

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 28

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Employability for Young People in Care and Care Leavers		
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2013		
Report of:	Interim Director of Children's Services		
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Wards affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Positive actions to develop employment opportunities for the children and young people to whom the local authority is parent are essential to Brighton & Hove City Council's responsibilities as corporate parents as detailed in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- 1.2 This Strategy meets a statutory duty (Children & Young Persons Act 2008) placed on every part of a local authority to co-operate in promoting the welfare of children and young people in care and care leavers and a duty on all partners to co-operate in fulfilling that duty. The Strategy was agreed by the Children & Young People's Trust Partnership Board in November 2010 and by the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2011.
- 1.3 "Employability" refers to a wide range of opportunities that the council and its partners can offer young people and include apprenticeships, work experience, taster days and work placements, either paid or unpaid.
The value of preparation is shown by research which suggests that successful apprenticeships are ones where young people have undertaken work experience prior to starting the programme.
- 1.4 To assist these young people achieve economic wellbeing, actions to improve employability will need to:
 - advocate for and provide work experience, work placements and employment opportunities within Brighton & Hove City Council and its partners and
 - promote the needs of care leavers for work experience, training and job opportunities with employers and employer organisations in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Corporate Parenting sub-committee monitor the development of bespoke packages leading to sustainable employment for each young person in care, based on an assessment of their interests, aspirations and abilities. This will assist Childrens Services in improving outcomes and reducing NEET (Not Engaged in Education, Employment or Training) for these young people.

- 2.2 That Corporate Parenting sub-committee secure a commitment across the local authority, and with other partner agencies wherever possible, to support packages of work placements, work experience, apprenticeships, full and part-time employment and training for young people in care and care leavers.
- 2.3 That these employability opportunities form the basis of Brighton & Hove City Council policy and procedure to assist our young people leaving care to achieve economic well being.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Preparation for leaving care and moving to adulthood is a process that supports these young people to make a successful transition to independent living. It is crucial that this preparation includes good support and planning for their future careers to enable them to meet their potential, achieve their abilities, hopes and aspirations and become economically and socially positively contributing citizens.
- 3.2 The decisions young people make between 16 and 21 years have a huge impact on their future lives and are key if we are to improve social mobility and social inclusion. Research shows that when young people are unemployed for periods after leaving school, the longer term prospect of achieving positive outcomes is poor and they can become socially excluded.
- 3.3 B&HCC’s Children in Care and 16 Plus Support teams take the lead in ensuring that the local authority and its partners as corporate parents assist young people while in care and to continue to support them as care leavers but these responsibilities need to be council- and partner-wide.
- 3.4 Social Workers and Personal Advisers in the 16 Plus Support Team undertake an assessment of employability needs with all young people. These are detailed in the young Pathway Plans. These are regularly reviewed to identify any barriers to further education or employment established and ways to overcome them identified. The key workers provide and maintain positive working relationships with young people providing appropriate support, mentoring, guidance and information. (see also 3.10.2 – additional support from Employment & Training Personal Adviser)
- 3.5 The 16 Plus Support Team currently has the statutory responsibility for 85 young people aged 16-17 years and for 193 young people aged 18-21+ years. A sample of recent data below shows levels of education, training and employment activity for 16 and 19 year old young people:

Education, training and employment activity for 16 year old young people in care

	Full time education	Employment/training	Unemployed
30.09.11	35 out of 42 (83%)	2 out of 42 (5%)	5 out of 42 (12%)
30.03.12	32 out of 42 (76%)	2 out of 42 (5%)	8 out of 42 (19%)
30.07.12	31 out of 42	1 out of 42 (2%)	10 out of 42

	(74%)		(19%)
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Education, training and employment activity for 19 year old care leavers

For the year 2011/12, 35 young people (61%) were in education, training or employment with 23 (39% (NEET) This is a fall on 2010/11 when 67% were in education, training or employment.

However, information from the Brighton & Hove Youth Employability Service shows that of the 377 young people aged 19 years on its database, 213 (56.5%) are in Education, Training & Employment and 164 (43.5%) are NEET.

The data collected so far for 2012/13 for 19 year olds (April-December 2012) shows that 22 young people (63%) are in education, training or employment with 13 (37%) NEET.

3.6 It should be acknowledged that children and young people in care have greater difficulty in accessing employment opportunities because of:

- poorer educational outcomes than their peers
- the majority being in care because of neglect and physical and sexual harm and abuse
- many having poor early years life experiences and disruptions to schooling
- many coming from poor economic and backgrounds of long term family unemployment
- many are vulnerable children who have been left too long with failing parents

However, we need to move away from the assumption that this is an inevitable consequence of their often disadvantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. What it does mean is that we need to invest in specific and targeted additional support to improve their employment outcomes.

3.7 This can be achieved by promoting and providing work experience, taster days, work placements either paid or unpaid, apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities with all employers and employer organisations in the city and to ensure that the young people are fully supported to participate.

3.8 Ofsted View The inspection of children's services in March 2011 noted "Performance for 16-19 year old young people in care and care leavers not in education, employment or training is improving slowly, though is still high apprenticeships and training opportunities are also insufficient to meet the needs of young people in care"

Areas for improvement in the inspection report recommended "improving the Corporate Parenting Board performance in championing access to work opportunities for children in care and care leavers" and "establishing specialist support ... with regard to employment, education and training opportunities".

3.9 An Ofsted inspection of one of our neighbouring authorities noted that: "The leadership and management of services for children and young people in care and care leavers are outstanding with competent and determined leadership from the council corporately and from Children's Services. This is complemented

by cross-party political support from elected members and the Corporate Parenting Committee as Children's Champion"

3.10 **Initiatives and opportunities that are currently in place in the council.**

3.10.1 On 11.09.12 the Public Service Board approved the creation of a single apprenticeship scheme across the city managed by the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership with full involvement of the Education Business Partnership. An Apprenticeship Co-ordinator has been appointed and will start her role in January 2013 based in Human Resources. HR has also been successful in a partnership bid with Jobcentre Plus to help establish apprenticeships across the council.

The manager of the 16 Plus Team is meeting with Simon Newell, Head of Partnerships & External Relations who is leading on the "City Wide Single Apprenticeship Strategy" (See Appendix 1 for detail of this scheme) He will also meet with the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator to discuss what each service area across the council will be able to offer and will report back with an update at the sub-committee meeting on 23rd January.

3.10.2 **Children's Services:**

The 16 Plus Support Team employs an Employment and Training Personal Adviser who provides advice, support and assistance to NEET (Not in Education, Employment, Training) young people in care in collaboration with schools, Further Education colleges, Youth Employability Service, training providers, employers and other partners. She provides help with CV's and application forms, interview preparation and practice, identifying future choices and aspirations and building young people's confidence and motivation. Her work also includes developing and implementing an Education, Training and Employment plan which will contribute to the young person's Pathway Plan, increase their employment options and enhance their career prospects.

The Youth Advocacy & Participation Service is setting up an apprenticeship for a care leaver and this will be advertised early 2013. YAP has already introduced a volunteer scheme to give care leavers an opportunity to gain work experience to help them be better informed and prepared in applying for the apprenticeship.

"Young Ambassadors" is a programme of opportunities for children and young people in care, care leavers and other vulnerable young people to gain skills, knowledge, experience and understanding of the functions of B&HCC as they relate to children in care. Young people will benefit from their involvement by having increased confidence, aspirations, accredited qualifications and pathways into education, employment and training. The programme is currently being developed and a project officer has been appointed to take this forward in 2013.

The Virtual School for Children in Care has employed a graduate care leaver since April 2012. Using his own experience he works in a mentoring role directly with children in care who have the ability to go on to university to both inspire and motivate them to prepare, apply and succeed. As his degree was in Graphic

Design he also works with the council's design team to develop more user friendly forms, leaflets and information for children and young people in care.

Youth Employability Services

YES is about to recruit a young apprentice to assist in working directly with young people who are not in employment, education and training. The position will be open to care leavers, as well as other young people, and will ensure that care leavers are targeted in the workplan to increase the number of young people in employment, education and training.

3.11 Ideas of initiatives and opportunities that could be explored across the council and its partners.

3.11.1 Housing Services:

The 10 year partnership with Mears for housing repairs that started on 01.04.10 included a commitment to 200 apprenticeships. Discussions are underway with Mears management to establish how care leavers with the required entry level are able to access these through a care pathway linked to the Community Social Responsibility Group of the partnership.

Denne Construction is another council partner has offered apprenticeships in the building trade open to all young people living in Brighton & Hove

3.11.2 Environment Services:

Suggestions already made that require follow up, planning and commitment include:

- Work experience in Environmental Health Teams, covering all services including food hygiene inspections, health & safety work, animal welfare, and pest control, with the Trading Standards service and the Environment Improvement Team
- Planning managers to set up a programme of short experiences to give young people a sense of the different career options available made up of some, if not all, of the following:
 - time on the front desk for some idea of the range of questions people ask
 - time in Development Control learning to read plan
 - site visit with Conservation staff to an "at risk" property, ideally a special opportunity to see something like the roof of the Royal Pavilion
 - time in Planning Strategy with a taster of how computers are used to update listed building information"
- Work experience in City parks and gardens including Stanmer Nurseries
- Use the ranger service to do some adventurous activity
- General ideas suggested that will require detailed follow up are traffic management centre activity, enforcement activity, cycle training and cycle demonstration town project and road safety site visits.

3.11.3 Adult Social Care & Health:

Initial discussions have taken place about offering taster days and work experience opportunities such as:

- with Care Crew in residential settings
- volunteering 'grand parenting' experiences within the Community Support Team and the Buddy Scheme within Day Services

3.11.4 **Leisure Services:**

Environment Services:

Leisure Services have approached Human Resources about offering an apprenticeship on the Volks Railway for 2013.

- Potential opportunities with Freedom Leisure at Prince Regent, King Alfred and Withdean Centres
- In Sports Development, assisting with sports sessions and events, in Sports Facilities helping set up a new activity.

These ideas (3.9.1 - 3.9.4) are primarily designed as opportunities for young people to experience and have a taste of the world of work, some of which could lead to apprenticeships and sustainable employment.

3.11.5 Some examples of positive action initiatives undertaken by other local authorities that the manager of the 16 Plus Team will be following up as examples of potential good practice that could be implemented in Brighton & Hove.

Local authority (a) and its HR recruitment policy states that any young person in care or care leaver for a council apprenticeship who meets the minimum criteria will be guaranteed an interview. If unsuccessful at interview they will be given full feedback on areas of strength and for development.

Local authority (b) currently provides 7 traineeships (4 Park Rangers and 3 in Catering) linked to NVQ training within the council for care leavers.

Local authority (c) and its procurement team works with council contractors to support employability and includes an apprentice support package which tops up the apprenticeship national wage to ensure the young person can maintain their work placement and accommodation.

Local authority (d) has a clear strategy across the authority which has placed an expectation on all service areas with regard to providing employability opportunities for LAC/Care leavers. The next development will be for some ring-fencing of apprenticeships for care leavers or for the creation of a bespoke care leaver apprenticeship scheme.

Local authority (e) currently has 6 ring-fenced apprenticeships called "Internship Plus" including health and social care, administration and IT. It offers a guaranteed interview for young people who meet the basic skills, experience and qualifications required.

Local authority (f) has a work preparation programme of a 3 day course followed by 13 weeks of bespoke work experience including weekly supervision in the workplace. An agreement is in place with local Jobcentre so young people can keep Jobseekers Allowance and sign on by post. It also has a care leavers

apprenticeship scheme with bespoke apprenticeship in young person's chosen field.

Local authority (g) has created a pool of trained senior officers to act as mentors to support young people with practice interviews, CV writing and job searches and to provide advice and guidance while on work placements.

- 3.12 Corporate parenting in the field of furthering employment opportunities is not just a responsibility but a real opportunity to improve the futures of children and young people in care and care leavers. This can be achieved by recognising that all parts of the council and its partners have to contribute to ensure its success. There are few other specific issues of higher importance than progressing this agenda for the children and young people for whom Brighton & Hove has a degree of parental responsibility.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with young people both in care and who have left care to seek their views on what B&HCC and its partners could be providing in employment and pre-employment opportunities. The views and opinions of foster carers, residential care providers, Social Workers and Personal Advisers have also been sought and considered.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications: *(requires an update)*

- 5.1 There are currently no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. If additional costs arise as a result of future developments then it will be necessary to identify appropriate funding.

Finance Officer Consulted: Date: 18.09.12
David Ellis, Accountant Business Engagement - Children's Finance

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Employability opportunities enshrined within corporate parenting duties describe the collective responsibilities members and officers of B&HCC and its partner organisations have towards children and young people in local authority care. The commissioning and delivery of services is underpinned by the Children Act 2004, the Care Matters Implementation Plan 2008 and the Children and Young Person's Act 2008. Local authorities have particular duties to care leavers to ensure that Pathway Plans are developed which include assessment in respect of employment and education needs. Under the leaving Care legislation, and as with any good parent, the authority's duties and advice to care leavers extends beyond their minority, as described in the body of the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Date: 15.01.13
Natasha Watson, Managing Principal Lawyer

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Effective corporate parenting is critical to the implementation of Brighton & Hove Council's Equalities Policy and to the achievement of the priorities set out in the Children & Young People's Plan 2009-12

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no immediate sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Corporate parenting and in particular greater access to sustainable employment will assist our aims to support young people to engage in law abiding and socially acceptable activity and behaviour and to become socially responsible citizens.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Effective corporate parenting strategies will assist the council as a whole and its partners in meeting their duties to children and young people in care and care leavers and this includes the management of significant risks, including risk to self, to others and to reputation and financial risk.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are no immediate public health implications however significant employability opportunities will have a huge impact on these young people's future prospects, in fulfilling their potential and improving their social mobility and social inclusion and in reducing social exclusion.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The Corporate Parenting Strategy describes the collective responsibilities that members and officers of Brighton & Hove City Council and its partner organisations have towards children and young people in local authority care.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

- 6.1 Corporate Parenting responsibilities and duties meet a statutory duty upon Brighton & Hove City Council in respect of children and young people in care and care leavers and as such there are no alternative options.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To meet Brighton & Hove City Council's responsibilities in respect of children and young people in care and care leavers in assisting them become independent adults with sustainable employment and a good standard of living.

Attached: Appendix 1 Single Apprenticeships Scheme – Briefing (January 2012)