

Appendix 1 - Support currently provided to Care Leavers under the Local Offer

Support to be extended to age 25 years

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty to local authorities, to provide Personal Advisor (PA) support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 if they want this support.

As of 3rd February 2020, 51 young people over the age of 21 years of age have been supported by the leaving care service. Support was offered for a variety of reasons including general support (88%), support with education, employment and training (50%), support with health and wellbeing (57%), support with accommodation (50%) and help with independence skills (26%). An additional PA was recruited through money from the Department for Education New Burdens Grant. It is likely that there will be an increase in the number of young people who wish to remain open beyond the age of 21 years and the one additional worker will not be able to meet the demands.

Current funding from the Department for Education New Burdens Grant is £66, 412.00 and is likely to rise in the new financial year, this money has been used to recruit additional staff to work with the increase in young people.

Council Tax

In a twelve-month period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 we have made council tax payments for 44 young people at a total cost of £13, 488.61. The estimated costs had been £25,000.00 so the spend has been half of the estimated cost.

The payment of council tax has assisted in reducing the number of young people who are evicted from properties due to occurring debt through none payment of council tax.

Apprenticeships

Our local offer introduced 5 apprenticeship opportunities which were ringfenced for care leavers. Since April 2018 Warwickshire County Council have employed 5 care leavers as apprentices through these ringfenced opportunities, 1 care experienced apprentice was already in post prior to the Local Offer. All of these apprenticeships are within Children's Services and the young people have been heavily supported throughout. To date only one care leaver out of these 6 apprentices has dropped out prior to completing. Two young people have recently completed the full programme and are awaiting their results and following successful interviews they have been offered positions within the Participation Team supporting other care experienced young people on a full-time contract. One young person has also been offered a post as a family support worker. These are the first care experienced apprentices employed by Warwickshire who have successfully completed the apprenticeship.

The payment of the national minimum wage and an additional bursary of £1000 have made undertaking an apprenticeship a feasible option financially for our young people with the potential offer of employment on completion.

A recent meeting held with the apprenticeship hub saw over 20 care experienced young people attend to express an interest in completing an apprenticeship with

Warwickshire. Alongside the additional financial incentives it has been apparent that our apprentices require perhaps more emotional support than their peers given that they often live independently and do not have the immediate support of family. The two new posts within the participation will act as peer support to future apprentices.

In addition to the ringfenced apprenticeships we have had three care leavers who have secured apprenticeships within Warwickshire County Council in Children's Services, Finance and Engineering. One of these young people has dropped out of his apprenticeship due to personal circumstances.

Driving Lessons

The offer supports 10 driving lessons and this can be used in conjunction with the Rees Foundation Offer of £700 of driving lessons in addition to the ones funded by the Local Authority. To date 46 young people have been provided with driving lessons at a cost of £11,598.50.

Young people have reported that being able to have driving lessons has built their self-confidence, given them a sense of pride and has enabled them to "feel the same as their peers" who are learning to drive. Passing their driving test will open up employment opportunities that they may otherwise not have been able to consider.

Gym memberships

Following discussion with representatives of all local district/borough councils and in consultation with third party contractors between July – October 2018, concessionary membership rates were agreed (per district/borough) for Warwickshire Care Leavers up to the age of 21 who reside in Warwickshire as follows:

Stratford District Everyone Active offer a full years' membership covering use of the Fitness Suite, Swimming Pools, health suites and group exercise for £220 per year (£18.33 per month). This is required to be paid in full on application. If a care leaver leaves the district then money will be refunded on a pro rata basis.

Warwick District offers a full years' membership covering use of the Fitness Suite, Swimming Pools, health suites and group exercise for £149.50. This is required to be paid in full on application. If a care leaver leaves the district then money will be refunded on a pro rata basis.

Nuneaton & Bedworth Everyone Active offer a swim pass only at £20 per month, or swim & gym £25.25 (duplicating the student rate).

Rugby GLL offer a "Better for Everyone" package at £26.80 per month (full access to gym, swim, & sauna).

North Warks Borough Council at Atherstone offer a gym, swim & classes, free of charge to Warwickshire County Council.

If a care leaver wished to access a private gym or exercise classes payment can be made which is capped at £25 a month. Between January – December 2019 we made payments for a gym membership for 91 care leavers at a cost of £8,500.41.

To date the following number of young people have taken advantage of the offer at a cost of £13,779.92.

Gym	No. of Young People who have a membership	Cost per year
Stratford	TBC	TBC
Warwick	11	£1,644.50
Nuneaton & Bedworth	2	£480
Rugby	0	£0
North Warwickshire	0	£0
Private/Alternative	This includes payment for dance classes and boxing, judo etc instead of gym.	£11,655.42
Total Costings		£13,779.92.

Being a member of a gym has contributed to physical and emotional health and well being, some young people report attending the gym together they have advised that this has helped with their emotional wellbeing by offering them the opportunity to socialise.

Accredited Independence Training

Warwickshire have commissioned Doorways to facilitate independence training for young people. From April 2019- December 2019 26 young people attended 56 sessions and gained 75 AQA qualifications. There have been some issues in engaging young people and the feedback from young people is that they prefer one to one sessions rather than group sessions, this clearly has an impact on resources. To date the cost of the independence training with Doorway has been £2988.65.

In addition to this, 16 foster carers have attended Preparation for Independence Training and a further 5 foster carers have completed the online training. Although they are unable to provide young people with accredited independence training this is a supportive, realistic way of teaching care leavers within the home environment.

We are confident that our young people are now being better prepared to live independently and in addition to the above are now moving forward in developing an app an independence booklet that can be used by PA's and Social workers.

Mentor scheme

The original local offer recognised the importance of mentoring for young people. The Asylum and Leaving Care Service have set up a two-year pilot scheme to work in collaboration with Volunteering Matters to provide a Grandmentoring service. Since April 2019, we have worked closely with Volunteer Matters who have trained 40 Grandmentors and made 11 successful matches with care leavers with a further 6 care leavers who have been matched with their Grandmentor and are waiting to start. This pilot scheme is costing £25,000 per year and Volunteering Matters are matching this funding to cover the total cost of £50,000 a year. The scheme has enabled young

people to develop adult support networks beyond social care and offers emotional and practical support, feedback from young people has been extremely positive.

We have also recently started our own Peer Mentoring within the Leaving Care Team and 10 young people attended the first training session in January 2020. The aim is to match Children in care with a peer mentor if they desire this and this could be across all ages as the scheme develops.

In addition to the Leaving Care Peer Mentors, the Asylum Team are training some of their young people to be peer mentors for other Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People. The first peer mentoring training for UASC young people begins in March 2020.

These schemes will provide young people with positive role models, encourage them to participate in activities and services available to them and uses the skills and experiences of our young people. It is envisaged that this will be particularly relevant when young people newly arrive in Warwickshire.

Drop in's

There are now 2 Drops Ins; one in the South of the county and one in the North. Regular group events take place at the drops in's including a weekly 'Chill n' Grill' group with up to 30 young people attending regularly and a focused NEET group which has transformed into a social and peer support group. Other activities have been held at the Drop Ins including cinema nights, music groups, beauty days, baking and cooking sessions.

We have also launched a Pop-Up shop in the south which offers free clothes, toiletries and setting up home items for young people. This is used regularly by our care leavers and has had positive feedback and support from across the county.

We have seen the use of the Drop Ins evolve from a group setting to now include social events outside of the Drop Ins which have included both Care Leavers and Asylum Seekers engaging and socialising together. These have included trips to London, Ten Pin Bowling, Go-Karting, Cinema trips, Christmas parties and weekly group get togethers.

We have launched a bike group where young people are taught how to strip down and repair bikes that have been donated to us from Warwick University. Once they have fully repaired the bike and it is judged to be road worthy, they can take ownership of the bike.

In addition to the smaller events we have held four celebration events throughout 2019 which included a formal event at Old Shire Hall to celebrate Refugee Week with over 120 people, a Fun Day at the Myton Drop In for National Care Leavers Week including a mobile climbing wall with around 100 people attending, a Christmas Party for over 100 care leavers and a Celebration Lunch on Boxing Day run by volunteers and funded by donations for 50 Care Leavers who were alone over Christmas. All of these events have received excellent feedback including comments such as "this just feels like hanging out with family at home".

The drop ins are safe places for our young people, they have made them their own and enjoy having somewhere to attend. The drop-in centres have helped young people to develop relationships and a sense of belonging. One of the many benefits from this is we are participating and engaging young people in a way we never have before and reaching some of the young people who are deemed to be the most at risk resulting in a reduction in missing episodes and lower risks of exploitation for a number of young people.

There is also a washing machine and laptops for young people to use should they wish.

We have a football team that now trains on a Sunday and plays casually every Sunday morning and in a 6-a-side league every Monday evening in Coventry. This football team has been essential in promoting positive physical and mental wellbeing as well as developing the young people's communication and team player skills. The Sunday morning football has over 30 young people who regularly attend and is a great place for new arrivals to make friends and a support network. The boys have also played in a football tournament which was arranged by Coventry Children's Services for local Children in Care and have played an 11-a-side friendly match against Warwickshire Police. These matches with the police and other teams are beneficial to our young people as they are increasing exposure and integration within the UK.

Having recently joined a Coventry league and gain promotion there is a noticeable difference in the young people's demeanour, confidence and self-esteem. It has really helped to bond young people and provide them with a support network not just on the days they play football but throughout the week

Over the summer of 2019 we ran a 5-day activity residential trip to Marle Hall. The week included activities such as gorge-walking, climbing, canoeing, abseiling and day trip to the sea. The young people who attended this have shared that they had never experienced these activities and had a great time, again they reported the positive impact this has had on their emotional well being and sense of worth.

Relationships and Sexual Education Training has been running regularly for UASC young people and to date 45 young people have attended with further training taking place in February half term. This training teaches young people about healthy relationships and cultural differences they may encounter in the UK. We are also starting a Respect and Recognition workshop for UASC girls to consider areas such as Female Genital Mutilation, exploitation and healthy relationships.