

<b>Item No.</b> 6.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 18 February 2010	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Adolescent and Aftercare Service Apprenticeship Scheme for Care Leavers	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To receive the annual report relating to the apprenticeship scheme being delivered for care leavers.
2. To note the apprenticeship scheme rests within the remit of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service for Looked After Children and Care Leavers aged 13-21 and Organisational Development Department.
3. To consider what steps might be taken to engage with council departments to promote higher numbers of apprenticeships and to promote specific allocation target of 20% of apprenticeship opportunities offered to care leavers.
4. To note progress of the coaching scheme (as outlined at the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on 26 November 2009).

## 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 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**

### **Apprenticeship Scheme**

9. In partnership with Southwark's Organisational Development Department the Looked After Service has developed a protocol to enable care leavers to access the Council's apprenticeship scheme.
10. The Corporate Parenting Committee have endorsed the protocol and have requested that an annual report is submitted each year with regards to development and delivery.
11. Each year the Adolescent and Aftercare Service deliver short preparation courses for care leavers to develop their skills and confidence to meet the shortlisting requirements of Southwark's apprenticeship scheme and to attend for job interviews.
12. In addition, there are close working relationships where the Team Manager from the Aftercare team and a member of Organisational Development meet to discuss any placement issues arising from a care leaver's workplace. It is recognised that care leavers will often require additional support and understanding especially during the initial stages of employment until they adjust to a workplace environment.
13. The annual report provided by John Howard, Head of Organisational Development is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
14. Appendix 1 also provides a brief update of the coaching scheme for care leavers (minutes refer).
15. It should also be noted that the Adolescent and Aftercare Service have developed two further (now three in total) apprenticeship posts within the Service for care leavers as part of the scheme. This is seen as an example of best practice and role modeling for other departments to demonstrate that the establishment of apprenticeships is both feasible and of benefit to an organisation.
16. This report asks if the Corporate Parenting Committee can support and promote the Council's overall apprenticeship scheme and also highlight the benefits to vulnerable groups especially care leavers.

### **Policy implications**

17. There are no new policy implications attached to this report.

### **Resource implications**

18. 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.
19. There are no additional resource implications for the apprenticeship scheme.

## Community impact statement

20. 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.
21. 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.

## Consultation

22. 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.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None to note		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Apprenticeship scheme progress report - Concurrent report from Head of Organisational Development

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services & Safeguarding	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Saunders Head of Services for Children in Care	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	8 February 2010	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Executive Member</b>	Yes	
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer</b>	8 February 2010	

**Concurrent report from the Head of Organisational Development.**

**Apprenticeship scheme progress report.**

The recent recruitment campaign for apprenticeships attracted 18 applications from looked after children (a slight increase on previous campaigns). However, at the end of the campaign only one of these 18 applicants was successful in securing an apprenticeship.

The success rates at each stage for the last three campaigns are illustrated below:

LAC	Sept 2007	% of LAC applicants	Feb 2009	% of LAC applicants	Oct 2009	% of LAC applicants
No. of applicants	16		15		18	
No. shortlisted	12	75%	11	73%	12	67%
Passed tests	8	50%	10	67%	6 (1 DNA)	34%
Successful at interview	7 (1 DNA)	44%	6	40%	3	17%
Commenced work	7	44%	6	40%	1	5%

The next campaign commences in February 2010. The data in the table above is currently being analysed to ensure that opportunities for looked after children are maximized.

(Caution should be exercised in respect of percentages as the size of this sample is small).

Key areas under consideration are:

- How to increase the number of applications from looked after children – based on the minimal increase in interest over the last two years
- How to prepare candidates for the assessment process – given the decrease in success rates from 50% to 34%
- How to prepare candidates for the interview process – in light of the decrease in success rates from 44% to 17%

In the current campaign two of the three successful candidates were unable to commence work due to the results of CRB checks. There are a number of apprenticeship opportunities which do not require CRB clearance and in future campaigns it is essential that looked after children are provided with appropriate support to ensure they express a preference for options which are appropriate for them.

## **Coaching for Care Leavers scheme progress report**

### Background

Children's Services Management Team approved a model for mentoring and coaching of care leavers in March 2009. The objective of the programme was to provide additional support to care leavers aged 18+ in making the transition from care to independent adult life.

### Approach

Because the council has operated an effective mentoring scheme for several years, many managers across the council had received training and gained experience in mentoring. It was agreed that this in-house resource, with additional training, would be able to support care leavers. Utilising this resource would also benefit the adolescent and after care service by raising awareness across the organisation of what the service does and creating more integration of council services.

### Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

Managers (Hay 12+) across the council with mentoring experience were invited to volunteer to provide coaching and mentoring to a care leaver. The response was extremely positive with 22 volunteers coming forward from all departments bringing a wide range of personal and professional experience. Success in recruiting volunteers was due to:

1. A compelling proposition
2. Invitations to volunteer came from the Director of Children's Services
3. The Chief Executive was one of the first to volunteer
4. The opportunity for managers to extend skills and experience
5. A genuine desire to help

Volunteers attended a briefing session with the adolescent and aftercare service followed by a three-day coaching programme leading to the Certificate in Leaderful Youth Coaching (CLYC) accredited by the International Coach Federation. The model used looks at specific goals in the context of a whole life, recognising that work, relationships, accommodation, health etc are all interconnected.

All volunteers were CRB checked.

### Recruitment and Selection of Care Leavers

A leaflet was designed and distributed offering young people the opportunity to work with a coach. Personal advisers were briefed on the project and given guidance on which young people would be most likely to benefit from the service. Those young people who came forward were invited to a briefing session to explain what coaching is and how the service would be provided.

### Matching Coaches and Young People

Information was gathered from young people regarding their objectives for working with a coach along with basic details about their education, training, career and other aspects of life they would like help with. This was undertaken by managers in the A&AC service.

Each volunteer had a one-to-one with the project manager from organisational development (OD) to ascertain what they could offer and their preferences.

At a meeting between A&AC managers and OD information was reviewed and matches between coaches and young people proposed. The matching process was helped by significant experience of matching mentors and mentees in the council mentoring scheme.

From this process, 18 matches were proposed.

### Introducing Coaches and Young People

It was agreed that a group session where coaches and young people could be introduced would be the most supportive approach for all parties. It proved difficult, however to get everyone in the same place at the same time and only eight personal introductions were made on the planned date. Each pair arranged a date for their first coaching session as the outcome of the introduction.

### Coaching Activity

Although most of the coaches fed back that their first session went well, in almost all cases there has been difficulty in arranging or conducting further meetings. Coaches report that young people are difficult to contact and often do not turn up for meetings. Given the difficulties and challenges faced by the young people this was to some extent expected.

### Outcomes and Next Steps

It is too early at this stage to see clear added value from the coaching activity and likely benefits will not have been realised where coaching sessions haven't taken place.

The next step is to meet with the young people to try to improve problems with contact and attendance.