in person. Another mentioned that reduced contact due to Covid had been hard. What was interesting was a few wanted less contact from Youth Direction and others wanted more contact. Going forward the Service will review the level of contact and tailor contact more to meet individual needs.

2.100 In terms of the type of work or training being sought, most had an idea of what they wanted to do although several replied that they were not ready and some said they had things going on or would look for a job when they felt better. For those that were ready, they wanted a job and were not keen on college or training.

2.101 The survey shows that the 19 young people are using the service for a variety of help. Advisors would be reflecting on the findings to improve the service and ensure that the young people are at the centre of the service.

3.0 Key Findings

- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 places a duty of Local Authorities to assess and meet the care and support needs of children moving from care into living independently
- At the time of the review, there were 242 care leavers and of these young people, 66% were EET and 34% were NEET.
- For those over 18, the NEET numbers increased with 92 EET (57%) and 69 NEET (43%)
- Out of the full NEET cohort, a much smaller number of young people are work ready. Other factors such as mental or physical health, homelessness, pregnancy etc. make it harder for them to enter employment or training. At the time of the review only 10 of the 69 NEET cohort were work ready
- In Stockton for March 2021 there were 6947 young people aged 16 – 19 and up to age of 25 with an active care plan. 5634 were in EET and 497 were NEET
- Outcomes for young people in Stockton are roughly in line with national averages
- Comparative data for March 2020 and March 2021 for the Year 12 and Year 13 cohort shows a small increase in NEET and Not Known compared to National and Regional data. In learning data for Stockton shows a slight increase but still slightly less than the Regional and National data
- The aim of the Leaving Care Service is to improve outcomes for young people as they leave care and make their transition into adulthood. Personal Advisors work across all domains of a young person's life (not just in relation to EET) helping with accommodation, finance, health issues, family contact, social/economic needs and with the development of independent living skills
- The Virtual School works with other services to support care leavers through ongoing challenge and support to all educational settings. The Virtual School funds two Senior Participation Advisors based within Youth Direction to work with Children and Young People in our Care (CYPIOC)
- The NEET and Progression Team in Youth Direction work to reduce the numbers of young people in NEET through impartial information, advice and guidance. The cohort of young people is tracked and monitored to ensure they are known to the service and offered appropriate support. Senior Participation Advisors work with over 100 young people made up from CYPIOC from Stockton Schools and Colleges and those in NEET
- Children's Service and HR work together to explore and promote opportunities for Children in Our Care (CIOC). All Council jobs are promoted to CIOC but specifically apprenticeship opportunities and they are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum essential criteria. Despite, this the Council have not received many applications from CIOC. Since 2017, the

Council have recruited to 90 apprenticeship opportunities. Of the 90, four were from CIOC. Requests for work experience are considered on an ad hoc basis

- National and Regional funding provides some support to employers towards apprentice schemes. The Middlesbrough and Teesside Philanthropic Foundation have £85,864 to support of minimum of 16 CIOC secure an apprenticeship
- Support for employers is essential when opportunities are offered to care leavers
- More work experience would be useful to introduce care leavers to the working environment
- Partnership working can increase the number of opportunities available for care leavers
- It was important that staff resource was made available to identify opportunities for care leavers and develop links with agencies, colleges and employers and provide support to both the young person and employer
- Therapeutic approaches can help a young person become work ready, equipping them with the skills to cope with challenges and setbacks
- A survey of young people in Care and Care Leavers who were NEETS received positive feedback about the support they were receiving but reinforced the need for contact tailored to their individual needs

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Although outcomes for young people in Stockton were roughly in line with national averages, the Select Committee concluded that more needed to be done for Children in Our Care as they make the difficult transition into independent living. The Select Committee recognised that Children in Our Care do not enjoy the inherited opportunities and access to family help and support. Often struggling to overcome issues with mental and emotional health and low aspirations, these children can feel locked out from achieving success.

4.2 The Select Committee's recommendations seek to do more to help Children in Our Care become work ready and maximise their opportunities through strengthened partnership working and a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and job opportunities with local employers and partner agencies.

Recommendations

That the Council:

Enabling Young People to be work ready

1. Improves transitions from pre to post 18 services and explore distinct approaches to provide coping mechanisms for our young people who are care leavers moving from education to employment or further training.
2. Redefines its approach and commitment to getting a young person in care or leaving care into education, employment or training by retraining and refocusing the workforce.

Creating Opportunities

3. Explores appropriate local and national incentives available for employee and employer when employment is gained.
4. Strengthens its commitment to seeking out and increasing access to interview opportunities to young people who are care leavers.
5. Ensures education, employment or training is at the forefront of Children's Services and partners' work with all children and young people, and in particular a strong focus on young people leaving care.

6. Has a corporate commitment to creating a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and apprenticeship opportunities within SBC for young people leaving care.

Brokerage Opportunities

7. Has a Borough-Wide commitment to creating a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and job opportunities with local employers and partner agencies for young people leaving care through the creation of a dedicated brokerage resource which will focus on pro-actively finding, placing and maintaining young people in education, employment and training.

GLOSSARY

EET	Employment, Education and Training
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
CIOC	Child in Our Care
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
NCCIS	National Client Caseload Information System
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
PA	Personal Adviser
SW	Social Worker
LCT	Leaving Care Team
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
YP	Young Person
SUH	Setting Up Home
CYPIOC	Children and Young Person in our Care
PP	Pupil Premium
CYPIOC (OOA)	Children and Young Person in our Care (Out of Area)
CYPIOC OOB	Children and Young Person in our Care (Out of Borough)
VS	Virtual School
PEP	Personal Education Plan
HE	Higher Education
CAMHS	Children's and Adults Mental Health Service
SBC	Stockton Borough Council
SRC	Stockton Riverside College
EHC	Education Health and Care
LC	Leaving Care
PfA	Preparing for Adulthood
PAS	Participation Advisers
LMI	Labour Market Information
LAC	Looked After Children/ Child
HR	Human Resources
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
NHS	National Health Service
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ACT	Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
WECA	West of England Combined Authority

CASE STUDIES

Leaving Care Service

Case Study A

YP moved successfully from a foster care placement to a staying put arrangement at 18 and then on to university accommodation. They are now waiting to move into their first independent tenancy. The YP has achieved both an undergraduate degree and a master's qualification. The YP has achieved highly in terms of EET but has also developed interpersonal skills (from taking part in consultation groups and doing public speaking) and has developed practical independent living skills (such as learning how to budget and to cook and clean for themselves). The YP has come the full journey as he has just turned 25 and, since aged 16, has worked regularly with his PA and the LCT.

Case Study B

This case study highlights a YP who came in to care late, aged 17, with little support from her own family and who was pregnant with her own child. Initially there was no engagement with any generic or specialist services at all but over time. The YP now has health providers in place, has accessed support around her own child being removed, has her own accommodation furnished with SUH money from the LCT, has all relevant benefits in place, is learning to budget better, has much better self-esteem and fully engages with LCT support. This YP remains NEET but has come such a long way in other areas and has had a high level of intervention from ourselves.

Youth Direction

Case Study – Tom:

I first met Tom in Year 9 to introduce myself with his support worker in school and I started to attend his meetings to begin to build a rapport and get a fuller of a picture of him as a person. My initial impressions were that he was a very likable young man with a good sense of humour.

Despite ongoing meetings my first real intervention occurred when Tom was in year 10 as I was informed by the School that he had become increasingly disruptive and often left site. It was necessary to increase my involvement and I began to see him more often. It became clear that Tom needed something to be proud of and something to achieve. He attended the cadets in his spare time so, focussing on his interest in the armed forces I got him involved voluntarily in school time with the concluding event of Stockton's 1245 sunflower project, an event at Trinity Church attended by hundreds of people. Tom did amazingly well in terms of event support and customer service and vitally started to see a sense of purpose and consequently achievement.

Despite the Summer breakthrough, in Year 11, Tom's school attendance dipped further. In my opinion it was him struggling with upcoming GCSE's and this was his way of dealing with it. He was assessed by an Education Psychologist who advised that Tom learning difficulty was likely a result of childhood trauma which resulted in him finding it difficult to process and retain information. Linda, Virtual School was heavily involved and as a combined team involving the school, social worker, SBC SEN Team, foster carer, mum, myself and most importantly TOM we came up with a plan of action. A number of approaches were attempted starting with an alternative education Army training programme where unfortunately Tom struggled being part of a group.

We then arranged for him to work with Nudge, which is bespoke education for students disengaging with education and the informal Pals Programme which saw him spend time 1:1 with another role model and here, we again began to see real improvement in Tom. He still would not engage with school, but he was engaging with role models and with activities that he enjoyed

including gardening and outdoor projects. At the same time school arranged for him to sit his exams in the home.

Towards the end of year 11 we were able to arrange for Tom to begin spending a couple of hours a week working as a trainee within the café in Arc. This resulted in noticeable change in Tom and for the first time he started to get excited about learning. Starting with learning how to use the coffee machine and using his motor skills to perfect coffee presentation (he was obsessed with producing a perfect frothy milk heart and had great delight keeping me updated on his progress!) He was natural and brilliant with the customers and began to make relationships with staff and regulars alike.

Once school had finished and after further discussions with 'the team' around Tom it was agreed that Tom would continue at Arc. Arc management were extremely supportive and spoke of Tom's real potential. It was agreed that Tom was not ready for a more formalised apprenticeship scheme and so together with SRC we came up with a bespoke package for him. He was enrolled at SRC, however, trained on the job at Arc where SRC provided a support worker and a Maths and English specialist – also, uniquely taught at Arc. Roland Todd from SBC was able to secure funding which enabled us to pay Tom a small incentive so he felt like he was going to work. Initially Tom wasn't engaging well with Maths and English and so I started to sit in to support, focussing on the basics and with what Tom could do. This gave him added confidence to move forward and try things he couldn't do.

There were blips with Tom's behaviour and attendance, but Arc's staff constantly worked with those around Tom to try and move forward and keep him on track. It felt like the combined efforts were working and Tom was working towards the very real possibility of being offered a full time Apprenticeship in ARC.

And then...Covid struck. Everything that was working had to stop – suddenly as ARC naturally had to close its doors. Tom was incredibly disappointed. Chatting further with Tom he decided he would like to try attending college. Working with a senior member of staff from SRC and SBC SEN Team a new support plan was put in place and he would still have access to the same support worker.

Sadly, the change in context, potential and network of support resulted in a real downturn in Tom's attitude and engagement. He went back to previous ways and just wanted to spend his days socialising with friends. He wouldn't attend lessons, became disruptive and refused to engage. I talked further with Tom in an effort to support him but he was adamant that he wanted to be at Arc, he was frustrated and angry that this wasn't possible.

As of today, Tom has signed up to engage with Princes Trust. This is a remote course at present however he will be in college with support of a 1:1 as Tom does not feel he would be self-motivated to complete the work at home.

During Tom's journey he has suffered with his mental health, has issues with drugs and moved home with his Mum.

Tom should be extremely proud of himself as he has come so far, work with Tom is ongoing, we won't give up, we can see his potential and we as a team want to support him to achieve. Both Tom and us are adapting and adjusting all the time to help him get the future he deserves and is most definitely capable of.

Case Study – Sam

Support to Sam began in Year 10 and continued as he pursued different paths culminating in employment as an Enhanced Care Worker. He now feels he has found his place in the world. The following is a statement from his education provider:

Sam has been a pleasure to work with since he began the course. He immediately fit into the group and got stuck in with all work required with maximum effort. Sam is a very caring and supportive young man who isn't afraid to answer questions in sessions, support other students and be an overall great intern.

Sam demonstrated he is reliable, compassionate, supportive, and hard-working. He has built up some fantastic clinical skills and knowledge which has helped him to seek employment. Sam now feels like he has found his place in the world and is loving working with colleagues and patients within the hospital. Sam should be extremely proud of himself and how far he has come. I believe this is only the start of many great things to come from him.

Youth Direction

Planning and Recruitment

- Youth Direction to recruit 2 Apprentices from Children & Young People In Our Care
- Apprenticeship to last 1 year
- To work under one manager
- Undertake a Level 2 qualification in Children's and Young People's Workforce.
- Apprentices to be progressed into employment within the authority

Apprentice A – achieved a Level 1 in Functional Skills in Maths, English, and ICT, Level 2 in Children's and Young People's Workforce. Completed their apprenticeship and went on to gain employment outside of the Local Authority.

Apprentice B – achieved a Level 2 in Children's and Young People's Workforce. They left early and went on to employment outside of the Local Authority and then to University.

Apprentice C – did not achieve any qualifications, they left early to NEET and are now a Teen Parent.

North Yorkshire County Council: Opportunity Brokers

Case Study One - "Sarah"

Studying Performing Arts but lacked confidence and suffered from anxiety

- Initial referral into Op Broker to find additional support to boost confidence
- Further referral to find work with young people – Restorative Relief Worker
- Needed paid employment – support to create and distribute CV & find work experience in a café.
- Explored Apprenticeship in Hospitality – decided against it
- Support to apply for NYCC Apprenticeship in RP – successful

Case Study Two - "Harry"

Unsure what he wanted to do so referred to Op Broker

- Attended University of York open day to explore university but decided this was not for him
- Explored apprenticeships and decided on Engineering
- Op Broker sourced work experience in local engineering firm
- Supported through application process with large engineering firm – down to last 50 but unsuccessful
- Supported to find alternative role – part way through when firm had to make redundancies
- Op Broker approached numerous firms on Harry's behalf and found one willing to take him on.
- Op Broker sourced funding for driving lessons
- Now mid-way through apprenticeship with really supportive employer

NEET Survey

Question 1) Have you been offered help by an Adviser from Youth Direction?

- All 19 replied Yes

Question 2) What help did you receive?

- Help with jobs, training and college courses were the main areas
- Interview skills and techniques
- Transport to interviews, open days and start dates
- Talk about personal issues, someone to listen to me, check in on me
- Help with a bursary
- Help with getting ID/ opening bank account
- Support around anxiety
- Food parcels / personal items
- Housing
- Voluntary work

Question 3) Did you find this useful?

All 19 answered Yes

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not useful and 10 being excellent please rate us:

- 10 = 9
- 9 = 3
- 8 = 4
- 7 = 2
- 6 = 1

Question 4) What could we do better, do you have any suggestions for improving our service?

- Nothing
- Not sure
- Prefer less contact
- No, all good
- Covid is a problem – but that's not you
- Hub – drop-in service was closed and really like seeing people in person
- New Hub is open – I like it
- Wanted more contact but only once a month
- Prefer face to face contact

Question 5) What type of work/training are you looking for?

