



ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: All

Care Leavers

Report by the Director for Housing and Communities

Officer Contact Details

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report is intended to update on findings from the motion carried on November 7th 2023, whereby officers were instructed to investigate and outline how Adur District Council can better support care leavers by engaging directly with West Sussex County Council (WSCC), to proactively help the Care Leavers service move towards Good and on to Outstanding status as assessed by Ofsted, through the implementation of the following initiatives.
- 1.2. The development of a shop front facing community base for our care leavers.
- 1.3. Develop an apprenticeship or work-based opportunity provided by the district council for any care leaver who wanted to explore this as an alternative employment, education and training option.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The sub-committee requests that officers continue to engage and work with WSCC to proactively support care leavers so that they have the same opportunities and ambition as other children do.
- 2.2. The sub-committee recognises that it is not cost effective to open, maintain and resource a shop front for care leavers and instead seek alternative ways to improve outcomes for care leavers through existing mechanisms already at the council's disposal and by working with statutory partners to explore County wide potential.
- 2.3. The sub-committee requests officers to seek alternatives to embarking upon a localised stand alone apprenticeship scheme and finds alternative ways to improve routes to training and employment for care leavers, for example through positive recruitment approaches such as is found in the guaranteed interview scheme.

3. Context

- 3.1 The statutory responsibilities for children and young people sit with colleagues in the county council. Children and young people who have experienced the care system are a part of our community and will access local council services directly and indirectly.
- 3.2 The county council's care leavers service supports young people to exit care successfully as they move towards independence. It operates under a clear legislative framework provided by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 3.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced corporate parenting principles which local authorities in England must have regard to. As a district council we are not the statutory corporate parents but we form a part of the wider fabric of social and economic infrastructure that contributes to the wellbeing of children, young people and their families, creating environments where communities thrive.

- 3.4 Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This principle recognises children and young people as actors in their own lives and applies at all times throughout a child's life.

4. Issues for consideration

- 4.1 Care leavers are a group who migrate in and out of areas. A care leaver may originate from one area, be placed in another area and then permanently settle in that area. Conversely, care leavers may return to an area of historic significance and wish to resettle closer to these earlier roots and bonds and may also return to their birth families. We have additional mechanisms and partnerships where working with families engaged with statutory services or with children looked after and leaving care are already considered. Examples of where we are already engaged in or might best influence and promote such activities is through existing networks such as the Local Community Network, our homelessness prevention work and our health and wellbeing services.

Setting up and effectively running a shop front for care leavers is assessed as being a costly endeavour that would require significant and recurring resourcing. The costs would include building costs in relation to rent, leasing, running costs, utilities and insurance, as well as staffing costs as there is no existing team that could subsume this workstream. Given the nature of the displacement and levels of transience experienced by care leavers, setting up an Adur-specific scheme is assessed as unviable as we need to take a global view of the settlement of care leavers in the context of national, regional and sub-regional work to ensure no care leaver is left behind.

In reviewing data there is no evidence to suggest that care leavers are disproportionately represented in Adur. As such, rather than develop specific responses we should continue to work within resources and structures within the council and with our statutory partner, West Sussex County Council.

An example of this would be to sign up to a national guaranteed interview scheme (GIS) or develop an assertive local alternative. West Sussex County Council successfully operates such a scheme whereby if care leavers meet the essential criteria for a role, they are guaranteed an

interview. This approach is widely shown as effective with care leavers, individuals who have disabilities and with veterans leaving the armed forces. There is government guidance as to how a GIS scheme can be set up and People and Change would be able, using limited resources, be able to further investigate the requirements of the scheme and advise as to any resource implications involved.

5. Engagement and Communication

5.1 We have undertaken no specific engagement or communication in relation to this as we are already fully engaged with children's services in West Sussex, and are represented at the Safeguarding Children Partnership board, the Children First Partnership board and at the Supporting Families oversight group, all of which have a focus of children who are looked after or leaving care.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 By Article 2.04 (a) (viii) of the council's constitution, the council has a duty to demonstrate awareness of its corporate parenting role and shared responsibility for understanding the impact of council decisions on, and championing the needs of, children in care and care leavers in the area.

7.2 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

7.3 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

7.4 s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the local authority to enter into a contract for the provision of making available of assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the local authority.

Background Papers

[2023.11.07 - AJSSC - Agenda item 9 - Motion from ADC Council 1](#)

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

Matter considered and no issues identified.

2. Social

2.1 The work outlined in this report is expressly designed to increase social outcomes.

3. Equality Issues

3.1 The council is subject to the general equality duty set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

3.2 In delivering the plan the council must have due regard to the need to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- c. Foster good relations between different groups

3.3 This paper describes the council's commitment to providing truly inclusive services by listening to underrepresented voices, creating equal access and meeting our equality duties.

3.4 Given the breadth of work proposed and the complexity of relevant protected characteristics and their intersections it is not possible to analyse all the impacts of the plan in relation to legally protected characteristics. However, the council's legal duties (Equality Act 2010) will shape the development of the associated work plan, roadmap, in relation to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

3.5 Actions and areas of investment identified in the plan, as well as other decisions relating to implementation of the plan, will require Equality Impact Assessments as proposals are brought forward to relevant committees.

4. Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

The council is committed to the promotion of communities as safe places.

5. Human Rights Issues

Matter considered and no issues identified.

6. Environmental

This work will support the participatory element of the council's climate and ecological action plans.

7. Governance

Matter considered and no issues identified.