

## ITEM NO: 4(b)

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW (AUDIT) PANEL</b>
<b>Date:</b>	16 September 2013
<b>Reporting Scrutiny Panel:</b>	Services for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AGED 16 PLUS</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This Review has considered the current approach towards the services for looked after children aged 16 plus in Tameside and has made recommendations to support future services.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Overview (Audit) Panel note the recommendations in section 9 of the review.
<b>Links to Community Strategy:</b>	This review supports the Community Strategy priorities relating to 'Prosperous Tameside' and 'Supportive Tameside' but also recognises links across all Community Strategy areas.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The review itself has no specific policy implications. Should the recommendations of this report be accepted by the Tameside Council's Executive, the relevant services will need to assess the policy implications of putting individual recommendations in place.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)</b>	No estimate of costs associated with implementing these recommendations have been provided at this stage. If the implementation of these recommendations results in additional costs then they will need to be managed from within the budget allocated to the service, including any additional allocation of efficiency savings beyond 2014/15.
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	<p>The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 (the Leaving Care Act) came into effect on the 1 Oct 2001. The Act amends the previous provisions for care leavers in the Children Act 1989. The act aims to ensure that a Local Authority will provide help until a Young Person reaches the age of 21 and in some cases 24. The Leaving Care Act has two main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure that Young People do not leave care until they are ready.</li><li>• To ensure that they receive more effective support once they have left.</li></ul> <p>The Local Authority has a duty towards eligible and relevant and former relevant children where Eligible are those Young People still in care aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and Relevant are Young People aged 16 or 17 who have already left care, and who were looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14, and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17.</p> <p><b>Local Authorities duties under the Leaving Care Act Aged 16-18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Duty to ensure pathway plan is in place by 16th birthday</li><li>• Duty to make assessment and meet needs</li><li>• Duty to provide financial support</li></ul>

- Duty to provide Personal Adviser
- Duty to ensure accommodation

#### **Aged 18-21**

- Duty to maintain contact and to provide support through Personal Adviser
- Duty to assist with costs of education, employment and training

#### **Aged 21 and over**

- Duty to 18-21 year olds continues if still in education or training
- Duty to ensure vacation accommodation for higher education

Most 16/17 year old care leavers will not be able to claim benefits. Therefore, for as long as a Young Person is a relevant child the responsible Local Authority will be his/her primary source of income. Financial support provided will include the cost of:

- Accommodation
- Food and domestic bills
- Pocket money
- Transport costs for education and training
- Clothing
- Childcare costs

The support will be co-ordinated by the Personal Adviser. Weekly allowances will be calculated by each Local Authority according to the Young Persons individual needs, but should not be less than the amount the Young Person would receive if entitled to claim benefits. The Personal Adviser should ensure that those who leave care at 18 and are entitled to claim benefits receive their full entitlement.

#### **Risk Management:**

Reports of Scrutiny Panels are integral to processes which exist to hold the Executive of the authority to account.

#### **Access to Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe by:



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## **1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF THE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL**

- 1.1 I am very pleased to present this report of a review undertaken by the Services for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel into the Services for Looked After Children Aged 16 Plus.
- 1.2 It is important that looked after children in the borough are provided with sufficient support, in order for them to make a successful transition to adulthood and independence. Ensuring that young people receive emotional and practical support during this period plays a big part in achieving positive and sustainable outcomes.
- 1.3 It is important that the Council provides a comprehensive, non-judgemental service which allows care leavers to gain access to opportunities that are available to all residents in Tameside.
- 1.4 Understanding the wide support networks that are available to care leavers is key to ensuring that the required support and signposting is offered. It is important that care leavers play an active part in the design of their own pathway plan, which allows them to set out goals and aspirations with regards to decisions relating to their employment, leisure and wellbeing.
- 1.5 The partnership work that the Council undertakes is vitally important in ensuring strong links are established. This allows young people to access the necessary services to successfully enter employment, education or training.
- 1.6 The Council are responsible for ensuring that the right support is in place to ensure care leavers enter the transition to adulthood and independence at a pace which suits them best. Every young person is different and it is important that services provided by the Council are person-centred and responsive.
- 1.7 The Panel are aware of the growing financial pressures that the Council currently face. It is therefore important that current and future provision of services for looked after children aged 16 plus is aimed at achieving the best possible outcomes for young people in the borough.
- 1.8 The Panel has noted that the following recommendations may be impacted on by the service review and redesign that is taking place within Children's Services.
- 1.9 On behalf of the Services for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel, I would like to thank all those who have participated in this review.

Councillor Claire Francis  
Chair of the Services for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

## **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council is committed to meeting the needs of children that have been in care, to ensure they have access to an all-inclusive support and guidance network.
- 2.2 The Council continues to increase the amount of partnership work that takes place with a variety of organisations. The purpose is to ensure that young people in the borough have access to a wide range of opportunities, in order to meet their needs.
- 2.3 This review focuses on the support and guidance provided to care leavers by the Council's Leaving Care Team and partners. It is important for the review to look at all aspects of

support, with a view to achieving the best possible outcomes for young people in the borough.

- 2.4 The review also looks closely at the practical and emotional support that is provided, which enables all interventions to be as positive and sustainable as possible.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL – 2012/2013**

Councillor C Francis (Chair), Councillor R Welsh (Deputy Chair).  
Councillors L Drennan, P Fitzpatrick, J Jackson, R Miah, G Peet, C Reynolds, T Smith, A White, C White.

Mrs L Aspin (Roman Catholic Church)  
Mrs S Marsh (Church of England)  
Mr N Ahmed (Muslim Faith)  
Mrs T N Sharma (Hindu Faith)  
Mrs A Gregory (Parent Governor)  
Mr M Osmond (Parent Governor)

### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **Aim of the Review**

- 4.1 To explore how Tameside Council and its partners are supporting care leavers during the transition to adulthood and independence.

#### **Objectives**

- 4.2
1. To examine the services that are provided for looked after children aged 16 plus in Tameside
  2. To understand the role of the Leaving Care Team and other support services
  3. To explore all aspects of support including employment and housing as well as the emotional and social wellbeing support that care leavers receive
  4. To examine the work that is undertaken to promote community cohesion for care leavers and reduce the affects of loneliness and isolation
  5. To examine the views of care leavers, with regards to the support and guidance received during the transition period
  6. To understand the facilities and services provided at a Tameside children's home
  7. To examine the performance and outcomes of looked after children services in Tameside
  8. To produce workable recommendations for the Council to deliver sustainable improvements to future services for looked after children aged 16 plus

#### **Value for Money/Use of Resources**

- 4.3 It is important for all looked after children aged 16 plus to receive the necessary support and guidance to ensure their transition to adulthood and independence is both positive and sustainable. Therefore, effective strategies creating supportive and inclusive environments should maximise better life outcomes for looked after children, resulting in a more supportive and prosperous Tameside.

#### **Equalities Issues**

- 4.4 The services that are available for looked after children can impact on all sections of Tameside's communities. The review will consider strategies that lead to supportive and

inclusive environments so that looked after children receive the support and guidance required to help them achieve well and live independently.

### **Tameside Area Agreement Targets**

- 4.5 The following targets from the Tameside Area Agreement relate to special educational needs.

<b>KEY QUALITY LIFE MEASURES</b>	
Prosperous Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worklessness</li> <li>• (N)EET – (Not) Education, Employment or Training</li> </ul>
Supportive Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Intervention/Prevention</li> <li>• Low income households</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORTING MEASURES</b>	
Prosperous Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Leavers (EET / NEET)</li> </ul>
Supportive Tameside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable People – achieve / maintain independent living</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> </ul>

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 The Panel met with Joy Dunbavin, Head of Service, Looked After Children Resources, Tameside MBC to receive an overview of the services that are provided for looked after children aged 16 plus in Tameside.
- 5.2 The Panel met with Mark Prescott, Team Manager, Looked After Children; Lesley Mason, Assistant Team Manager, Looked After Children; Samuel Ankers, Social Worker, Looked After Children and Hannah Broadbent, Leaving Care Personal Advisor to receive further information about the services available and the support work that is undertaken.
- 5.3 The Panel met with a group of care leavers accompanied by Mark Prescott, Team Manager, Looked After Children; and Lesley Mason, Assistant Team Manager, Looked After Children to receive information about the transition period and the support provided by the Leaving Care Team and other relevant services.

## **6. BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW**

- 6.1 The Children (and Leaving Care) Act 2000 came into force in October 2011. The Act detailed that local authorities have a duty to assess and meet the needs of young people that have been in care and ensure that they keep in touch with care leavers until they are at least 21 years of age.
- 6.2 Every young person in care should receive a comprehensive pathway plan once they reach 16 years of age and allocated with an advisor who will coordinate support and assistance. A financial regime will be provided for every care leaver and focus will be given on education, employment and training.
- 6.3 The Children Act (1989) regulations were updated in 2010 with information about planning transitions to adulthood. The updated guidance is intended to ensure that care leavers are given the same amount of support their peers would expect from a reasonable parent.

- 6.4 It is important that the local authority ensures that the following principles are taken into account:-
- Would this be good enough for my own child?
  - Providing a second chance if things don't go as expected.
  - Is this tailored to their individual needs, particularly if they are more vulnerable than other young people?

## **7. REVIEW FINDINGS**

### **Tameside Leaving Care Team**

- 7.1 Tameside Council are currently looking after 386 children and this figure changes constantly. From the 386 children 260 are living with foster carers. A big part of a foster carer's role is to involve children and young people in all elements of family and school life so they are prepared for independence once they reach age 16 and above.
- 7.2 Tameside's Children's Services has a dedicated team of social workers and support workers that provide support and guidance to children aged 16 plus that are leaving care. The Team is based at Clarence Arcade in Ashton Town Centre, which is easily accessible and allows young people to visit whenever they feel the need. A decision was made some years ago to locate a number of different services for 16 to 19 year olds in the same building, including Connexions and the Youth Offending Team. This ensured that people did not automatically associate the building with looked after children.
- 7.3 The Leaving Care Team is made up of 5 social workers and 5 support workers who offer support to 52 of the 386 looked after young people between the ages 16 and 18. The Team also work with 155 children in need and care leavers between the ages of 18 to 24, or 25 if still in higher education.
- 7.4 Even if a child has never been looked after in a children's home or been in foster care they may still qualify for leaving care services if they are deemed as being 'In Need' and aged 16 or 17.
- 7.5 The term 'in Need' can mean a number of things, for example a child:
- Having a disability
  - Needing accommodation
  - Being separated from parents
  - Being at risk of significant harm
  - Having significant family problems
- 7.6 Work to prepare looked after children to be able to manage independently as young adults starts long before they are matched with a social worker at the Leaving Care Team.
- 7.7 Social workers in the Leaving Care Team are allocated with a looked after child when they are 15½ years of age. This allows the child to be introduced to the service and provides a transition period between the child leaving Children's Services and moving towards leaving care services.
- 7.8 Each young person's needs are assessed and they receive a pathway plan, which is reviewed every 6 months. The pathway plan is designed jointly with the young person and is aimed to be as holistic and flexible as possible.

- 7.9 Social workers undertake monthly statutory visits to young people in their homes and prepare reports and documentation for reviews and child placements. Support is also provided for young people across all the different stages of every day life.
- 7.10 The Leaving Care Team also provides services for care leavers aged 18 plus. The aim is to gradually reduce the amount of support a young person requires. Guidance is provided by personal advisors who are legally required to carry out a minimum of 4 contacts per year. Contacts with care leavers in Tameside are much more frequent than the legal requirement, with some care leavers requiring weekly contact.
- 7.11 Feedback received from care leavers show that the introductory period with a social worker from the Leaving Care Team is extremely beneficial and it allows good relationships to be built, which can continue until they reach 21 years of age.

### **Conclusions**

1. Concerted efforts are made to ensure that the transition from Children's Services to Leaving Care Services is as smooth and sustainable as possible.
2. Each care leaver actively contributes towards the development of a pathway plan, which sets out achievable goals and aspirations for the future.
3. Legal framework states that authorities are required to make a minimum of 4 contacts per year with care leavers above the age of 18.

### **Support Offered to Care Leavers**

- 7.12 The support and guidance that is provided by the Leaving Care Team is entirely voluntary for care leavers to accept. This requires young people who are entitled to support to make a choice as to whether they wish take it.
- 7.13 Support and advice can be provided through the drop in service or by phone. A personal advisor can provide assistance with all aspects of everyday life, ranging from attending meetings and appointments to budgeting and assisting with housing applications.
- 7.14 Every care experienced young person is supported by a suitably trained and qualified social worker until they reach adulthood. The support is then continued by a personal advisor until they reach 24 (or 25 if still in higher education).
- 7.15 Every young person has their own pathway plan which includes everything they want to achieve and the support they will need to get there. The plan is regularly reviewed and focuses on a young person's health, education, employment, leisure and future plans.
- 7.16 It is important for care leavers to be active members of the community. Young people are provided with a free swimming pass, supported library cards and discounted gym passes. They are also actively encouraged to be part of the Young People's Care Council 'Definite Hopefuls', be involved in interview panels and assist staff with shaping the services that are provided to looked after children.
- 7.17 The Leaving Care Team run an independence group for 14 to 19 year olds. The course runs for 7 weeks and provides the opportunity for young people to learn a range of skills they may need during their preparation for independence. The course covers healthy eating, budgeting, drug and alcohol awareness, DIY and sexual health. The courses are well attended and regular feedback from young people emphasises the useful skills that have been gained.

- 7.18 Ex-care leavers currently work alongside Council staff to provide a range courses and group work sessions. Expressions have been made about increasing the range of topics and courses that are available to care leavers. Working along Council staff allows ex-care leavers to be involved in the decision making process that takes place around service delivery and help to contrite towards service review and redesign.
- 7.19 While support is available for employment and life skills, it is essential that social workers and personal advisors work closely with the young people to help sign post them to services that aim to promote socialising and relationship building. This is extremely important during periods of loneliness and isolation that can be encountered during a young person's introduction to bed sits and their own tenancies.

### **Accommodation**

- 7.20 If a young person is living in a children's home they are presented with the opportunity to progress towards independence through a placement with a foster carer, supported lodgings, a bed sit and eventually their own tenancy
- 7.21 Tameside has a 'Staying Put' policy for care experienced young people, so where appropriate to a young person's plan they can remain with a foster carer until they are 19 years of age. For young people that are ready to become semi independent a supported lodgings placement can be offered, where young people live within a families home and share a kitchen and bathroom. The family are required to ensure the young person has access to two meals a day, all other aspects of independence is promoted i.e cooking, washing and cleaning etc.
- 7.22 Young people who want to begin a more independent life can be offered a trial in a training flat, a placement with a supported lodgings provider or one of the Council's supported bedsits. A trial in one of the bedsits is offered over a period of time which suits them best, dependent on availability. Many people are also able to move into supported accommodation where they are given extra support before moving to their own tenancies at 18 years of age.
- 7.23 The Leaving Care Team currently have 7 bedsits, which are leased through an arrangement with New Charter Housing Trust. The bedsits are fully equipped and furnished. The team also have 16 supported lodgings providers, which offer accommodation in a family home setting.
- 7.24 During the transition to adulthood young people are provided with support and advice with regards to employment, training, accommodation, leisure and finance. All young people have access to funding worth £2,000 to help them in setting up a home, for items such as furniture and appliances. They are also supported with a personal allowance of £56.80 per week if they are not in full time employment.
- 7.25 The Council uses a wide range of independent supported accommodation for young people aged 16 to 19 to help them become confident enough to gain their own tenancies.
- 7.26 All young people have access to a 'setting up home' grant of £2000 to help them buy the equipment needed for a first home.



## **Conclusions**

4. Care leavers have a choice about whether they wish to make use of the support and guidance that is on offer.
5. A range of courses are provided by the Leaving Care Team to assist care leavers with their preparation for independence.
6. Once a young person reaches 16 years of age they are provided with the opportunity to reassess their accommodation situation, with the view to moving towards independent living.
7. The Leaving Care Team has links with New Charter and supported accommodation providers across the borough to help provide care leavers with practical experiences of independent living.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Council work with ex-care leaving volunteers to contribute more to the development and delivery of supplementary courses and group work sessions, where possible.
2. That the Council provide opportunities for care leavers to be able to test out bedsits over a shorter period i.e weekends.
3. That the Council improve the promotion and recruitment process for supported lodging providers in Tameside. With a view to increasing the number of supported lodging placements that are available in the borough.

## **Education and Employment**

- 7.27 The Leaving Care Team have a focused and comprehensive approach for care leavers to gain employment, education or training.
- 7.28 The Leaving Care Team can help young people with employment and training opportunities through life skills training and work placement opportunities. Clubs are jointly run with Connexions that focus on preparation for interviews, CV's and looks at what options are available locally.
- 7.29 The service also works jointly with Connexions to provide a job club for care leavers. The course lasts for 6 weeks and accommodates young people age 16 to 19. Young people are provided with help to complete application forms, interview techniques and presentation skills. Once the course is completed the aim is to provide a young person with an idea about the type of employment they would like to enter. Once this is done the service will work to find an appropriate work experience placement for that young person.
- 7.30 The service has contacts with a range of local employers that are able to provide a 12 week work experience placement. Young people receive £100 per week for attending and successfully completing the placement. The payment is made up of the young person's Job Seekers Allowance, which is then topped up to £100 from the Council's looked after children budget. Once a placement is successful a 12 month traineeship can be identified in an area of interest, where remuneration is equal to the minimum wage.
- 7.31 Following on from a successfully completed traineeship work is undertaken to find a young person permanent employment through an apprenticeship. There are currently five ring fenced apprenticeships within the Council, across a wide range of services.

- 7.32 Young people are also supported in entering further and higher education. The Leaving Care Team has excellent relationships with colleges and schools in the borough and financial support is also available to help with any equipment or books that may be required.
- 7.33 Young people that continue in higher education are provided with financial support for books, equipment and a laptop. Personal education plans are reviewed and monitored, and support can be provided to attend any parent evenings and university visits. In Tameside there are currently 8 young people in higher education between the ages of 18 and 22. If a young person chooses to live away from home they are able to access the 'set up home' fund and leaving care services will also provide a bursary of up to £2000 for the successful completion of a course.
- 7.34 The bursary is split into three stages, meaning the young person receives £500 for the completion of year 1, another £500 for completion of year 2 and £1000 for successfully completing year 3 and passing the course.

### **Emotional and Practical Support**

- 7.35 Whilst many Tameside care leavers go on to find the employment or training, some young adults struggle to find employment due to their complex needs. The Leaving Care Team help to signpost young people to services they may need and also check on their mental health, finances, social and family contacts.
- 7.36 The team is looking to at a peer mentoring scheme to use the experience and knowledge of existing and ex-care leavers to support their younger peers.

### **Biggest Issues for Care Leavers**

- 7.37 Some of the biggest issues that exist for care leavers are isolation, loneliness, poor mental health, lack of money and the stigma of being looked after. It is important that the service provides as much support as possible to ensure a child's transition to adulthood is as positive and sustainable as possible.
- 7.38 Formal support exists through the Young People's Care Council 'Definite Hopefuls' and informal support is provided on a regular basis. While an out of hour's service is available to care leavers facing difficulties with isolation and loneliness, due to demand this may not result in the right support being provided. Plans are currently in place to develop a mentoring/buddy scheme which will allow current and ex-care leavers volunteer to help support young people during periods of loneliness.
- 7.39 Thought will have to be given about the training that volunteer mentors are provided with and also about the way that young people are able to make contact. It is important that care leaving volunteers are safeguarding against being involved with a young person's problems too much and becoming easily contactable.
- 7.40 The team repeatedly try to engage with young people even if they are faced with resistance. While work is undertaken to break down barriers it is important to remember that engagement is voluntary and it is down to the individual to utilise the support and advice that is on offer.
- 7.41 If concerns do escalate certain steps can be taken to supervise a young person's spending or behaviour, however this would be a last resort as it is effectively disempowering the individual.

## Conclusions

8. Joint working relationships allow young people to learn the necessary skills to gain employment and provide opportunities for work experience.
9. A staged progression has been introduced to allow care leavers to gain experience and understanding before long term employment is an option.

## Recommendations

4. That the Leaving Care Team works closely with the Council's Economic Development Unit to continue to build relationships with local employers, as part of their on-going commitment to provide essential work experience for care leavers.
5. That the Council supports the development of a peer support scheme, to help combat isolation and loneliness amongst care leavers. Ensuring that volunteers are provided with sufficient information and training, enabling them to deal with a variety of situations.
6. That the Council consider providing designated mobile phones for peer mentoring volunteers.
7. That the Council ensures that relevant sign posting is undertaken and information is passed to partner agencies, for young people that do not engage with the support that is offered by the Leaving Care Team.

## Monitoring Outcomes

7.42 The service is monitored through performance indicators which look at the percentage of young people that are in suitable accommodation, which in Tameside is nearly always 100%. The service is also monitored on GCSE and A Level results, along with the total number of looked after children that are successfully in Education, Employment or Training (EET) by their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

7.43 **Table 1: Employment, Education or Training (EET) Monitoring Information**

SURNAME	FORNAME	D.O.B	AGE	ELIGIBILITY STATUS	LAC NOW	CASE WORKER	PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES	PLANS FOR FUTURE	ACTIONS FOLLOWING MEETING.	LAC 16-18 IN EDUCATION TRAINING EMPLOYMENT
H	P	Nov 95	16	Eligible	Yes	Gill Barber	Lives with foster carer Year 11 - St Thomas Moore's Denton.	Planning to go to college Sept 2012 – Public Services course.		Y
M	S	Nov 95	16	Eligible	Yes	Peter Hughes	Living with mother Year 11		Social worker to meet Sky this week and establish her future further education plans.	Y
S	J	Oct 95	16	Eligible	Yes	Peter Hughes	Living in private residential children's home – Ivydene – Marple. Attends Stockport PRU.		Social worker to discuss future education plans with Jordan.	Y

- 7.44 The table above provides an example of the monitoring information that takes place for employment, education and training (EET) outcomes for Tameside care leavers.
- 7.45 Data from January 2012 shows that information was recorded for 44 looked after children. Results showed that 34 young people (77.28%) were EET and 10 young people (22.72%) were not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- 7.46 Subsequent data from January 2013 showed for 55 looked after children results showed that 51 young people (89.10%) were EET and 4 young people (10.90%) were NEET.

### **Conclusions**

10. The Council are monitored on a number of outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.
11. Outcomes for care leavers entering employment, education or training has improved significantly over the 12 month period from January 2012 to January 2013.

### **Recommendations**

8. That the Council consider increasing the monitoring that takes place with regards to the outcomes of care leavers. Providing information about how transient care leaver's are and employment outcomes.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 Concerted efforts are made to ensure that the transition from Children's Services to Leaving Care Services is as smooth and sustainable as possible.
- 8.2 Each care leaver actively contributes towards the development of a pathway plan, which sets out achievable goals and aspirations for the future.
- 8.3 Legal framework states that authorities are required to make a minimum of 4 contacts per year with care leavers above the age of 18.
- 8.4 Care leavers have a choice about whether they wish to make use of the support and guidance that is on offer.
- 8.5 A range of courses are provided by the Leaving Care Team to assist care leavers with their preparation for independence.
- 8.6 Once a young person reaches 16 years of age they are provided with the opportunity to reassess their accommodation situation, with the view to moving towards independent living.
- 8.7 The Leaving Care Team has links with New Charter and supported accommodation providers across the borough to help provide care leavers with practical experiences of independent living.
- 8.8 Joint working relationships allow young people to learn the necessary skills to gain employment and provide opportunities for work experience.

- 8.9 A staged progression has been introduced to allow care leavers to gain experience and understanding before long term employment is an option.
- 8.10 The Council are monitored on a number of outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.
- 8.11 Outcomes for care leavers entering employment, education or training (EET) has improved significantly over the 12 month period from January 2012 to January 2013.

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council work with ex-care leaving volunteers to contribute more to the development and delivery of supplementary courses and group work sessions, where possible.
- 9.2 That the Council provide opportunities for care leavers to be able to test out bedsits over a shorter period i.e weekends.
- 9.3 That the Council improve the promotion and recruitment process for supported lodging providers in Tameside. With a view to increasing the number of supported lodging placements that are available in the borough.
- 9.4 That the Leaving Care Team work closely with the Economic Development Unit to continue to build relationships with local employers, as part of their on-going commitment to provide essential work experience for care leavers.
- 9.5 That the Council supports the development of a peer support scheme, to help combat isolation and loneliness amongst care leavers. Ensuring that volunteers are provided with sufficient information and training, enabling them to deal with a variety of situations.
- 9.6 That the Council consider providing designated mobile phones for peer mentoring volunteers.
- 9.7 That the Council ensures that relevant sign posting is undertaken and information is passed to partner agencies, for young people that do not engage with the support that is offered by the Leaving Care Team.
- 9.8 That the Council consider increasing the monitoring that takes place with regards to the outcomes of care leavers. Providing information about how transient care leaver's are and employment outcomes.

## Post Scrutiny - Executive Response

**In Respect of:** Scrutiny Review of Services for Looked After Children Aged 16 Plus

**Date:**

**Cabinet Deputy:** Councillor Allison Gwynne, Executive Member (Children and Families)

**Coordinating Officer:** Joy Dunbavin, Head of Service Looked After Children Resources

**Partnership:** Prosperous Delivery Board

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
1. The Council work with ex-care leaving volunteers to contribute more to the development and delivery of supplementary courses and group work sessions, where possible.	Accepted	The Leaving Care Management Team will recruit several volunteers from care experienced adults and other interested members of the Community or Council employees who wish to volunteer in facilitating groups and projects for adolescent Looked after Children.	Joy Dunbavin	15 September 2013
2. That the Council provide opportunities for care leavers to be able to test out bedsits over a shorter period i.e weekends.	Accepted	The Leaving Care Team will pilot the use of one of the bed sits for Young People aged 16 or 17 for 1 night or 2 and assess their capability and emotional resilience during this period.	Mark Prescott	15 August 2013
3. That the Council improve the promotion and recruitment process for supported lodging providers in Tameside. With a view to increasing the number of supported lodging placements that are available in the borough.	Accepted	A Fixed Term contract for a recruitment officer to oversee all recruitment and promotion of fostering, adoption and supported lodgings in the borough has been agreed with a view to increasing our in house placements closer to children and young people's family locations at a lower cost.	Joy Dunbavin	15 August 2013

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
4. That the Leaving Care Team work closely with the Economic Development Unit to continue to build relationships with local employers, as part of their on-going commitment to provide essential work experience for care leavers.	Accepted	The Leaving Care Team will build close working relationship links with the Economical Development Unit and have a target of an additional 10 work experience placements for young people in 2013/2014	Mark Prescott	15 August 2013 and ongoing
5. That the Council supports the development of a peer support scheme, to help combat isolation and loneliness amongst care leavers. Ensuring that volunteers are provided with sufficient information and training, enabling them to deal with a variety of situations.	Accepted	The Leaving Care Team Managers will scope out the development of a peer support scheme for care experienced young people and what the scheme will cover by 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2013 to be discussed by the Children's Management Team	Mark Prescott	15 July 2013
6. That the Council consider providing designated mobile phones for peer mentoring volunteers.	Accepted	This will be covered in the scoping of the above with clear cost/benefit analysis and where the additional money will be sourced from.	Mark Prescott	15 July 2013
7. That the Council ensures that relevant sign posting is undertaken and information is passed to partner agencies, for young people that do not engage with the support that is offered by the Leaving Care Team.	Accepted	The Leaving Care Team will send monthly information to the Head of Service for Looked after Children on young people who are not actively engaging with the team for their names to be flagged to other partners who may be more likely to engage successfully with them.	Mark Prescott	15 July 2013
8. That the Council consider increasing the monitoring that takes place with regards to the outcomes of care leavers. Providing information about how transient care leaver's are and employment outcomes.	Accepted	The Leaving Care Team will be looking at all their data needs and what we use it for to produce a monthly data booklet that will include outcomes for older care experienced young people.	Joy Dunbavin	15 August 2013