

SHROPSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CARE LEAVERS ACTION PLAN

Our journey of continuous improvement



*'All children and young people to be happy, healthy, and safe and reach their full potential,
supported by their families, friends and the wider community'*



Introduction

In feedback from Mark Riddell, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers for the Department of Education, following his visit in February 2018, he commented , ‘I was very impressed by the leadership approach that was ambitious, aspirational and I got a real sense of passion and commitment to have a better offer for care leavers across the service area’. Mark provided the Council with feedback on progress made to date and areas where further improvements are required.

The Ofsted Inspection in November 2017 noted the improvements made in the Care Leaving Service, however also identified areas for improvement.

This action plan encompasses the recommendations and findings from Ofsted and feedback from Mark Riddell. The action plan is ambitious and sets out key priority areas and actions to be undertaken to enable us to have strengthened Corporate Parenting arrangements, arrangements in place to promote effective engagement and participation with children and young people, which will enable all care leavers to receive an outstanding service.

This action plan is pivotal in enabling us to demonstrate that we are making progress in key areas and to enable corporate parenting panel to fulfil its responsibilities and to hold relevant officers to account. However, our success in measuring the impact of this work must come from children in care and Care Leavers themselves. We are committed to delivering this action plan in conjunction and in partnership with the young people who are in receipt of care leaving services. They will be the measure of our success in delivering improved and outstanding services.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Ensure that all pathway plans, have clear overall objectives and timely specific actions.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
1.1	All looked after young people to have a Pathway Plan in Place by their 16 th Birthday.	All young people to have a Pathway Plan that sets out clear objectives and timely specific actions.	Audit Data Measure	Steve Ladd Elaine Storey 01/05/2018	Work is currently being undertaken to ensure every 16 plus year old has an up to date pathway plan. Currently 78% of LAC 16-17 year old's have an up to date Pathway Plan and 93% of Care Leavers have an up to date Pathway Plan. This work is now under scrutiny of weekly Exception Reporting and Performance Management Framework and is reported into Corporate Parenting Panel. Does not need to be monitored separately via a Care Leaver Action Plan. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
1.1	Outcome focused planning workshop to take place with all Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and Child	Outcome focused Care and Pathway plans to be created by social workers and Personal	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Donna Chapman	Martin Calder has delivered 4 scheduled outcome focus	Green	

	Protection Chairs, Team Managers, Social Workers, Personal Advisors PA's) and Virtual School – delivered by Research In Practice	Advisors and given additional quality assurance by Independent Reviewing Officers. All children to have an up to date plan which is progressing in line with their needs, with clear timescales and which is outcome focused.		01/04/2018	planning workshops. Guidance and tools in place and have been shared with staff. Plans remain a practice priority and are subject to scrutiny through Quality Assurance Framework. ACTION COMPLETE		
1.2	Develop practice guidance on how to write a SMART outcome focused plan including Do's, Don'ts, hints and tips.	Social workers and PA's will have an easily accessible guide to writing an outcome-focused plan, improving the quality of outcome-focused plans.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Pippa Murphy 01/04/2018	Guidance supported by training in Nov '18 has been sent to all team managers and discussed at end to end. Plans remain a practice priority and are subject to scrutiny through Quality Assurance Framework. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
1.3	Revise pathway plan templates as part of Liquid Logic and consult children, young people and their families on this.	All children's plans will be written in conjunction with children and young people, in an outcome focused style, which children and young people are able to understand.	Review	Siobhan Hughes/Lisa Kelly 01/11/2018	New template introduced and supported by training in Nov '18. Quality Assurance Framework is evidencing improvements in quality of Pathway Plans. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	

1.4	Principal Social Worker to undertake Pathway Plans with AYSEs (Assessed and Supported Year in Practice) , creating good examples of Pathway Plans.	Workers will understand expectations for good quality Pathway Plans and AYSEs will develop skills to consistently create good pathway plans.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/10/2018	Pathway Plans have been identified for the Principal Social Worker to work alongside ASYE's. Mick McCarthy is also delivering Pathway plan training in Oct/Nov/Feb. Improvements in timeliness and quality of Pathway Plan's evidenced through Quality Assurance Framework. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
1.5	Pathway Planning workshop to take place with all relevant teams	Workers will have the skills to create high quality pathway plans and improvement shown in auditing.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Elaine Storey 01/05/2018	Pathway Plan workshops have taken place. One last mop up workshop to take place in February 2019. Improvements in Pathway Planning evident through Quality Assurance Framework ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
1.6	Bi-annual themed audit of 25 plans to take place across children's services as	Understanding of the quality of children's plans across children's	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 30/07/2018	Audit was completed in July 2018. Further audit took place in	Green	

	part of the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure that they are SMART and outcome focused.	services and individual feedback and support created for workers.			December 2018. The finding of this audit will be shared with Managers in January 2019. This activity will form part of normal Quality Assurance Framework activity. ACTION COMPLETE		
1.7	Leaving Care Team to receive IT support to understand how best to make the most of their IT equipment, including Digital Recording.	To increase the amount of time PA's have available to spend with Care Leavers.	Audit Feedback from young people/PA's.	Elaine Storey 01/05/2018	IT support visited Team 3 rd May 2018 delivered hands on workshop. Signposted to Leap into Learning guidance sheets. Staff are now making full use of IT equipment to support Digital Recording. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Ensure that care leavers have the opportunity to access apprenticeships to increase their opportunities for education, employment and training.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
2.1	Establish a corporate commitment to providing Care Leavers with the opportunity to access apprenticeships	Suitable opportunities for Care Leavers across Shropshire Council.	Review	Clive Wright 01/02/2018	Corporate commitment and support given to create up to 10	Green	

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
	across Shropshire Council.				apprentices across the Council. Apprenticeships now in place. ACTION COMPLETE		
2.2	Establish a cross Directorate apprenticeship group, chaired by the DCS to agree a clear process for the identification across the council of LAC apprenticeships.	Increased numbers of LAC apprenticeships being offered to young people	Review	Karen Bradshaw/Michelle Leith 01/02/2018	This Task and Finish Group was established and is now concluded as apprenticeships were developed and recruited to. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
2.3	Representative of children's services to attend the monthly apprenticeship levy board meetings.	Increased opportunities for LAC young people to access apprenticeships.	Review	Donna Chapman 01/02/2018	Complete – Donna Chapman Workforce Lead now attends this meeting. Tracie Watson Team manager, Leaving Care is part of this work, ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
2.4	Apprentice Care Leaver Ambassador to be established within the Leaving Care Team.	To ensure that the views of Care Leavers are represented and to increase participation in all areas of strategic work.	Position established.	01/05/2018	Appointment made in August 2018 and Ambassador is developing role. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
2.5	To explore opportunities for a pre-employment course to be made available to care leavers before they commence on an apprenticeship and to explore support to be made available to care leavers during	To ensure that care leavers are fully prepared and supported for and during their apprenticeship.	Support in place. Feedback from care Leavers.	Tracie Watson 01/05/2017	An internal pre-employment course has been delivered to all identified Care Leaver Apprenticeships. We will be looking to	Green	

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Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
	course of the apprenticeship				develop this further in respect of next cohort of Care Leavers. ACTION COMPLETE		

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Improve the arrangements for preparing care leavers for independent living, ensuring that they have appropriate opportunities for participation and that they know what support they can expect under the Shropshire pledge.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
3.1	Develop Independence and life skills programme to commence from age of 12 with all care providers that will deliver a consistent programme of independence for our care leavers.	Young people who are prepared for independence and are tenant ready.	Audit Feedback from young people/housing providers/PA's.	Elaine Storey 01/01/2019	Independence Programme agreed. All providers are on board with agreed model. Further work is required to model embedded across all providers but this work will form part of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service Manager work plan. Report to Corporate Parenting Panel in May 2019. ACTION COMPLETE	GREEN	
3.2	Create a marketplace for providers of temporary accommodation to buy into the independence programme to ensure that they tenancy ready.	Young people who are prepared for independence and able to access accommodation.	Audit	Elaine Storey 01/06/2018	As above. ACTION COMPLETE	GREEN	
3.3	Training Flat to be made available to all young people transitioning into independence.	Young people to be prepared for independence and are tenant ready.	Audit Feedback from young people/housing providers/PA's	Elaine Storey 01/06/2018	Training flat is now been used to support young people with developing independence skills. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Ensure that all Care Leavers are offered appropriate accommodation.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
4.1	Housing to employ a Children and Young Person's Coordinator post on a two years fixed term contract.	To work alongside Children's Services to support all young people in care and Care Leavers who are transitioning into independence or require housing support.	Data and audit information	Laura Fisher 01/06/2018	Post appointed to and worker in post. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
4.2	Review of housing options for Care Leavers to be undertaken to consider sufficiency and suitability.	To ensure that all care leavers have the opportunity to live within suitable accommodation. To ensure that only suitable accommodation is being offered to Care Leavers.	Data and Audit Information Feedback from Care Leavers,	Colleen Male Laura Fisher Elaine Storey 01/05/2018	Initial meeting held 10 th April 2018. Monthly meetings now take place to discuss individual care leaving young people. Care Leaving young people now receive a gold band rating to receive priority status to obtain accommodation. New Century Court is new accommodation available for young people. Laura Fisher now sits on Corporate Parenting Panel. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
4.3	In accordance with chapter 17 of the	To ensure that all care leavers have	Data and Audit	Laura Fisher	Action in place.	Green	

	‘Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities’ any decisions regarding care leavers (aged 22-25) deemed to be not in Priority Need or care leavers (aged 18-25) deemed to be Intentionally Homeless must be agreed by the Housing Services Manager and Care Leaver Service Manager before final decisions are issued. If a decision is unable to be agreed by relevant service managers decision to be escalated to DCS and DASS.	available to them suitable accommodation to help them overcome any challenges that they may be facing.		01/04/2018	ACTION COMPLETE	
4.4	All care providers offering care, accommodation and support to Care Leavers to be provided with information about how they can best maintain relationships and support young people that have previously been in the care of the Local Authority.	To ensure that Care Leavers receive appropriate support and are able to form lifelong relationships once they move on to a new living arrangement	Data and Audit	Elaine Story Lisa Preston Laura Fisher 01/07/2018	Discussions currently taking place about how best to facilitate this. We would hope to involve the Leaving Care Ambassador in this work. This work to be on-going by the service and doesn’t require oversight from an action plan. Report to Corporate Parenting Panel in June 2019. ACTION COMPLETE	Amber
4.5	To continue to develop opportunities for staying put and staying close.	To maximise support opportunities for care leavers so they feel supported as they transition into	Data	Mick McCarthy 28/02/2019	Work is on track to revise Staying Put policy by end Feb 2019.	Green

		independence, at a time that is right for them.			ACTION COMPLETE		
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RECOMMENDATION 5:

Ensure that Corporate Parenting Panel is Strengthened to Fulfill its Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
5.1	Review of Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference and membership to take place.	To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the panel are fully understood and to secure commitment from key partner agencies.	Revised Terms of Reference and Membership	Councilor Nick Bardsley Colleen Male Elaine Storey 01/05/2018	Complete. Terms of reference updated and in operation. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
5.2	Review of Corporate Parenting Terms of Reference in conjunction with young people how young people will participate in Panel meetings and areas of business.	To ensure that LAC and Care Leavers contribute to Corporate Parenting Panel.	Revised Terms of Reference and Membership and SU Feedback	Councillor Nick Bardsley Colleen Male Elaine Storey 01/06/2018	Complete. Leaving Care Ambassador attends panel and ensures young people are engaged when appropriate. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
5.3	Data scorecard for Care Leavers to be established and to be produced on a quarterly basis. Focus to be given on key performance measures in respect of numbers and % and to provide a context for young people not hitting key measures.	To ensure there is a full understanding of the experience of our Care Leavers, which can be used to inform practice and service delivery.	Data Scorecard	Elaine Storey John Foster Tracie Watson 01/05/2018	Data scorecard produced. As data is populated through introduction of Liquid Logic amendments will be added. Managers' matrix now includes accurate caseload; PWP and in touch data. Liquid Logic will allow for suitable	Green	

					accommodation and Education, Training and Employment to be added ACTION COMPLETE		
5.4	Corporate Parenting Panel to confirm expectations of the Care Leaving Team as Corporate Parents. These expectations to be considered by the team at a Team Development Day.	Team to promote a positive and clear message to Care Leavers about the Corporate Parent commitment to meeting their needs individually and strategically as well as hearing their voice.	Outcome of Team Development Session Feedback from Care Leavers.	Elaine Storey Tracie Watson 01/07/2018 Mike McCarthy 1/8/18	Team day TBA when new staff in post, Feb 2019. Plans in place to undertake this session and doesn't need to be part of a separate action plan. ACTION COMPLETE	Amber	
5.5	Care Leavers pledge to be revised in conjunction with young people to ensure that it is compliant with guidance and that the local offer sets out clearly what Care Leavers can expect when they leave local authority care.	Care Leavers are aware of their entitlements and what support is available to them.	Care Leaving Offer Feedback from young people	Elaine Story 01/06/2018	Pledge approved. Local offer now drafted. Awaiting printing before final draft produced. Launch day of local offer and care leaver covenant to take place early summer 2019. This work will continue under governance of Corporate Parenting Panel. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Arrangements within the Leaving Care Team to be Strengthened.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
6.1	Review of Leaving Care Team capacity and caseloads to be undertaken.	To ensure that the Leaving Care Team has the capacity to deliver outstanding services to our Care Leavers.	Review and recommendations in place	Elaine Storey 01/07/2018	2 new posts have been appointed to. Capacity is now available. New workers will be in post by end of January 2019. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.2	As part of this review consideration to be given to establishing targeted workers to lead on key areas of practice and to work alongside care leaver champions.	To drive forward improvements in key areas of the Care Leaving Service.	Review and recommendations in place.	Elaine Storey 01/05/2018	Participation lead PA post in place. Housing worker appointed. Care Leaver Champions in place who report into Corporate Parenting Panel. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.3	Review of the transfer protocol to take place to consider when in which circumstances the role of the PA should commence. This work is to be used to inform the review of capacity.	To ensure that young people receive the support of a PA as soon as they need this.	Review of protocol	Elaine Storey 01/05/18	New protocol approved. All 17-year old's allocated by end Jan '19. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.4	Review of Financial Policy to take place to ensure it reflects the needs of our Care Leavers.	To ensure levels of financial support are at an appropriate level.	Review of Policy	Elaine Storey 01/07/2018	This is approved and contained within local offer. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.5	Meeting with Adults' Services to take place to ensure that young people's transition to Adults Services in a planned and timely	Protocol to be established that ensures there is no disruption in support and service during the period of transition.	Meeting to take place Audit Feedback from	Elaine Storey 01/06/2018	1st meeting has taken place. Plans in place to produce a joint protocol. Protocol to be presented to	Green	

	way.		young people		Corporate Parenting Panel in March 2019. ACTION COMPLETE		
6.6	To establish a care leaver forum which meets on a regular basis, to undertake activities and to consult and participate in key areas of work.	To ensure that care leavers have the opportunity to contribute to practice and service development and that we learn from their care experience.	Care Leaver Forum with a planner to be established	Elaine Storey 01/07/2018	First Care Leaver Forum took place 6/6/18 led by Marvin Campbell and the Team. Care Leavers Forum is now established and meetings take place on a fortnightly basis. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.7	Meeting to take place with 0-25 Emotional Health and Well-Being Service to confirm local offer to Care Leavers.	To ensure that Care Leavers receive timely help and support in relation to their emotional health and well-being.	Clear offer in place.	Colleen Male Elaine Storey 01/06/2018	Initial discussions have taken place and further actions will be completed. 0-25 service are contributing to final Local Offer for Care Leavers. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.8	Care Leaver's celebration Event to take place during Care Leaver's Week – 25 th October – 3 rd November 2018. This is to become an annual event.	To celebrate the achievements of our care leavers	Celebration Event to take place	Elaine Storey Tracie Watson October 2018	Event held October 2018. Feedback extremely positive and we will look to repeat event in 2019. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	
6.9	To become a member of the National Benchmarking Forum.	To benefit from good practice guidance, training sessions and learning from other local authorities to enhance service delivery.	Membership	Elaine Storey 01/04/2018	Complete – membership in place. ACTION COMPLETE	Green	

Closing the Loop on Improvement Actions

Shropshire Children's services are committed to the continuous improvement of practice within the service and utilise the Quality Assurance Framework to review practice on a regular basis, creating actions for improvement. As part of this we have an auditing framework which includes monthly child journey audits, regular thematic audits and an IRO/ICC dispute resolution process, looking at the whole picture of practice, the learning from which is shared with workers and managers, including learning from the service users whom we contact as part of the audit.

In addition to the Quality Assurance Framework, the IMPACT service user feedback project aims to change the culture and approach to gathering service user's views within children's services. One of the activities of this project is a service user feedback and practice observation week twice a year, the findings of which we will utilise alongside that from child journey audits, to measure the impact of our action plan.