

TITLE OF REPORT: Local Care Leavers Offer

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing and Learning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Care Leavers Offer, highlighting what has been achieved, what else we need to do and how this is supporting care leavers.

Background

1. Every local authority has a statutory duty under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 to offer care leavers support, advice and guidance. The Council publishes its current offer on its website, which outlines the services and support to care leavers.
2. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Government introduced the requirement for local authorities to publish a 'Local Care Leaver Offer', which outlines the services for care leavers available within the local authority area. This offer is a combination of statutory entitlements as well as how the Council and its partners can support care leavers over and above their statutory duty.
3. The draft Local Offer was published in April 2018 and it is hoped we will be able to subsequently refine this by hosting a stakeholder event, involving external partners and local businesses to encourage partners to sign up to the local offer and make pledges for our young people. It is hoped this will take place in the summer.

Progress

4. Progress has been made since the introduction of the Care Leavers Offer and we now have
 - Council Tax exemption for care leavers up to the age of 25
 - Free leisure passes for all care leavers
 - Peer mentoring
 - A housing pathway with a range of options for young people which will commence in July 2018
 - Improved employment, education and training offer from both within the Council and from partners
 - Improved apprenticeship offer within the Council
 - A commitment from a range of Council departments to offer shadowing days and mentoring
 - Practical support in helping young people move home
 - A greater understanding from partners about their role as corporate parents

Next steps

5. In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for our care leavers we need to
 - Host a stakeholder's event to get greater support from local businesses and partners to include not only employment or training but to broaden the offer to include free tickets to activities and events such as football matches, concerts, cinemas, meals out
 - Implement the care leavers app, which allows all care leavers access to the local offer on their phone. This will also enable them to get automatic updates and invitations to events being offered by the service
 - To seek the views of our care leavers on the local offer and develop accordingly.

Impact

6. It is too early to analyse the impact of the Care Leavers Offer as it has only been in place for three months, however having the right Care Leavers Offer should ensure care leavers
 - Have a smooth, planned transition when leaving care
 - Understand their entitlements
 - Have a choice of accommodation when leaving care
 - Have a range of supported opportunities into employment and training
 - Know how and where to seek support
 - Ensure all care leavers are supported up to the age of 25 by the leaving care team
 - Enable care leavers to gain access to, and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - (i) Endorsed the draft Local Care Leaver Offer as set out in appendix 1, for the purpose of consultation and engagement with stakeholders; and
 - (ii) Agrees to receive a further report recommending a final Local Offer following the proposed consultation activity.
8. For the following reasons
 - To ensure the Council meets statutory requirements
 - To ensure that care leavers are supported by both the Council and partners in their transition into independence.

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