

<b>Report title</b>	The REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16-25 Annual Review 2019	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
<b>Originating service</b>	Children and Young People in Care	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Alice Vickers Tel Email	Corporate Parenting Officer 01902 553010 <a href="mailto:Alice.Vickers@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Alice.Vickers@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Children's Leadership Team	17 October 2019

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**Recommendations for decision:**

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Agree the developments and additions made to the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 - 25.
2. Approve the publishing of the revised REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 - 25.

**Recommendations for noting:**

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The process of the review.

## **1.0 Purpose**

1.1 As the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 - 25 has been now live for the last 12 months, a comprehensive review by care leavers, and the steering group set up to support the services published in the offer, has taken place in August and September 2019.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 Following the 'Children's Social Care Reform – A Vision for Change' document published in January 2016, the government produced the Children and Social Work Bill which subsequently received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. Implicit in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, it is the requirement to improve support for looked after children in England and Wales especially for those leaving care.

2.2 The Act introduces seven corporate parenting principles to which local authorities must have regard. These are:

- to act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of relevant children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to and make best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people
- to have regard to the need for those children and young people to be safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

By September 2018, local authorities in England are required to publish a Local Offer for care leavers, providing information about services which the local authority offers that may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living. This includes services relating to health and well-being, relationships, education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society.

### 3.0 Progress and discussions

- 3.1 A consultation with care leavers took place on 10 August at Aldersley Stadium with 13 young people in attendance. Using Mentimeter to gain care leavers' views, participants were asked about the additional elements of the offer to establish which elements were of benefit and which of the offer needed strengthening. Highlights of this consultation were;
- The majority of the care leavers, 11 out of 13, had heard about the Local Offer and the two young people who hadn't were still in care.
  - Young people had used a significant number of services available in the health and well-being section
  - In respect of relationships; care leavers would like the opportunity for face to face counselling, domestic violence support and Child Sexual Exploitation awareness.
  - In Education, Employment and Training (EET), over half of care leavers had accessed their EET co-ordinator. There was also high uptake on financial assistance for higher education. Use of mock interviews and Impact work coaches were lower. Care leavers advised they would like bus passes, more opportunity for work experience and more apprenticeships in the EET offer.
  - Transport offer - further assistance to get to college, employment and training is required. Also, access to bikes would be beneficial.
  - Accommodation support showed that the training flat is well utilised.
  - All care leavers felt that Young People Advisors (YPA) should be promoting events and opportunities for young people.
  - Care leavers would like more of a relationship with YPAs and more general encouragement from them.
- 3.2 The steering group who represent external organisations and the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) met to look at the feedback from the young people and to evaluate their experiences of delivering the services and made the following comments;
- All care leavers should have a health passport, and all are offered one. Only one young person out of the 13 had a health passport. It is not clear why numbers are so low and this will be investigated and addressed by health colleagues.
  - The Offer needs to separate out the statutory leaving care summary from the health passport.
  - The quarterly sexual health workshops are not occurring and need to be removed from the Offer. Care leavers can still access support from Embrace and Embrace are working closely with staff
  - There is a partnership between the Children and Young People in Care service and the Strengthening Families service who are working together to develop support for care leavers focusing on healthy relationships.
  - Counselling support is to remain on the Offer as this can be provided. Children and Young People in Care service and the Strengthening Families service to add the pre-birth support pathway to the offer.
  - In respect of the WV Active offer, information about career opportunities is to be added.

- Swift card has been linked to the WV Active card, combining free access to the centre and a pay as you go travel card which will initially be loaded with £5.
- The Pot to Plate scheme is to remain in the offer but is being relaunched with new volunteers.
- Education, Employment and Training (EET) - support is needed for after university.
- In respect of accommodation, the House Project is to be added.
- Mind of My Own platform (MOMO) is to be removed and the new process is to be added.
- A section on driving lessons supported by the Rees foundation needs to be added.
- The Grandmentor Project is to be added.
- Alumni for care leavers is to be provided by the Rees Foundation with membership for care leavers for life
- Facility to regain priority banding to apply for Wolverhampton Homes properties when returning to Wolverhampton from University in another part of the country.

3.3 Both consultations highlighted a need for additional support and services that will need to be explored over the next 12 months with other partner organisations and these include;

- Free access to public transport for care leavers across the West Midlands. The regional care leaver group will petition the Combined Authority as a collective in January 2020.
- Smoother transition to support from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services to adult mental health services, the commissioner for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to be invited to Local Offer steering group.
- Discounted rent for working care leavers.
- No sanctions for care leavers claiming benefits by the Department of Work and Pensions.
- Access to City of Wolverhampton graduate programme for care leavers leaving university.
- Protected savings for care leavers.
- Discounted optical care and prescriptions for working care leavers.
- Access to free beauty treatments for care leavers.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

4.1 Any costs associated with developments and additions made to the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 – 25 will be contained within the overall budget for 2019-2020 for the Children and Young People in Care Service of £30.8 million.

4.2 Other Services within City of Wolverhampton Council and external partner organisations are working in partnership with the Children and Young People in Care Service to support the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 – 25. Any costs incurred by other Services within City of Wolverhampton Council and external partner organisations will be contained within their existing approved budgets for 2019-2020.

[NM/06112019/M]

## **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 The publishing of a Local Offer for Care Leavers is a legal requirement as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to improve support for looked after children in England and Wales, especially for those leaving care.

[SB/02112019/Z]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 The REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 - 25 is to mitigate against the inequality faced by care leavers in the community.

## **7.0 Climate change and environmental implications**

7.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications as a result of this report.

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 There are no human resource implications as a result of this report

## **9.0 Corporate Landlord implications**

9.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications as a result of this report.

## **10.1 Health and Wellbeing implications**

10.2 There are no health and wellbeing implications as a result of this report.

## **11.0 Schedule of background papers**

11.1 The REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers Aged 16 - 25