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| Item No 11 | Classification: Open | Date: February 3 2009 | Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee |
| Report title: | | Adolescent and Aftercare Service | |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | | All | |
| From: | | Rory Patterson Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding | |

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note the establishment of Adolescent and Aftercare Service for looked after children and care leavers aged 13-21.
2. To receive further progress report relating to care leavers attending university (previous Corporate Parenting Committee report 26 March 2008).
3. To note service delivery and performance to ensure looked after children and care leavers are in education, employment or training (EET).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adolescent and Aftercare Service

4. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service was established from 1st April 2007 as part of a single business unit for looked after children was established.
5. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service (A&Ac) provides the full care planning function for all looked after children from the age of 13-18 and aftercare support until the young person becomes 21 (24 if attending university). It is noted that under Care Matters the Government's initiative to improve outcomes for children in care, it is expected that the upper age limit will be raised to 25 for children attending university.
6. The main remit of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service is:
 - Provide care planning to include health, education, pathway and transition plans.
 - Maintain meaningful contact and support for young people who have left care up to the age of 21.
 - Deliver support to young people who wish to attend university.
 - In partnership with health, deliver effective health interventions to reduce teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.
 - Deliver specialist partnerships to address issues relating to youth offending, substance misuse and sexual health.
 - Track and support pupils in year 10 and 11 to achieve GCSE results.
 - Delivery of a range of interventions post 16 to promote semi-independence including group work, mentoring, life skill training and appropriate placement.
 - Actively support "Speakerbox" and deliver effective participation.

- In partnership with Southwark Housing and Commissioning Services, deliver appropriate living accommodation post 18.
 - Integrate services from Connexions, Southwark Works, Further Education and Council Apprenticeship schemes to ensure looked after children post 16 are in employment, education and training.
 - Provide specialist advice and interventions for unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minors leaving care.
7. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service consists of 5 teams which provide the full range of services for looked after children and care leavers aged 16-21.
 8. Each team has a senior practitioner (complex cases), social workers (looked after children aged 13-18) and personal advisors (care leavers 18-21)
 9. One of the 5 teams is a specialist team concentrating solely upon unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minor care leavers. (Corporate Parenting report dated January 2008).

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Adolescent and Aftercare Service

10. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service currently has 277 looked after children of which 45 are unaccompanied minors.
11. In addition it provides services for 420 care leavers (of which 118 are unaccompanied minor care leavers).
12. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service priorities are included within the overall strategy for Southwark's looked after children and are monitored through business planning, Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Young Southwark and Corporate Parenting Committee Processes.
13. Alongside the CLA 0-12 Service, the Adolescent and Aftercare Service delivers good outcomes which are reflected by strong performance across the key Southwark and Government performance indicators.
14. There are a number of performance indicators which are specific to the Adolescent and Aftercare Service, these being:
 - GCSE attainment (A2)
 - Percentage of Care Leavers in employment, education or training (A4)
15. The Adolescent and Aftercare service has a number of integrated / co located services which are specifically targeted to enhance outcomes for looked after children, these being:
 - Specialist drug worker.
 - Specialist nurse for teenage pregnancy.
 - Connexions advisors.
 - Employment advisor.
 - Education advisors including GCSE home tuition project.
 - Access to specialist CAMHS Service for looked after children (CareLink).

16. The A&AC Service has produced a “guide to the A&AC Service” which is made available for all looked after children arriving in the service at 13 and over. (Appendix 1)

Employment Education and Training

17. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service delivers a number of initiatives to promote care leavers being in employment, education and training.
18. Each Care Leaver has an allocated Personal Advisor who has lead responsibility for ensuring access, wherever possible to education, employment and training opportunities.
19. Working in partnership with co-located Connexions staff and employment advisor the Service provides the following inputs:
- Home visits / weekly contacts of care leavers.
 - One to one support with careers advice, job applications, interviews, college / training enrolments / open days.
 - Financial support with travel to interviews, work trials / placements and work clothing.
 - Support with accessing childcare funds for care leavers with children.
 - Liaison with colleges/training centres to track care leavers attendance at colleges / training centre.
 - Updated information board in reception area for care leavers with current employment and training opportunities.
 - Referrals of job ready care leavers to various employment agencies, local job centres and Southwark Work's employment advisers for additional support.
 - Work Experience placements for 17+-age range with local government and private sector – retail; administration; customer services etc.
 - Work trials with large retail outlets leading to employment.
 - Liaison with local job centres (benefits and recruitment); employment agencies and specialist employment agencies (special needs) for opportunities for young care leavers.
 - Regular and intensive work with local colleges and training providers regarding new opportunities to engage care leavers to successfully apply for and complete courses / training.

Equalities

20. Young people accessing EET are included in the CLA service annual Equality Impact assessment. In keeping with national trends there is a slightly higher proportion of young women in the service who are successfully engaged . The ethnic breakdown of this group currently reflects the makeup of the rising 19 year old care leavers group.

Performance

21. As at November 2008 the ratio of care leavers at (19) in education, employment or training against Southwark's overall population stood at .89
22. This performance places Southwark in the top quartile in England and Wales.

23. The government has also introduced a new performance indicator (NI148) where care leavers in Education Training and Employment are measured as a percentage of all care leavers.
24. This currently stands at 69% which is an improved performance from 07/08 of 67.5%. Because this is a relatively new government indicator, there is no data relating to the performance of other local authorities.

Young People Attending University

25. Since the report to Corporate Parenting on 26th March 2008 the following key activities have been undertaken to promote university attendance.
 - Implementation of revised policy including support with accommodation and up to £3,000 in grants towards living costs, books and equipment.
 - Development and distribution of information leaflet for care leavers. (Appendix 2).
 - Modifications to CareFirst (database) to track care leavers attending university.
 - Ensuring that all young people attending university will have their own tenancy made available to them via Southwark Housing Protocol. This will enable young people to travel each day to a London University or alternatively use their Southwark tenancy during the holiday periods. Young people if they prefer can defer having a Southwark tenancy until they have finished their degree.

Performance

26. During 07/08 academic year, the A&AC service had 44 care leavers attending university.
27. In the current academic year (08/09) Southwark currently has 51 young people attending university.
28. Key information is now inputted and tracked through CareFirst.
29. As at 06-01-2009 there are:
 - 404 Care Leavers aged 18 – 21 yrs of age.
 - 125 (31%) are unaccompanied minors.
 - 51 have been identified as being at University.
 - 18 (35%) are unaccompanied minors.
30. University is not a national performance indicator and therefore, cannot be subject to comparisons with other local authorities.
31. The current level, it would appear that just over 1 in 10 of Southwark's care leavers (12.5%) is attending a University course. This does not include care leavers taking BTEC or other vocational course.

Policy implications

31. The service has a key role to play in meeting the Council's statutory requirements under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and Care Matters.

Community Impact Statement

32. It is recognised that care leavers engaged in further education are more likely to be able to access the world of work and contribute to the local economy and make a positive contribution to Southwark in their adult lives.
33. Many of Southwark's looked after children, do not begin to fully settle and make sense of their lives until they have left care. It is therefore crucial that the Adolescent and Aftercare Service maintains effective contact with care leavers up to the age of 21 (or 25 if attending university or further education) to provide all necessary support and encouragement. Over 95% of Southwark's care leavers obtain accommodation or a council tenancy within the boundaries of the London Borough of Southwark. It is crucial that these young adults are enabled to become responsible citizens whilst contributing towards community life and the local economy.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

34. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service delivers statutory provision for looked after children and is delivered within current resources allocated to the children looked after service.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services

35. There are no legal implications arising from this service

APPENDICES

| No. | Title |
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| Appendix 1 | "Your guide to the A&AC Service" (circulated seperately) |
| Appendix 2 | University Leaflet (circulated seperately) |

AUDIT TRAIL

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| Lead Officer | Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services and Safeguarding | |
| Report Author | Chris Saunders, Head of Services for Children in Care and Chair of ICS / CareFirst Board. | |
| Version | Final | |
| Dated | January 23 2009 | |
| Key Decision? | No | |
| CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER | | |
| Officer Title | Comments Sought | Comments included |
| Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services | Yes | Yes |
| Finance Director | Yes | Yes |

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|---|-----|-----------------|
| Executive Member | Yes | Yes |
| Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team | | January 23 2009 |