



Strengthening the Local Offer for Care Leavers in East Sussex

CPP 21.1.2022

Background

- December 2021 333 Care Leavers 18-21, 87 of which are Unaccompanied Asylum- Seeking Young people. 100 young people 21+
- Statutory duty to provide support until aged 21 years or 25 depending on needs/wishes.
- Care Leavers should expect to receive the same level of care and support that any other young person would receive from reasonable parents/grandparents.
- DfE statutory guidance (Feb 2018) required all local authorities to develop and publish a Local Offer.
- ESCC Local Offer published in 2019 which is accessible on the Council website.

Developments and progress made to the Local Offer since 2019

- Health Passport fully embedded.
- Project Manager appointed as Health & Wellbeing lead with NHS funding in place to support personalised health budgets.
- Young People's Substance Misuse Service extended to 25
- 2 months free membership for Care Leavers at all Freedom Leisure sites & 1 month free for their 'plus one'.
- Links established with Active Sussex to promote & develop healthy living lifestyles projects for Care Leavers across the County.
- Independent Social Worker commissioned to support Care Leavers gaining access to their records.
- Laptop/Tablet supplied to all Care Leavers including wi-fi access.
- Pupil Premium+ pilot scheme underway to support young people aged 16+ in further education including English Language provision for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs).
- Embedded education specialist from Virtual School within the Care Leaver's service & UASC Service.

Developments and progress made to Local Offer since 2019 continued ...

- Care Leaver housing protocol developed between ESCC & the Districts and Boroughs. All Care Leavers now categorised as in priority need with joint housing pathway planning completed. Range of supported housing options available as a stepping-stone to independent living and tenancy management.
- Established links with Rough Sleepers Initiative to provide funding/support for permanent housing solutions for those young people with complex needs and/or at risk of intentional homelessness.
- Council tax exemptions now in place for all ESCC care leavers up to the age of 25 years living within East Sussex.
- Dedicated Participation Worker embedded within the service to develop strategy & policy. Range of participation events & activities established.
- Care Leaver Council established.
- Designated worker lead on all benefits related advice.
- Established named links in all DWP/Job Centres.
- Corporate Grandparenting Offer strengthened



What next? Ideas

- Series of meetings to be coordinated with all ESCC departments
- Series of meetings with partner agencies to explore how the offer can be enhanced.
- Corporate Parenting Panel to consider how best to complement any new developments.

Possible next steps for the Children's Services Dept.

- Increase Care Leaver's access to their records and Life Story work.
- Family Group Conference Service to be developed for older LAC and Care Leavers, alongside Lifelong Links initiative to look at safe reunification/family support.
- Extend clothing allowance from the current rate of £200 pa to £800 pa for under 18's.
- Re-establish a multiagency group to focus on work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities for Care Leavers.
- Rent Guarantor Scheme to be adopted thus extending housing options for Care Leavers into the private market.
- Weekend and out of hours support to be funded for 18+ year olds.



Possible next steps for the wider Council

- A 'whole Council' approach to Corporate Parenting to be developed and to be led by elected members and CMT.
- Each ESCC department to make a pledge to Care Leavers specific to their area of service.
- Protocols to be developed to enable Care Leavers to access wider Corporate services as a priority e.g., mental health support.
- Introduce prepaid debit cards to reduce demands on the current petty cash systems.
- Develop digital and social media support to Care Leavers.
- Re-design the Local Offer on ESCC website.

Possible next steps for partner agencies

- Free Prescriptions (CCG).
- Extension of equal access to leisure facilities across the county (Districts and Boroughs).
- Council Tax waiver to be extended to all Care Leavers resident in ESCC and across housing borders. (Districts and Boroughs and other LAs).
- Development of a training flat to be explored to support tenancy management. Step down accommodation for 18+ year olds to support the transition into mainstream accommodation from High Intensive supported accommodation (Districts and Boroughs).
- Discounted travel options (Communities, Economy & Transport Department and local bus/train companies).