

Committee: Safeguarding Sub Committee – For Information	Dated: 09/02/2023
Subject: Care Leavers and their education, training and employment	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Claire Chamberlain, Interim Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Rachel Talmage, Head of Service, People Department, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

This report sets out the current offer for Care Leavers, the support offered, and its impact. Our Local Offer for Care Leavers is published in accordance with Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.¹

Ofsted is introducing a new, separate judgement to the framework for Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) in January 2023. Our ambition is to achieve an excellent outcome for every child.

The majority of care leavers are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Our children bring a wealth of personal experience, courage and determination. It is common that education has been disrupted prior to joining the City, that permanent immigration status is needed alongside the need to learn and develop English language skills prior to being ready for further education.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

¹ [Resources and Information for Children in Care and Care Leavers - City of London](#)

Main Report

Background

National

1. Lots of children in care and care leavers go on to further education, and many care leavers go on to university, although for some young people this happens later in life.² However, care leavers are one of the most under-represented groups in higher education. In 2020/21, just 13% progressed to higher education by age 19 in England, compared to 45% of all other pupils.³
2. Ofsted is introducing a new, separate judgement to the framework for Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in January 2023.⁴ The new judgement will focus on the things that matter most to care leavers' lives, including their learning and employment opportunities. Inspections will also consider whether local authorities are making good decisions for care leavers, and what they are doing to support them into adulthood.

London

3. Despite major improvements over the last decade, London's children in care can still face multiple obstacles, and many remain particularly vulnerable. This means that fewer care leavers go on to further training or university, and can face complex challenges as they transition into independent living.
4. Recent research published by The Children's Society demonstrates the need for a more consistent, pan-London offer for care leavers. The City of London already fulfils their recommendations for care leavers, except:
 - A commitment that local authorities across London reserve a set number of their in-house apprenticeships for care leavers, ensuring that they are given guidance and support from the application process through to the end of their placement.
5. **London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) Programme: Care Leaver's compact**

The London Care Leavers' Compact will provide a framework for a consistent and high-quality offer across the capital. The City of London is involved in the LIIA programme.
6. It is a duty under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 that England's local authorities must publish information about the services offered for care leavers. Each London borough therefore has a care leaver offer, but these are individual to each area and do not provide a consistent and shared offer for our care leavers. Care leavers do not always live in the borough responsible for them, which poses further challenges with the variation in offers. It is also important that the offer to care leavers reaches beyond services provided by

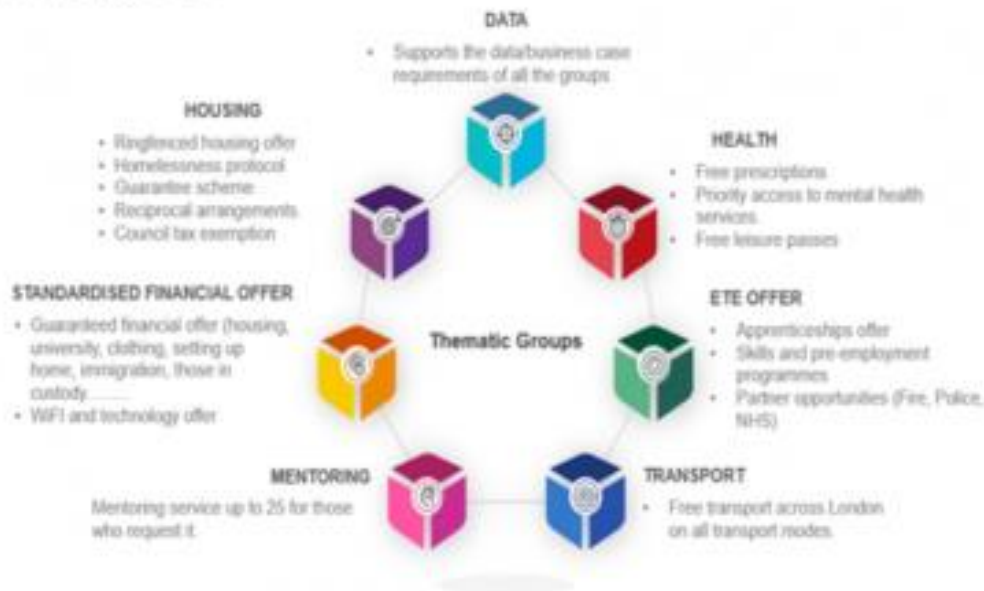
² [Higher and further education - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](https://www.becomecharity.org.uk)

³ [Supporting care leavers and estranged students in higher education - HEPI](https://www.hepi.org.uk)

⁴ [A new judgement for care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

local authorities. Partners such as health, education and transport have important roles to play, as do the private and voluntary sectors.

Areas to be explored as part of the guarantee – Our thematic working groups



The City

- To help care leavers succeed in education and training, the City of London provides registration fees, course fees, exam fees, equipment, course books, travel costs, clothes and uniforms for study or work. This is published on our local offer. Driving lessons are provided where this is linked to a job role requirement, but this is not yet a core offer for all care leavers.

Current Position

- Children's Social Care and Early Help aims for excellence across all its work for children and families. All our young people are offered to stay with their foster families, or to remain in their supported living accommodation. There is no 'cliff edge' for leaving care. All but three care leavers were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Support to our care leavers in respect of education/training and employment is a core part of the social worker's role with care leavers, and a primary part of their Pathway Plan. Social workers use the advice and guidance service Prospects, Connecting Communities, and the Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that our young people are on the right courses at the right time, and that young people are progressing. A new Expert Practitioner role started in January 2023 to boost oversight of those not yet in education/training or employment, by chairing their pathway plans and offering coaching to social

workers. A new part-time Deputy Virtual Headteacher will be working to strengthen the educational offer for care leavers and work with colleges across London to boost extracurricular enrichment work.

10. The Head of Service for Social Care and Early Help chairs a monthly tracker with the Virtual School Headteacher, Prospects and the deputy/team manager. This has ensured good management grip and that no care leaver is left behind or overlooked.

Cost of living and effect on education

11. Cost of living and effect on education, training and employment: The City of London has increased subsistence by 10% to match the cost-of-living increase from 1 December 2022 (to be reviewed in six months and again in one year), and have matched this with young people accessing universal credit. This was following staff feedback, and from listening to young people. For example, one young person is studying while she works with the NHS. She lives in a studio flat. The extra funds help her with laundry costs outside the home, and to help deal with mould in the flat.

The Virtual School Headteacher

12. The part-time Virtual School Headteacher has recruited an interim Deputy Head to support care leavers aged over 18 years. The Deputy Head will be scrutinising students' courses to ensure that they are relevant and impactful. He will be looking at the care leavers' individual trajectories to see what else could build around, for example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes. The Deputy Head will undertake project work and report on impact. An example of an excellent outcome last term was the Virtual School Headteacher working to ensure that a care leaver could access a foundation level degree. This was a unique outcome, and enabled the student to reach university without A Levels or equivalent.
13. The Virtual School Headteacher has created a joint project with the City of London Boys School to provide one twilight session a week throughout spring and summer, so that care leavers get a chance to be taught science, engineering, drama, art and design. There will be a post-class game of football every week, trips to museums, and London-based activities to engage and inspire.
14. The Virtual School Headteacher has created an enrichment project called Beneath the Trees, linking care leavers aged 16 to 25 years with Epping Forest – part of the City of London outside London. The overall aim being to enrich education and provide a breadth of experience and opportunity.

Socially responsible contracts: corporate centre

15. The Head of Service for Social Care and Early Help worked with Education and Early Years and the corporate centre to ensure that our procurement requirements include contracts offering work/training to vulnerable people, including care leavers.

Connecting Communities

16. Social care has referred young people to the Connecting Communities Project and worked closely last term to identify young people who could be helped into work/training. This project is limited by the contract with the European Social Fund to work with people in 12 boroughs across London and geographically in the City (not including those we are responsible for outside). As our care leavers largely live across greater London, most miss out on this offer.

Prospects

17. In quarter 2, 2022/23 Prospects supported five care leavers, with three being secured into further education.

Education and Skills Team

18. There is a new project for our children in care and care leavers with the Freeman's School, which offers a residential programme for 10 young people and includes oracy skills. Impact will be reported on as part of the service development plan.

Key Data

19. There are currently 58 care leavers aged 18 plus in the City of London: six are not in education, training or employment; four of our young people are in university; 41 are in college (some work part-time around study); and five are working. One care leaver at university has an offer of full-time work with a global software company set up post-graduation.

20. Six young people aged between 18 and 25 years are not in education, training or employment. These are the reasons and support provided:

- a. Due to immigration control, court hearing pending March 2023
- b. Seeking voluntarily return to country of origin via Home Office
- c. Due to emotional wellbeing (two young people). Mental health support, advocacy and independent visiting are offered and taken up.
- d. Due to alcohol addiction. Joint support via Children's and Adult services, specialist support in place and currently working with Virtual School Headteacher to gain a college place.
- e. Due to likely criminal exploitation; the person is under probation support and out of touch with services.

21. There are no ringfenced apprenticeship vacancies for care leavers at City of London.

22. There are no care leavers working as apprentices within City of London.⁵

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Corporate plan

⁵ [Care Leaver Local Offer :: Home / Local Authorities / City of London \(careleaveroffer.co.uk\)](https://www.careleaveroffer.co.uk)

23. Work supporting care leavers sits within a commitment to a flourishing society, ensuring equality of opportunity. We would like to see an equality of outcome for our young people: being able to access well-paying jobs and receive a good quality education. Our ambition for care leavers is equivalent to our hopes for our own children, and that they outperform us and achieve more than us.

Financial implications

24. If young people are in good jobs which pay well by the age of 25, they will be better able to manage when difficulties and changes arise.

Resource implications

25. Virtual School Headteacher funding for all children with a social worker is set by central government is not permanent and is subject to review. It is clear to see the impact of the role on young people, and it is hoped funding will continue.

Legal implications

26. One young person is unable to study/work for immigration law reasons, which is a waste of his talent and contribution to UK society. This also has an impact on his health and wellbeing.

Risk implications

27. Providing a full, creative, enrichment programme and ensuring that young people are provided with opportunity and courses that will stretch them offers an antidote to boredom/risk/unhealthy behaviours on an individual basis. The City of London will be subject to an Ofsted inspection in this area. There is a risk that, should the impact of the offer continue to innovate and grow, then the City of London would suffer reputational risk.

Equalities implications

28. Project work has adapted to focus on the unique needs of our young people, who largely have English as a second/third/fourth language, and who are hindered by immigration control and often lengthy journeys that disrupt formal education.
29. Our young people may be subject to structural and individual racism, as most are black or brown. They may also face prejudice as people who have migrated to the UK. Together with language and cultural barriers, this means it is harder for some of our young people to have an equality of outcome educationally and with accessing well paid, secure work.
30. Barriers exist with apprenticeships (as legal status and levels of English are required), and there are no pre-apprenticeships or designated apprenticeships for care leavers yet offered within the City of London Corporation as an employer itself. Rather, these apprenticeships are a feature of good procurement from our commissioned partners which have yet to have any impact.

Climate implications

31. None.

Security implications

32. None.

Conclusion

33. The education employment and training offer open to care leavers is robust and creative. The next piece of work is to extend and expand the post-18 college offer, so that young people have a fuller curriculum. The collaborative focus on those who are not yet engaged in education and employment or training is keeping these numbers low and ensuring that every effort is made to bring about change.

Appendices - None

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