

Outreach visit to Local Economy Team programmes on Thursday 10th November 2016

The Education and Children's Services Committee is conducting a review into the experience of children and young people leaving the care system, in order to make recommendations for improvement.

The government's [Keep on Caring Strategy](#) sees the local help and support that care leavers receive from their local authority as being critical to whether care leavers make the transition from care to independence successfully. One of the key outcomes of the strategy is to improve access to education, employment and training.

The Council's Local Economy programme youth employment programmes are accessible to care leavers, though they do not track outcomes for care leavers specifically as part of their contract monitoring with providers.

The chair of the committee, Councillor Jasmine Ali, , scrutiny project manager, Julie Timbrell, with the support of Elaine Gunn , Principle Strategy Officer, visited two providers, St Giles Trust and Inspire. They were chosen as examples and in order to understand more about the employment support offer available to young people in Southwark, the issues young people are often faced with, the impact of the programmes on the lives of young residents and to hear case study examples about Southwark care leavers.

St Giles Trust

Visit Dee Rouse (Contract Manager) at St Giles Trust.

Address: St Giles Trust, Georgian House, 64-68 Camberwell Church Street, SE5 8JB

www.stgilestrust.org.uk

St Giles Trust provides the council's Youth Fund part-time employment programme called **GROW**. This programme supports young people (aged 16-24) who are still in education or have other responsibilities (such as caring) into part time work. The current 2 year contract runs until March 2017. They **deliver** the Youth Fund **Getting Ready for Work programme**. This provides a 'ladder of support' for young people who are keen to engage in employment but are not work ready. The programme targets support based on the level of need and work readiness of the young person. They have been contracted to work with 220 people and to date they have worked with 200. The aim is part time employment and sustaining employment for 6 months.

The project confirmed that they work with care leavers, and other young people who need support, including working with young people with caring responsibilities. Some young people can often only work for shorter periods due to restrictions on time.

The project works by addressing career progression, and this can often include college and attending short courses. Smaller providers are able to build confidence with young people through developing relationships. Part of the projects work is employment engagement with actual and potential employers.

A Young person's experience - Ariana O

Joined through work experience for a week, but stayed for a year. Her work experience in St Giles enabled her confidence to grow and she said she has learnt a lot. Ariana said the project made her aware of the qualities she had. She went on to work at another cafe, and now has a job as a barista for 6 hours. She is also attending full time education, studying business.

She said the project helped her with everything - from personal issues to education. She obtained a qualification and received help with the course homework. Now she is studying English, as her third language. She said that GROW helps people get out of gangs and fights.

When asked if the project had helped Ariana develop friendship she said that when she first arrived she was more withdrawn and lacked confidence, but now she has developed and focused on that area, becoming more outgoing; now she does have many friends. Dee added that Ariana has developed experience with mixing with different ages in a work environment. Ariana said that with clients here it is important to be patient with people and not judge people. The staff here is very good at that. When asked about young people who are more resistant Ariana said that staff can talk to people in separate rooms and that helps.

The project looks at the wider needs of young people and they do training on food and budgeting. Many young people turn to McDonald's to eat. The project provides advice, but it is difficult as some hostels may not have cooking facilities.

Another problem was zero hour's contracts. This created problems with young people's hostels because of variation in money to pay rent. Changes in take home pay were difficult to manage particularly as many young people do not know how to negotiate with the hostels; consequently the young people were building up debts of 500 or 600 pounds. The project now keeps up contact with the young people every two weeks addressing issues as they arise. They also help them with their rights e.g. not taking overtime the young people can not actually manage, through fear of losing their jobs. The support workers are there to fight the young people's corner.

Their work is about building confidence in making choices to build independence, and showing the young people services that can help, if the young people needs to access specific help. The project is there, with the young person, to offer support and guidance, until such time as the young people decide they can do it for themselves. The project said that when the young people start to make autonomous decisions they know the young person is ready to move on and at that point the project might suggest reducing support to once a month, for example.

When asked how long this takes the project team said it takes some time often to build a relationship and to identify the issues - depression; exploitation; gangs. There can be many things going on for each young person, and help can only be provided once a relationship is developed. Sometimes young people can be helped in a month, sometimes support lasts a year and half.

One issue flagged up was that funding can be time limited, but the project can not just drop clients. This needs to be looked into if the funding changes; giving consideration to what happens to the young people still receiving support from the project.

Inspire

Visit Tracy Franklin (Director) and Asma Begum (Programme Manager InSpired to Work) at Inspire at St Peter's

Address: InSpire at St Peter's, The Crypt at St Peter's, Liverpool Grove, SE17 2HH

<http://in-spire.org.uk/youth-programme/>

Inspire deliver the **InSpired to Work programme** as part of **Southwark Works**. This programme supports young adults 18 – 24 into employment by supporting them through training, job searching & creation, advocacy and bursaries. This programme includes the Employee Mentor programme, which matches a young person's aspirations with a mentor and placement in an organisation. An employer mentor guides the young person's work placement and supports their future career development.

Inspired to Work started 5 years ago

A young people coming through the door will first receive an Initial Assessment , which will help decide where the young person would best fit. A plan will be developed identifying what the young person wants to do. The project will look for ways to address functional skills and life issues. A programme will be developed to work with the young people to upskill or find paths to an apprenticeship and or employment.

Young people are supported go on extensive workshops about employment, and also money savvy workshops on how to manage their money. Each young person has a dedicated case worker. Young people are matched with a placement and mentor from the industry the young want to enter into e.g. Accountancy. The initiative also holds unique events, such as event management.

There is higher level support package for young people "getting ready to work" for people with more needs, which offers intensive support and access to funds.

The project is open to all local people who are local, not just Care Leavers. InSpire have been working with a specialised service that works with care leavers so they have received more referrals. More recently Inspire have been working with an officer who is the employment lead for Southwark on a council initiative recently convened to focus on 40 young people, in conjunction with other agencies. Relevant people and organisation all came together to create action plans for the young people and develop a range services. The young people were not there for there for time efficiency reasons; however the young peoples' social workers & PAs were present. InSpire found this approach really valuable, particularly being able to hear from the range of professional expertise and understand the breath of opportunities. Each young people was assigned support and an action plan. The lead council officer is holding this process. Inspire received 9 referrals.

Recently the project received new funding for "ladies in reduced circumstances" for employment support, training, white goods, transport. The money is focused on meeting needs and then enabling

young people to develop independence. An example is where one young person has received funding for two illustrations courses from this fund.

InSpire was asked for recommendations on improving the offer for Care Leavers and identified the following issues:

- There are problems around of communication with housing and social care for the young people, that the voluntary then have to pick up.
- Apprenticeships pay a low amount, the high living costs locally mean young people require extra support in order to be able to access an apprenticeship. This means that apprenticeships are unaffordable unless there is either family support, or additional social support.
- Care leavers can get support , but Care Leavers on the fringe might have problems – for example have accessed care services later.
- Young people who fall through the gaps are a concern.
- London living wage is needed for young people. This would make Apprenticeships fully accessible to a range of young people.