

Children Looked After Services: Draft Employment Education & Training Strategy

Introduction

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&ACS) for those aged 13-21 years, which is part of the overall service for children in care

This service provides support across a range of partners and services including Named Nurses, CAHMS, Connexions, Employment Advisors, Substance Misuse Specialists, Housing and dedicated teams for unaccompanied minors and education support.

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.

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

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.

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.

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 care 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

The strategy for delivering employment education and training opportunities for care leavers is to be seen within the context of Southwark's strategic plan for 14-19 year olds (overarching strategy) and linked with the strategy for the Youth Offending Service (vulnerable group).

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).

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
- Early Years
- CLA Education Team

This group will have some representation on Southwark's 16-19 year old partnership

Cohort Tracking

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.

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.

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: -

1) Raising achievement

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

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

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

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.

This priority area can be broken into three specific areas:

2a) 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 independent reviewing officer (IRO) to ensure that targets/interventions identified are implemented within set timescales.
- systematic support and tracking provided for all 16-18 year olds by Connexions Service
- Support from co-located 16 plus education advisor and employment advisor to assist young person (16-18) maintain relationship with educational establishment or employer. (CLA Education Team)
- Matching with coach from Southwark's care leaver scheme (18+)

2b) 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 Institutions
- 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
- Southwark College – targeted 19 year old project.

2c) 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

3) Effective information advice and guidance

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

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)

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

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

Partnership Services

All services who are delivering support and interventions to this vulnerable group will have clearly identify what is available and clarify referral pathways of service thresholds and referral pathways.

These service descriptions are laid out fully in Appendix 2 which will be used as a resource guide for key staff.

Appendix 1: Strategy Group Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Employment Education and Training Support and Resources for CLA – Service Descriptors

Appendix 3: CLA and Care Leavers Employment Education and Strategy Action Plan 2009 – 2011

Objectives	Task	Success Criteria	Timescale	Lead
Raising Achievement - promoting and accessing a diverse range of services	Dedicated, co-located education advisor for years 12 & 13 (part time post – part of CLA education team)			
	Access to a matched coach (18+)			
	Co-located employment advisor to support education, employment and training advice			
	Accessing 6 th form and college placements			
2a) Preventative Action	Group work programme delivered by Adolescent & Aftercare Service			
	Cohort tracking group able to identify those most at risk and additional support			
	Delivery of finance management courses for 17 year olds as part of independent skills training			

Partnerships Strategy and Action Plan to support children in care and care leavers accessing employment, education and training

Appendix 1

	Systematic support and tracking provided for all 16-18 year old by Connexions Service			
	Matching with coach from Southwark's care leaver scheme			
2 b) Targeted Intervention	Role of co-located employment advisor to develop tailored employment opportunities			
	Partnership with Job Centre plus			
	Accessing services available through Southwark's Youth Offending Service to support young people being discharged from Youth Offending Institutions			
	Targeted Interventions overseen by cohort tracking group to ensure delivery and service cohesion for those <u>not</u> in EET			
	Partnership with early years services to deliver support and advice concerning day care.			
	Southwark College – targeted 19 year old project			
2c) Sustainability	Targeted programmes provided through partnership with Southwark College			
	Tracking afforded through co-located connexions staff, employment advisor and 16+ education worker			

Partnerships Strategy and Action Plan to support children in care and care leavers accessing employment, education and training

Appendix 1

<p>3) Effective Information and Advice and Guidance</p>	<p>Provision of accurate and up to date information on opportunities, progression routes, choices and where to find help and how to access it</p>			
	<p>Training and comprehensive service guide available for social workers and personal advisors in the adolescent and aftercare service</p>			
	<p>Information guide available to Southwark Foster Carers concerning choices for young people in years 12 & 13 and beyond.</p>			