

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 November 2009	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Adolescent and Aftercare Service Coaching Scheme for Care Leavers Employment Education and Training for Care Leavers	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the revised and ongoing remit of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service for Looked After Children and Care Leavers aged 13-21.
2. To receive a report relating to coaching scheme being delivered for care leavers.
3. To receive a report concerning support for care leavers in achieving education, employment and training opportunities.
4. To consider what steps might be taken to engage with major council contracting projects to include specific allocations of employment and apprenticeship opportunities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adolescent and Aftercare Service

5. The Adolescent and Aftercare service was established in 2007 as part of a single business unit for looked after children and care leavers.

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

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.

6. 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 young person achieves the age of 21 (24 if attending university/higher education).

7. 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.

8. 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 DTA 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 on the cusp of 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 care leavers post 18
 - 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

Adolescent and Aftercare Service

- 9 The Adolescent and Aftercare Service currently has 293 looked after children of which 42 are unaccompanied minors (as at 30th October 2009).
- 10 The service also supports 371 care leavers (of which 133 are unaccompanied minor care leavers).
- 11 The key performance indicators relating to the Adolescent and Aftercare Service are included in the overall performance report submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- 12 Currently the Service Manager post for the Adolescent and Aftercare Service is vacant following the retirement of the previous post holder after nearly thirty years of service with the London Borough of Southwark. It is hoped that by the time of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting on 26th November an appointment will have been made.

Employment, Education and Training

- 13 The current economic climate is having a significant impact upon national unemployment levels which has been noted to be particularly affecting the 16-24 year old age group.
- 14 Each care leaver has an allocated personal advisor from the age of 17 years and 9 months who has lead responsibility for coordinating plans to wherever possible ensure the person has access to employment education and training opportunities.
- 15 The Adolescent and Aftercare Service also has access to a number of co located staff from other services who specifically target age group (16-21) accessing employment, education and training, these being
 - Employment Advisor (joint funded with Southwark Works)
 - Advisory Teacher to promote post GCSE study (joint funded with Children's Services)
 - Connexions Advisor (funded by Connexions Services)
- 16 Southwark Council's learning and development service also works in close partnership with the Adolescent and Aftercare Service to deliver apprenticeships and targeted coaching for care leavers
- 17 The children looked after service has also established three apprenticeship posts for care leavers within its staffing structure.
- 18 From 29th July a multi agency steering group was established to develop a

targeted strategy for children in care (16+ and care leavers).

- 19 Appendix 1 outlines the draft partnership strategy and action plan to support children in care and care leavers accessing employment, education and training. Many of this group present extremely challenging behaviors' and have experienced chaotic lifestyles before coming into the care system at a late stage. This strategy therefore includes a number of targeted services which can offer the flexibility and patience required to successfully re-engage this group.
- 20 Appendix 2 outlines this years current performance (KPI at 19 years of age) and gives information as to some of the challenges being faced by the young people who are not in employment, education and training on their 19th birthday.

Launch of coaching scheme for care leavers

- 21 In partnership with Southwark's learning and development service, agreement was reached that the current council coaching scheme delivered by Managers for new staff and junior managers would be used to also provide a resource for care leavers. This scheme enables senior managers (Hay 12 and above) at the point of completing their coaching training to opt whether they would wish to coach a care leaver rather than a Southwark member of staff. Should managers opt to do this they receive further training to coach a young person and managers will then be matched with a care leaver. This has required careful planning as we needed to ensure that Managers were clear about the responsibilities involved as it is imperative that coaching partnerships are not lost due to the Manager moving on or not being adequately prepared or equipped for the task.
- 22 Arrangements have also been put in place to provide ongoing support for coaches and access to advice should there be any specific concerns or difficulty.
- 23 Appendix 3 is a flow chart indicating the process through which senior manager may opt to join the scheme.
- 24 Appendix 4 is a leaflet provided for care leavers about the scheme.
- 25 Appendix 5 is the document supplied for managers outlining the scheme.
- 26 The scheme was launched in August 2009 with an invitation from Romi Bowen Director of Children's Services (see Appendix 6) inviting current senior managers who have already completed their training to opt to join the scheme.
- 27 33 senior managers expressed their interest in the scheme including the Chief Executive. Briefing sessions were delivered at Bradenham House (Adolescent and Aftercare Services) which included input from a care leaver (Adrian White who hosted the recent celebration ceremony).

- 28 18 managers have subsequently attended the three day training course and on the 9th November the first group of care leavers have been matched with senior managers as their coaches.
- 29 In addition to the obvious benefits afforded to the care leavers by having an experienced manager working with them as their personal coach, it is also hoped that the needs of care leavers in general will be profiled across the council as senior managers from various departments are "attuned" to specific issues and how services might be shaped or referral pathways improved to target this particular group. The CLA service also hopes that the coaches consider shaping their services slightly in future to establish apprenticeship posts which might benefit care leavers.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 30 There are no new policy implications attached to this report.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 31 The Adolescent and Aftercare Service delivers statutory provision for looked after children and is delivered within current resources allocated to the children's looked after service.
- 32 There are no additional resource implications for the coaching scheme or the education and training strategies. The significant developments and targeted interventions outlined in these strategies outlined do not require additional funding as they are seeking to engage existing resources within the council in a more effective and targeted way.

CONSULTATION

- 33 As part of the overall looked after service, the Adolescent and Aftercare Service has a key role in delivering direct involvement of young people in their individual service plan and in evaluating and shaping service delivery.
- 34 Young people and care leavers were involved in shaping the coaching scheme and in delivering briefing sessions to interested managers.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Draft partnership strategy and action plan to support children in care and care leavers accessing employment, education and training
Appendix 2	Outlines this years current performance (KPI at 19 years of age) and gives information as to some of the challenges being faced by the young people who are not in employment, education and training on their 19th birthday.
Appendix 3	Flow chart indicating the process through which senior managers can opt to join the scheme.

Appendix 4	Leaflet provided for care leavers about the scheme
Appendix 5	Document supplied for managers outlining the scheme.
Appendix 6	Invitation from Romi Bowen Director of Children's Services inviting current senior managers who have already completed their training to opt to join the scheme.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
Report Author	Head of Services for Children in Care	
Version	Final	
Dated	17/11/09	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Executive Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	17 November 2009	