

Report to: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **15 July 2011**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **The From Care2Work strategy**

**Purpose of report:**

- **To inform Corporate Parenting Panel of the From Care2Work project and to consider the responsibilities of East Sussex County Council as a corporate parent to ensure the best employability outcomes for all East Sussex care leavers**
- **Corporate Parenting Panel members are asked to look for opportunities to act as champions for care leavers and support and challenge other organisations and other departments within ESCC to offer such opportunities to care leavers**

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**RECOMMENDATION: Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of the report**

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**1. Financial appraisal**

1.1 There are no increased costs arising from this report.

**2. Supporting information**

2.1 See as Appendix 1

2.2 The From Care2Work Action Plan is attached as Appendix 2

**3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of the report.

MATT DUNKLEY

Director of Children's Services

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Anna Brookes (Care Leaver Co-ordinator) and Peter Richards (Operations Manager LAC)

Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: none

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## **1. The From Care2Work Project**

1.1 From Care2Work is a national project aiming to improve employability outcomes for young people in the transition to adulthood. The project is managed by The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS). NCAS are the national advice, support and development service focusing on young people's transition from care. The Care2Work project started in 2009. This was a national government initiative where the aim was to seek large employers at a national level to offer employment opportunities for care leavers. Initially, 150 local authorities signed up to take part in the From Care2Work of which East Sussex was one. During phase one of the project local authorities were asked to complete a mapping project and work plan with actions at a strategic and operational level. The plan clearly indicated the importance of joint working with statutory and external partners.

1.2 Nationally the project identified the following actions to be in place at completion of phase1:

### 1.2.1. Corporate Parenting in Action

- A strategic champion should be in place to ensure the employability of care leavers is on the executive agenda, with operational local authority managers turning commitment into action
- Consideration should be given to how corporate parenting can be included in employment and skills strategies across the local authority
- To consider how young people are involved in shaping services and monitoring outcomes
- To ensure consideration is given locally to meeting the needs of care leavers when bidding for funds to tackle the training and employment needs of this group.

### 1.2.2 A Partnership approach

- To develop a network of internal and external partners to create opportunities for care leavers
- To consider Care2Work quality standards as a baseline
- To ensure social clauses in procurement contracts are linked to corporate parenting responsibility to create opportunities for care leavers
- To link with job centres and develop partnerships agreements
- To widen participation and mentoring opportunities for care leavers
- To link with Social Enterprise groups such as the Hastings Trust and the Hastings Furniture Service to develop employment and training programmes for care leavers

### 1.2.3 Raising aspirations

- To raise young peoples' career aspirations
- To work with a range of partners in all sectors to work together to provide opportunity for young people to discover talent/interests etc.

### 1.2.4 Supporting the journey to work

- To ensure a dedicated specialist post within a care leavers' service to provide a focus for employability, supporting young people to reach their potential and to advise care leaving staff on employment, education and training (EET)
  - To ensure that career planning journeys are set up from years 8/9 for care leavers
  - To improve employment literacy of young people so they can learn about the world of work through visits, experiences and meeting people from different work areas
  - To ensure work experience and work skills for care leavers
  - To ensure foster carers, teachers, social workers have aspirations for all young people and that all care leavers have appropriate information about choices and opportunities
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## 2. From Care2Work in East Sussex

2.1 The National Performance Indicator which measures the education, employment or training of a specific cohort of care leavers is the national indicator NI 148 Care leavers in education, employment or training. This indicator measures levels of participation in education, employment or training (EET) for young adults formerly in care – a key group at risk of social exclusion. Specifically this indicator measures the percentage of young people looked after on 1<sup>st</sup> April in their 17<sup>th</sup> year (age 16) who were engaged in education, employment or training at the age of 19. The overall performance indicator are as follows:

- o 2008/09 70% of care leavers were in education, employment or training.
- o 2009/10 67% of care leavers were in education, employment or training
- o 2010/11 50% of care leavers were in education, employment or training
- o In the first quarter of 2011/12 56% of care leavers were in education, employment or training.

The overall decrease in the percentage is related to the complex economic climate and the lack of opportunities for young people who have complex needs to access employment, training or education.

2.2 In response to improving our performance of EET East Sussex Children's Services in 2009 signed up to the National From Care2Work project. An East Sussex From Care2Work Action plan was devised with clear objectives and actions that supported the national framework. See Appendix 2 From Care2Work Action Plan.

2.3 NCAS has recently been successful in securing further grant funding from the Department for Education, although the long term investment remains uncertain. Phase 2 of the From Care2Work project will be delivered from April 2011 to March 2013. East Sussex remains committed to the aims and ambitions of the project in phase 2 which are:

- To build upon the success achieved in Phase 1
- To ensure that the employability and employment chances of care leavers remain a priority
- To continue providing support to local authorities
- To build on the relationships and opportunities developed with national and local employers

## 3. Progress in the FromCare2Work Project in East Sussex since 2009

- The From Care2Work Action Plan was created for Phase 1 and was reviewed and updated when the Care Leavers' service moved into the Looked After Children (LAC) service
  - The movement of the Care Leavers' service into LAC service has significantly improved joint working with other agencies. For example a protocol for vulnerable learners including care leavers has been put in place. The protocol outlined the roles and responsibilities of the team around the young person to ensure a smooth transition from school to college, training or employment. A protocol was also developed with FE providers to ensure that care leavers at college are appropriately supported by both the education provider and the leaving care team. This protocol will have to be reviewed in line with the changes in available support services. (The loss of the universal careers service ( Babcock), the Intensive Connexions Personal Advisors and the changes in funding to FE Colleges)
  - Joint working is now taking place including regular tracking and monitoring with all Further Education (FE) providers that our care leavers attend
  - A tracking system is in place to track progress towards qualification outcomes for all LAC and care leavers.
  - Joint working is in place with partners from FE and Higher Education (HE) to support opportunities for care leavers to access HE
  - There are to be training and network opportunities via regular meetings such as the pan Sussex Strategic group for care leavers. Membership of this group is from LAC services, Virtual School and both FE and HE providers across Sussex.
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- Close working with Project managers from the 11 – 19 Partnership and Provision team has been set up with reference to training, apprenticeships and foundation learning opportunities.
- A new Personal Education Plan (PEP) for care leavers has been developed to link with the pathway plan in line with the new regulations and guidance Vol.3 Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.
- A new PEP has been developed at Key stage 3 and 4 which has elements of career planning under economic well being and employability. This will have to be reviewed to consider the impact on young people following the changes on career information and guidance (CIAG)
- There has been an appointment to the Virtual School of a P/T Education, Employment and Training Coordinator with a specialist role to focus on EET of care leavers.
- Foster carers' awareness of EET opportunities has been built into foster carer training
- Widening participation opportunities have been developed with both Brighton and Sussex Universities to offer a range of activities, support and opportunities. These will be sustained despite the loss of Aim Higher monies through a Pan Sussex partnership group for care leavers.
- Care leavers have access to projects such as Work Pairing and Learn. These projects have been set up for Vulnerable learners and are employment based, where the learners have an opportunity to develop work skills.
- The Care Leavers' service is currently working with the Ethical Skills Training (EST) to pilot a 12 week pre apprenticeship programme to be delivered in key areas in East Sussex
- Employment partners are being developed via Work Pairing and Learn.

#### **4 Priorities for From Care2Work project in East Sussex 11/12**

East Sussex County Council needs to develop sustainable opportunities for all our care leavers whether it be through further education, training or employment. See the Care2Work Action plan (attached as appendix 2). We will need to monitor the impact of the raising of the participation age in 2013 as well as the impact that the loss of services such as Connexions (Babcock) and the Intensive Personal Advisors in schools will have on preparing LAC and care leavers for the future.

##### 4.1 The priorities are:

- As Corporate Parents – East Sussex County Council is the 'family firm' for our LAC and care leavers. East Sussex County Council should have care leavers as a higher priority within the local authority employment plans. For example care leavers should be given a high priority for appropriate opportunities of work experience, work shadowing or apprenticeships.
  - East Sussex County Council will need to ensure that when the Council is offering service contracts or puts projects out to tender that prospective employers are asked to offer opportunities to care leavers (e.g. work experience, work shadowing, apprenticeships).
  - In addition East Sussex County Council needs to encourage the 5 boroughs and districts to provide employability opportunities for care leavers.
  - East Sussex County Council via the Care2Work Action plan will need to develop both strategic and operational partnerships with organizations such as the NHS, large retailers, hotel chains, housing trusts/associations and leisure providers
  - East Sussex County Council needs to ensure that schools are able to provide impartial career information advice and guidance for all LAC to become work ready by ensuring that career planning journeys are set up from year 8/9 and to improve employment literacy of young people so that they are able to learn about the world of work through visits, experiences and meeting people from different work areas.
  - All foster carers and residential home staff should support the East Sussex From Care2Work Action Plan by having high aspirations for the young people they care for and by providing support, training and encouraging work shadow opportunities.
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