

	<p align="center">Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee</p> <p align="center">21st February 2016</p>
<p align="center">Title</p>	<p align="center">Care Leavers’ Strategy and Needs Analysis</p>
<p align="center">Report of</p>	<p>Commissioning Director – Children and Young People</p>
<p align="center">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p align="center">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="center">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="center">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="center">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A: Barnet Care Leavers’ Strategy Appendix B: Barnet Care Leavers’ Needs’ Analysis Appendix C: What makes a Resilient Care Leaver?</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>Care leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and research at a local and national level demonstrates that they do not have the same life opportunities and outcomes as their peers.</p> <p>Appendix A to this report presents Barnet’s strategy for care leavers for 2017-2020, with its proposed key strategic priorities. The underpinning needs analysis is provided in Appendix B, which spans key areas including education, employment and training; housing; finances and access to services.</p>

Recommendations

1. That the Committee approve the Barnet Care Leaver's Strategy as appended.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 It is important that the Committee on Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding (CELSC) is briefed on the implementation of the Care Leavers' Strategy, as Committee Members are key stakeholders in overseeing Barnet's Corporate Parenting Duties for children in care and care leavers.
- 1.2 The launch of Barnet's Children and Young People Plan 2016-2020 sets out the vision for Family Friendly Barnet: to develop resilient families and resilient children. A strategy based on resilience involves looking for strengths and opportunities to build on, rather than for issues or problems to treat. It is within this context that Barnet will implement the Care Leavers' Strategy.
- 1.3 Care leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Research shows that journey through the first decade of adult life can often be disrupted, unstable and troubled, and their life chances are significantly worse than those of their peers without a care leaving background.
- 1.4 The government's intention is to give care leavers the same care and support that their peers would expect from a reasonable parent, such as help finding a job or setting up home. The July 2016 'Keep on Caring' cross-government strategy sets the scene for the future of care leaving services to support better outcomes for care leavers. It invites councils to be more creative about the ways in which they meet their needs.
- 1.5 The Children and Social Work Bill, which is yet to receive royal assent, places duties on local authorities for cohorts including care leavers, including a local offer for care leavers. It also proposes that all care leavers receive a Personal Advisor to support them up to the age of 25 (rather than the present age of 21 for most care leavers).
- 1.6 Members have special responsibilities towards Barnet care leavers, as their corporate parents. Members' commitment to the care leaving agenda was demonstrated through the Barnet Pledge, brought by Members as a joint motion to the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee in January 2016 and the Corporate Parenting Action Plan that is being advanced to improve outcomes for Barnet's children in care and care leavers.
- 1.7 Barnet has recently been named as a UNICEF Child Rights Partner, in recognition of activity undertaken and planned to ensure that the rights and participation of children in care and care leavers are at the heart of service delivery and design. The three priorities for participation in the programme

align with the strategic priorities of the care leavers' strategy, and will strengthen these.

- 1.8 This paper informs Members of the needs of the care leaving cohort (Appendix B). On the basis of this, key strategic priorities for the council and its partners are proposed until 2020. This will enable members, officers and partners to better meet the needs of care leaver through targeted activity that will make a difference to outcomes for Barnet's care leavers.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 As corporate parents, Members are requested to note the Care Leavers' strategy, as well as the needs' analysis that underpins it. The strategy proposes the direction of travel for Barnet's care leaving services over 2017-20.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The report supports CELSC Members in advancing the corporate parenting agenda, and all Members in fulfilling their roles as Corporate Parents. Neglecting to send the strategy to CELS would impede this.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Progress against strategic priorities will be monitored through the reporting of key indicators both through monthly officer assurance reports and as part of the management information update to Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel and CELSC.
- 4.2 A detailed action plan has been developed to ensure that priorities are advanced in a defined and timely fashion. This action plan will be taken forward by the Corporate Parenting Officers' Group, in tandem with the Corporate Parenting Action Plan.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

Ensure that Barnet is a place of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life:

As one of the most vulnerable groups in society, research demonstrates that care leavers do not have the same life chances and opportunities as their peers without a care background. The Care Leavers' Strategy provides clear direction, based on evidence, of how opportunities can be improved for Barnet care leavers.

Support families and individuals that need it– promoting independence, learning and well-being.

Research shows that there are barriers to care leavers engaging in education, employment and training, which can be compounded by mental health issues or issues with financial management. Barnet's care leavers experience

independence earlier in their lives than many of our young people, and need resilience to deal with life's challenges at this transition to adulthood.

As former children in care, care leavers also benefit from activity taking place around the following corporate priority: ***To create better life chances for children and young people across the borough.***

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 There are no financial implications of the Care Leavers' Strategy at this stage. There are, however, pressures related to the Children and Social Work Bill in particular the requirement on Local Authorities to provide Personal Advisors for care leavers. This will be reviewed and the details reported to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel and other relevant Committees once the Bill becomes legislation.

5.2.2 There are clear governance arrangements in place and there is a stable management team in Family Services, which support continuous service improvement. Improvement work across the service, including the leaving care team 'Onwards and Upwards', is driven by the Practice Improvement Plan.

5.2.3 The 'Onwards and Upwards' team have developed a resilience philosophy for their work with care leavers (including statements in Appendix C), and are participating in Signs of Safety training, which forms a key component of the resilience model.

5.2.4 Recruitment and retention of social workers is being advanced as part of the Practice Improvement Plan and Workforce Planning Framework 2016/17. As part of these plans, there is a focus on decreasing the service's reliance on agency social workers and increasing recruitment and retention of permanent staff.

5.2.5 Family Services commissioning involves children and young people and is supported by clear monitoring arrangements which are robust and clearly governed to provide oversight of whether commissioned services achieve outcomes. The Commissioning process is informed by needs analysis drawing on diverse sources of insight.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

5.3.2 Before commencing a procurement process for services that are relevant to care leavers, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders. Opportunities to secure social value

through the implementation of the Care Leavers' Strategy will be considered.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. They also have statutory duties under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the associated regulations, being the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 in respect of eligible and relevant and former relevant children i.e. current and future cohorts of children who have left or will leave the local authority's care.
- 5.4.2 Local authorities have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, provided that this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings. Services might include day care for young children, after-school care for school children, counselling, respite care, family centre services or practical help in the home or targeted parenting and family support.
- 5.4.3 Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, in the council's constitution states that the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for powers, duties and functions relating to Children's Services. In addition to this, the committee has responsibility for overseeing the support for young people in care and enhancing the council's corporate parenting role.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 The nature of services provided to children and families by Family Services involve managing significant levels of risk. High quality early intervention and social care services reduce the likelihood of children suffering harm and increase the likelihood of children developing into successful adults and achieving and succeeding.
- 5.5.2 Family Services maintains a risk register, to ensure that risks relating to safeguarding children and young people are managed effectively. These risks are reviewed at least every quarter. Any risks arising from the strategy or the related projects will be managed in line with the corporate risk management framework.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.7.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.7.2 Equalities and Diversity considerations are a key element of the Council's approach to safeguarding and work with care leavers. Analysis of local needs with regard to equality and diversity have fed into the care leavers' strategy. Services provided take equality and diversity considerations into account, and there are seasonal events arranged for care leavers that celebrate diversity.

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

5.7.1 The needs analysis (Appendix B) draws on national findings from surveys with care leavers.

5.7.2 Barnet care leavers were consulted with to inform the needs' analysis and strategy, at a BBQ event in August 2016 and a co-produced survey was circulated to care leavers via their workers in November/December 2016. Personal Advisors and Social Workers at Onwards and Upwards were surveyed in late 2016 around the opportunities and challenges facing care leavers in Barnet.

5.7.3 On 24th January 2017, a stakeholder event with partners working with or for care leavers was held. This provided an opportunity to present partners with headlines from the needs analysis, generate discussion around improving outcomes for care leavers, and secure new commitments to Barnet's care leaving offer. Pledges from partners have been incorporated into the final strategy and accompanying action plan.

5.7.4 Across Family Services, the participation agenda is driven by the Voice of the Child Strategy, which outlines a clear vision to provide all children and young people within Barnet the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

5.8 Insight

5.8.1 The Barnet placements commissioning strategy is based on a thorough needs Assessment. It sets out the profile and needs of Barnet's looked after children and is designed to better meet the needs of our children in care. This includes meeting equality and diversity considerations as set out in the 2010 Equality Act. Sources of insight include:

- National research on challenges, opportunities and outcomes for care leavers
- Governmental papers and strategies

- Local data, from the ICS social care system
- Survey of social workers and personal advisors in the 'Onwards and Upwards' leaving care team
- Surveys of care leavers
- Findings from an external analysis of Barnet's care leaving cohort

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1. Item 6 (Care Leavers' Strategy) – Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel, 7th February 2016:

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s37769/Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.pdf>