

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 20th January, 2021.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chairman), Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall (sub for Cllr Tony Hampton), Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Martin Gray, Vanessa Housley, Dave Willingham, Lesley Harrison, Craig Piggott, Linda Russell-Bond, Janet Wilson, Helen McGrother, Claire Wilson, Paul McCarthy, Rachel Sandbrook (CS), Liz Purdy (HR), Judy Trainer, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Michael Henderson (DS)

Also in attendance: Cllr Lisa Evans

Apologies: Cllr Tony Hampton

CYP 32/20 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Sally Ann Watson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Item 3 – Scrutiny Review of the Cost of School Uniform – as neighbours owned Motif8 clothing who supply school uniform to Stockton Schools and their business uniforms.

CYP 33/20 **Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CYP 34/20 **Scrutiny Review of the Cost of School Uniform - Action Plan**

The Select Committee considered the action plan for the Scrutiny Review of School Uniform following the review recommendations being agreed by Cabinet.

AGREED That the Action Plan be approved.

CYP 35/20 **Scrutiny Review of Care Leavers EET**

The Select Committee received evidence from Council Officers on the different Council roles including Leaving Care Service, Youth Direction, Virtual School and HR.

There were currently 229 Care Leavers and of these young people 66% were EET and 34% were NEET.

Virtual School (VS)
Headteacher - Linda Russell-Bond / Janet Wilson

The Select Committee were reminded that services and schools in Stockton-on-Tees seek to 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. They also work 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.

How we work with other services to support Care Leavers:

- 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 Children and Young People in Our Care (CYPIOC)
- PP+ also used to support resources e.g. 1-1 Tuition, laptops. (COVID)

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

Virtual School: Care Leavers EET:

Termly VS 14-19 Working Party:

- Attended by VS, Youth Participation, Social Care, Key Personnel from Post 16 including Teesside University
- Monitor progress of pupils in EET/ NEET
 - Support Year 11 Destinations/ Transition

VS - Education Development Officer for CYPIOC:

- Responsibility for Post 16
- Represent VS at EET clinic

Youth Direction

Helen McGrother, Claire Wilson and Paul McCarthy

Senior Participation Advisors

Senior Participation Advisors work with 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 regarding education and training opportunities within the local area.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The team attend Personal Education Plans (PEP) 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.

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.

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.

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 the tea feel a punishment is inappropriate etc.

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.

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.

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.

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

The NEET and Progression Team comprises:

- 1 x Team Manager
- 1 x Senior Participation Adviser
- 5 x Participation Advisers
- 3 x Keeping in Touch and Support Workers

Total Cohort of 7320 young people (16-19 or 25 if SEN and have active EHC Plan).

Central Location OSS open 10-4pm drop in Monday – Friday to see an adviser around EET but young people present with all sorts of issues.

Senior Participation Advisors currently work with 112 young people:

NEET: (43) – LC, Field Work Teams, CYPIOC, Early Help Teams, SEN (More Complex) Work to move these young people closer to labour market and into EET:

- Building rapport, relationship and trust
- Level 6 Careers Guidance trained
- Young people led and impartial
- 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) – Early Help Teams, Field Work Teams, LC in EET, CYPIOC, SEN:

- Preventive work, advocating and attending meetings with young people (Annual Review, PEP, disciplinary meeting), professional challenge.
- Contact depends on needs at time
- SEN work, supporting with transition from school / college / beyond – working with a range of different partners – setting up bespoke packages / provision
- Process of moving young person into adult life Work (PfA) – Representing on PfA working group, facilitating the pupil voice, task and finish projects, Pathways tool
- Supported internship work provision
- Work in partnership with colleges / training providers / PAS / social workers / parents and carers

The team have adapted working practices during COVID through:

- Facetime / Video Calls
- LMI – North Tees Recruitment Drive
- Doorstep Visits
- Meetings taken place via teams – this sometimes helps to break down barriers
- More contact if young person lives alone
- New ways of working have been successful for some young people but not for others – anxiety etc.

Two case study examples were shared to illustrate the work of the team.

Leaving Care Service

Craig Piggott, Leaving Care Team Manager

Rachael Sandbrook, Leaving Care Personal Advisor

Team and Young People:

- 1 x Team Manager
- 7 x Full-time Leaving Care Personal Advisors
- 2 x Part-time Leaving Care Personal Advisors (2 x 18.5 hours / 1 x 22 hours)
- 242 active care leavers
- Under 18 = 82
- Over 18 = 160
- Total = 242

Leaving Care Personal Advisor:

- Support for 32 young people – 16 to 25 yrs
- Transition to adulthood
- Domains

- Pathway Plan
- Safeguarding and crisis intervention
- Partnership Work
- Advocate / Corporate Parent
- Barriers

Caseload of 32 young people aged 16 – 25 yrs, some co-worked with a social worker.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Employment, Education and Training

Support specific to EET includes discussing options with young people and helping them make plans. The team 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.

Higher education is a key area - as a Leaving Care Team (LCT) support is provided for the cost of university accommodation, administer a bursary and book allowance, help young people with the UCAS process and identify holiday accommodation if needed.

Two case study examples were shared to illustrate the work of the team.

Council Opportunities for Children in Our Care (CIOC)
Liz Purdy – HR Manager

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

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.

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.

The Council recognise the additional challenges that LAC may face due to their backgrounds and without the traditional family support enjoyed by other young people. The Council ensures 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.

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:

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 the Council were able to support in Community Services in Highways.

Apprenticeship Opportunities:

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

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 four 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

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

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

Over the last four years:

- The Council haven't received many applications from LAC for Council vacancies
- Appointed four people to Apprenticeships (from the 90 advertised)
- In Sept 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.

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 90days, £500 on completion)

AGREED that the information be noted.

**CYP
36/20** **Work Programme**

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

**CYP
37/20** **Chair's Update**

The Chair had no update.