

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 17th March 2021.

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

Officers: Martin Gray, David Willingham, Lesley Harrison, Craig Piggott (CS), Roland Todd, Viv Lattimer (ED), Michael Henderson, Judy Trainer (DS)

Also in attendance: Matt Clayton, Coventry City Council

Apologies: Liam Twizell (Healthwatch)

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Minutes of meeting held on 17 February 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **Scrutiny Review of Care Leavers EET**

The Select Committee received a presentation from Matt Clayton, Operational Lead Through Care & Edge of Care, Coventry City Council.

The presentation outlined the approach being taken by Coventry City Council to increase the numbers of care leavers in education, training and employment through partnership working.

Activities included:

- University Go! - Coventry Virtual School along with Warwickshire Virtual School and in Partnership with the University of Warwick and Coventry University had a programme for Looked After Children who achieved good results in their Year 6 SAT's and Looked After Children who had been identified as having the potential to go on to Higher Education. This programme helped to inform Young People, along with their Carers, Social Workers and Teachers that they had the potential to attend Higher Education when they left school, and to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the many different routes into Higher Education. The aim was that the Young Person would 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 – recognising 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 in partnership with job shop, DWP, Through Care, apprenticeship team, adult education, virtual school and Prospects. This panel worked collaboratively to ensure high quality opportunities available to care leavers

- Other taster events e.g. summer programmes with e.on and Severn Trent

Local Offer highlights included:

- All care leavers could earn incentive payments each week for positive engagement in education or training.
- Making sure that suppliers are directed to the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion policy which promoted the importance of prioritising care leavers for opportunities and encourage them to sign up to the national care leavers covenant. This was part of care leaver covenant procurement guidance.
- Provide mentoring opportunities for care leavers from Directors and senior managers within the Council
- All care leavers doing apprenticeships within Coventry City Council were paid the national living wage
- Doing everything to ensure all apprentices secure a permanent role at the end of their apprenticeship

The key issues highlighted were as follows:

- 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
- 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
- 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

The Select Committee received a presentation from Roland Todd, Principal Employment & Skills Officer, Economic Development on business engagement and funding available:

- Government Incentive Payments
- Tees Valley Combined Authority Apprenticeship Support Grant
- Stockton Youth Employment Fund
- Construction Industry Training Board
- Progress 2 Work – Middlesbrough & Teesside Philanthropic Foundation

The Select Committee received a presentation from Lesley Harrison and Carolyn Chubb on their experiences of employing three apprentices within their teams. The presentation included:

- Planning and recruitment
- Working experience
 - Job Role and Joint Expectations
 - Training Plan
 - Caseload and Work
 - Support and Challenges
- Qualification and Progression
 - Apprentice A – achieved a Level 1 in Functional Skills in Math's, 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
- Reflections
 - Two young people progressed in to EET
 - Need a clear work plan
 - Need to keep numbers low in each service area
 - Need to be clear with the young person what the role involves

The Select Committee received a presentation from Viv Lattimer on her experience of employing apprentices within economic development. Viv explained that three apprentices had been taken on in regeneration and business administration. Although there had been challenges, it has been a very positive and worthwhile experience with the apprentices bringing in a fresh, young ideas. The following approach had been adopted:

- Clear expectations at the outset
- Although a Corporate Parent, the young people were made aware of what the Council expected as an employer and they respected that
- Having the right person to supervise them was important, although responsibility became a team effort
- They were treated as young adults, albeit with a lot to learn
- Respectful relationships were reinforced, and the young people were treated as equals
- Individualised approaches were important
- Tasks and work plans provided milestones to work towards
- Achievements were celebrated; there was recognition of the journey
- Feedback and training were key
- The young people knew that the agencies were talking to each other; there were no misunderstandings

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.

AGREED That the information be noted.

4 Work Programme and Chair's Update

AGREED That the Work Programme be noted.