

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 10 November 2010	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Not in Education and Employment Training (NEET) Strategy – Progress Update	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children’s Services	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note interim progress report concerning Not in Education and Employment Training (NEET) Strategy for children in care (CiC). A full report will be presented at “Achieve Economic Wellbeing” Corporate Parenting Committee meeting scheduled for 26 April 2011.
2. To note the new CLA NEET Strategy and action plan introduced in April 2010 and comment on how this can be developed further.
3. To request the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services makes a written enquiry to the Strategic Director of Children’s Services to ask how the current review of early years provision will ensure looked after children and care leavers who are parents are supported in ensuring education or employment, and to share the response with the Committee.
4. To request the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services writes to 14-19 partnership to ask them to set out how the current strategy to support Southwark College will specifically meet the needs of older children in care and care leavers and to share the response with the Committee.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. Adolescent and Aftercare service was established in 2007 as part of a single business unit for looked after children and care leavers.
6. The Adolescent and Aftercare service (A & AC) is one of three services which make up the overall service for children in care and care leavers, these being the:
 - Adolescent and Aftercare service
 - Services for children in care 0-12
 - Adoption & Fostering Services
7. Each service area is led by a service Manager consisting of a number of social work teams and support from administration, finance and specialist co located staff.
8. The Adolescent and Aftercare service provides the care planning function for looked after children aged from the age of 13-18 and aftercare support until the education).
9. The Adolescent and Aftercare service has four teams which provide the full range of services for looked after children and care leavers (13-21). These being:-
 - Two teams for children in care aged 13-18
 - An aftercare team for care leavers aged 18-21 (24 if in university or higher education).

- One team for unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minor care leavers.

The main remit of the Adolescent and Aftercare service is:

Effective care planning to include health, education, pathway and transition plans

Maintain meaningful contact and support for young people who have left care up to age of 21.

Deliver support to young people who wish to attend university/higher education up to the age of 24.

In partnership with PCT, SLAM and Specialist Health Trusts and the Drug Treatment Agency deliver effective health interventions to include reducing teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.

Deliver specialist partnerships with Police, Community Safety and Youth Offending Services to address issues relating to youth offending including children in care who are at risk of becoming involved in crime or associating with gangs.

To work alongside colleagues in schools and children's services to narrow the gap relating to attainment especially at Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

Deliver a range of interventions post 16 to promote semi independence training including group work, mentoring, life skill training and placement stability.

Deliver effective participation arrangements with young people and Speakerbox to improve and shape services.

Working in partnership with Southwark housing, supporting people (including Adult Services) and the private sector (commissioned services) deliver appropriate living accommodation for young people leaving care.

Deliver an effective strategy to support young people in employment, education or training from the age of 16 -21. Delivered in partnership with Connexions, Southwark works, Southwark College, Council Apprenticeship Scheme and targeted youth support.

Provide specialist advice, intervention and support, specific to unaccompanied minors and unaccompanied minors leaving care

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Children Looked After Services Employment Education & Training Strategy 2010/12

10. There is a comprehensive service in place for care leavers providing a wide range of universal and targeted support including personal welfare, life skills, training and finance. This service is delivered by the Adolescent and Aftercare Service (A&AC's) for those aged 13-21 years, which is part of the overall service for children in care.
11. This service provides support across a range of partners and services including Named Nurses, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Connexions, Employment Advisors, Substance Misuse Specialists, Housing and dedicated teams for unaccompanied minors

and education support.

12. The Adolescent and Aftercare service is committed to raising the standards of achievements for all 19 year old care leavers whether they are resident in Southwark or living elsewhere. This strategy paper sets out how the A&AC and key partners intend to do this within the context of Southwark's 14-19 year old strategic plan and the National 14-19 reform programme.
13. The A&AC's aim is therefore committed to developing creative, autonomous learners who, irrespective of background have a right to the very best learning opportunities and a genuine choice of how to participate in the knowledge economy in the 21st century" (*Southwark 2016*)

Context for the strategy

14. All care leavers are allocated their own personal advisor in the adolescent and aftercare service when they reach the age of 18. Each care leaver will have had a pathway plan developed with them from the age of 16 identifying how they will prepare for independence, achieve economic wellbeing and make a positive contribution.
15. The Southwark 2016 plan identifies reducing the proportion of 16 – 19 year olds not in education, employment or training as a priority. Care leavers have been identified by the government as a particularly vulnerable group requiring specific targeted activity within overall council strategies. This document and action plan will articulate those specific areas which will build upon Southwark's current public service agreement (PSA) and relate to Southwark's initiatives around increasing levels of achievement and development of 6th form places. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service recognise that care leavers do not routinely have access to extended family and social networks and are far more likely to have experienced trauma through their childhood and disruption to their education/curriculum journey.
16. Our Children's Trust (Young Southwark) Children and Young People Plan 2010-2013 will set out its legal commissioning intentions that will include joined up targeted support to reduce NEET and comprehensive support for Children Looked After Post 16.

A thriving Southwark College is key to delivering targeted learning support for older CLA and care leavers. In recent years, Southwark College has not specifically targeted this group. It is hoped that the reshaped Southwark College will be able to develop an effective partnership with CLA Services.

17. It is therefore of great importance that the Adolescent and Aftercare service is able to work with key partners to deliver a permanent and safe living environment for carer leavers from the age of 18 which incorporates easy access to a named personal advisor, secure housing, adequate finance and a sense of hope/aspiration. Attainment support and targeted interventions will not succeed unless these core supports are in place and effective.

Strategy Ownership and Overview

18. The strategy for delivering employment education and training opportunities for care leavers will sit within the Children and Young People Plan 2010-2013 commissioning intentions for joined up targeted support to reduce NEET and comprehensive support for Children Looked After Post 16. Our strategy will also be linked with the strategies for 14-19 and youth Offending Service.
19. The strategy for care leavers will be overseen by multi agency group responsible for the development, delivery and evaluation process (for group terms of reference please see appendix 1).

20. This group will meet three times a year and has lead decision makers from the following services

- Adolescent & Aftercare Service
- Connexions
- Southwark Works
- Southwark College
- Southwark Apprenticeship Programme
- 14-19 Partnership
- Job Centre Plus
- Commissioning –Regeneration Service
- Early Years
- CLA Education Team
- Children’s Services Policy Team

This group will have some representation on Southwark’s 14-19 year old partnership

Cohort Tracking

21. The steering group will have a small operational team (sub group) who will be responsible for tracking each year cohort at 16, 17 & 18 years of age to deliver support, preventative interventions and targeted interventions for each looked after child and care leaver between the ages of 16 and 19 who are NEET.

22. The cohort tracking group will also identify trends/issues /service gaps which impact upon the group not accessing Employment, Education and Training. This information will be fed back to the multi agency to develop new interventions, services and partnerships to address identified needs.

Strategic Priorities

23. The Strategy for delivering outcomes for the 16-19 year old age group to enhance achievement of education, employment and training by the age of 19 fall into three main priority areas, these being: -

Raising achievement

24. Delivering and promoting access to a diverse range of learning opportunities between the ages of 16 -19 to raise aspiration and engagement.

25. The key components of this priority is as follows:

- dedicated, co located education advisor for year 12 & 13 (part time post – part of the CLA educational team)
- partnership with Southwark College
- provision of secure and appropriate living accommodation for care leavers
- provision of PC or laptop to all looked after children and care leavers in HE/FE
- access to a matched coach (18+)
- provision of financial support from the Adolescent and Aftercare Service for care leavers wishing to attend university
- provision to facilitate care leavers remaining with their foster carers post 18 to complete their A levels or HE studies.
- co-located Employment Advisor to support education, employment and training advice

- allocation of a personal advisor at 18 with appropriate knowledge and training to provide assistance and motivation.
- delivery of pathway plans which articulate detailed objectives and goals for children in care and care leavers.
- Accessing 6th form and college placements

Reducing the number of children in care and care leavers (16-19) not in employment, education and training.

26. Evidence shows that early preventative measures coupled with interventions and supportive actions can make a significant impact. This function will be delivered through the cohort tracking group (see above) which will address the plans and progress of each looked after child and care leaver within each year cohort.

27. This priority area can be broken into three specific areas:

Preventative action

- group work programme delivered by Adolescent & Aftercare Service
- allocated Social Worker and Personal Advisor able to escalate concerns at early stage to support network and cohort tracking group
- cohort tracking group able to identify those most at risk and requiring additional support
- pathway plans (16-18), independently overseen by Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to ensure that targets/interventions identified are implemented within set timescales.
- delivery of finance management courses for 17 year olds as part of A&AC group work programme.
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to ensure that targets/interventions identified are implemented within set timescales.
- systematic support and tracking provided for all 16-18 year olds through the Connexions Service
- Support from co-located 16 plus education advisor, connexions advisor and employment advisor to assist CLA (16-18) maintain relationships with educational establishment or employer. (CLA Education Team)
- Matching with coach from Southwark's care leaver scheme (18+)
- Delivery work experience placements, apprenticeships through Southwark's regeneration commissioning arrangements.

Targeted Intervention

Within the 16-19 year old cohort of looked after children and care leavers there are number who have very specific needs due to chaotic lifestyles.

The Adolescent and Aftercare Service and Partner Agencies will deliver a number of targeted interventions to provide opportunities for this most difficult to reach group.

- role of co-located employment advisor to develop tailored employment opportunities
- partnership with Job Centre Plus
- partnership with council's apprenticeship scheme
- accessing services available through Southwark's Youth Offending Service to support young people being discharged from Youth Offending Insitutions
- targeted Interventions overseen by cohort tracking group to ensure delivery and service cohesion for those not in EET.
- partnership with early years service to deliver support and advice concerning day care to CLA mothers (parents)
- Southwark College – targeted 19 year old project.

- Adolescent and Aftercare drop in service targeted at NEET. Ref Appendix 4

Sustainability

The strategy needs to ensure that where preventative action or targeted intervention is required, there is ongoing support to ensure that young people do not slip back. It is also important that there are support networks in place which are available and flexible to respond quickly when young people are ready to re-engage with employment, education and training.

This priority will be delivered through: -

- targeted programmes provided through partnership with Southwark College
- tracking afforded through co located connexions staff, employment advisor and 16+ education worker
- allocated social worker, personal advisors and specialist staff are able to work with those young people placed outside of Southwark and engage local resources
- role of cohort tracking group and independent reviewing officers to ensure that agreed interventions and pathway plans are delivered to sustain young people in employment, education and training opportunities

Effective information advice and guidance

28. It is recognised that a key to achieving both the above priorities is the need for effective information, advice and guidance. This is a key element of the strategy as it will assist looked after children and care leavers to become more self reliant and informed – thereby managing their personal and career development. This will be delivered through a number of key mechanisms: -

- provision of accurate and up to date information on opportunities, progression routes, choices and where to find help and how to access it
- the provision of advice through the adolescent and aftercare group work and drop in programme
- direct input from employment advisors, coaching scheme, connexions and CLA education team.
- training and comprehensive service guide available for social workers and personal advisors in the adolescent and aftercare service
- information guide available to Southwark Foster Carers concerning choices for young people in years 12 & 13 and beyond.

Achievement Framework

29. The Adolescent and Aftercare Service have a number of key performance indicators relating to care leavers. These are as follows:-

- The percentage of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation on their 19th birthday
- The percentage of care leavers who on their 19th birthday are in employment education and training
- The percentage of young people leaving care who have obtained 5 GCSE's Grade A to G (APA 3073 SC)
- The percentage of young people leaving care having obtained 1 GCSE Grade A to G (APA 3072 SC)

30. These performance indicators are part of the performance framework and are published annually and specifically cross referenced with Southwark's statistical neighbours.

31. In addition to the statutory performance indicators it is proposed that this strategy is appraised against the following additional outcome indicators:-

- the number and percentage of young people on their 19th birthday who are attending university
- the number and percentage of young people on their 19th birthday who have been matched to a coach under Southwark's scheme
- the percentage of young people on their 19th birthday are resident in the London Borough of Southwark
- the percentage of young people on their 19th birthday who have a Southwark tenancy

32. Key Performance Areas 2010-11

Care Leavers at 19 in appropriate accommodation 97%
(reflects strong partnership with Southwark Housing)

Care Leavers at 19 in employment education and training 58%
60% Year 11 pupils achieving GCSE success at S A-G

Percentage of looked after children who left school in June 2010
currently in employment, education and training 82%

33. It should be noted that the issues facing those care leavers who are NEET on their 19th birthday centre primarily around imprisonment (22%) and young parenthood (27%) Performance data is constantly updated during the year by allocated social workers and personal advisors. Young people who obtain the age of 19 during the last quarter have not all been fully inputted as information is required that they have actually started their further higher education courses in September/October and have continued to attend (subject to early drop out rates).

Policy implications

34. The strategy is consistent with the aspirations for care leavers set out in the Children and Young People's Plan. As outlined above there are a number of key national performance indicators associated with this area of activity which highlights the importance of maintaining an effective strategy for ensuring care leavers are supported in education, employment and training.

Community impact statement

35. Southwark CLA Service works to promote the 5 outcomes for children in care as outlined in every child matters. It is recognised that placement stability, engagement in education, access to additional activities, linked with health, lifestyles, all contribute to building resilience in young people.

36. The Looked After Children Service recognises that adolescent aftercare may be a concern for the community. The Looked After Children Service has a range of specialist services and staff who provide targeted support.

Resource implications

37. The CLA Service has fully implemented the new requirements relating to university support which has required additional budget allocation.

38. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review, reductions in expenditure across departments and the private sector will place additional pressures upon availability

of apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers and employment.

39. The proposed changes in higher education fees will act as a potential deterrent for many young people leaving care who may then become not in employment, education and training on their 19th birthday.
40. Wherever possible the CLA Service will effectively utilise partnerships across the council and grants to target care leavers achieving employment, education and training.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of meetings of Corporate Parenting Committee	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street SE1 5LX	Bola Roberts 020 7525 7232

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Strategic Action Plan
Appendix 2	Terms of Reference
Appendix 3	Drop In Service

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Chris Saunders Head of Services for Children in Care	
Version	final	
Dated	28 October 2010	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	1 November 2010	