

<b>Item No.</b> 9.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 13 July 2015	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Health Provision for Care Leavers	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Director Social Care	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee consider the information presented in this report on health services and note the actions we are taking to ensure positive outcomes are achieved for care leavers in Southwark.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. For most young people, moving to their own independent accommodation, entering further or higher education, engaging with apprenticeships and employment, enjoying good health and wellbeing, represent significant events in their journey to adulthood.
3. Mike Stein is an experienced researcher in the area of leaving care. He comments on how many care leavers have to cope with major changes in their lives, at a far younger age than other young people. 'Many care leavers have compressed and accelerated transitions to adulthood'<sup>1</sup> There is evidence that both physical and mental health problems increase at the time of transition and may combine with earlier pre-care and in-care difficulties. Combined with the new challenges of transitioning into new accommodation and relationships. The impact upon young people's health and wellbeing can affect their overall health and well-being.
4. In Southwark, we have developed good partnership arrangements with our health and CAMHS colleagues to monitor and review children and young people's health. Recent developments have focused on preparation for young people as they leave care to have detailed health plans and transition arrangements. This is with a view to establishing clear support to navigate the adult health provisions available within the respective community that the young person will reside in.
5. The successful transition from children's health services to adult services remains one of the biggest challenges in accessing responsive and appropriate services for care leavers.

## Achieving Excellence and Care Leavers Strategy

6. In October 2013, a cross-departmental strategy for young people leaving care was published.

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<sup>1</sup> Promoting the resilience and wellbeing of care leavers-Mike Stein. 2009

The strategy addresses the implementation of a vision which will remove some of the practical barriers that care leavers face as they progress to adulthood. The broad areas of concern identified are: education, employment, financial support, health, housing, justice system, ongoing support.

7. The Department for Education has published a data pack on outcomes for care leavers. Its aim is to consider the findings and to learn from the best practice.
8. The new inspection arrangements will have a specific focus and 'sub judgment' on care leavers. In particular it will look at:

'Young people leaving care and preparing to leave care receive support and help to assist them in making a successful transition to adulthood. Plans for them to leave care are effective and address their individual needs. They are safe and feel safe, particularly where they live. Young people acquire the necessary level of skill and emotional resilience to successfully move towards independence. They are able to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing. They enjoy stable and enduring relationships with staff and carers who meet their needs.'<sup>2</sup>

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

9. We know that good planning and preparation are crucial to supporting care leavers as they plan to leave care and we support them in the community.
10. 'We know from research that approximately half of children in care have clinical-level mental health problems; a rate that is four to five times higher than in children in the general population. Care leavers face complex psychological challenges. While most young people make a gradual transition to independence, supported by their family, care leavers often experience multiple, overlapping changes in their living circumstances all at once.'<sup>3</sup>
11. Current preparation for care leavers starts with the health assessment and review. If young people are struggling to engage with health professionals social workers and Sunshine House health professionals are often flexible in meeting young people in non-health environments and sometimes conducting home visits. Health and wellbeing are reviewed. Access to sports, arts, healthy eating are discussed. Immunisations reviewed and dental checks monitored and follow up actions progressed. We are working with health to develop a health passport for young people which will contain their key health details, for them to reference as they progress into adult-hood.
12. Our Carelink colleagues in CAMHS have worked closely with us to train care staff and to review all rising eighteen year olds to assess their current and projected needs. These assessments are used to apply for transitional services for young people prior to their eighteenth birthday so that there is provision in place to support very vulnerable young people with ongoing mental health input. Accessing the services to manage the transition is not always successful due to the threshold of adult services.

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<sup>2</sup> HM Government. Care Leaver Strategy. A cross-departmental strategy for young people leaving care. 2013.

<sup>3</sup> NSPCC Health and Wellbeing of Care Leavers. May 2015

13. The Social Work Matters operating model has integrated clinical practitioners who will support the social work staff in delivering the best health outcomes for children and care leavers. The clinical practitioners will often co-work with a social work colleague or undertake specific work with a young person to enable the management of a difficult event. Or to provide an intervention that will assist the young person to gain skills in managing their health difficulties.
14. Most young people who have been looked after will return to Southwark, to live. For those that remain out of borough this is generally because they are undertaking further education and employment, are settled in their accommodation and have identified with their local area. These factors will generally correlate with better health outcomes and management for these young people.
15. Southwark has a children and young person's health working group. The group has been developing a borough wide health strategy for all young people. The draft strategy prioritises looked after children and care leavers in receiving responsive and appropriate health services.
16. A key development within the strategy is a Wellness Centre in Southwark to provide flexible and accessible health services for young people. Funding has now been agreed for this project and developments commenced to identify key locations in the borough. A small team of health professionals will provide sensitive and rapid responses to young peoples health enquiries and needs.
17. Alongside the Wellness Centre, a health outreach service will be developed to reach those young people who require greater flexibility and a trusting relationship to be able to start to address their health needs. The health strategy is also considering the health training needs of social care staff. The development of GP services to become more responsive to the needs of young people and improved young people's health information within the borough.
18. The children and young person's health strategy will enable care leavers to access more responsive local health services to meet their physical and mental health needs. The delivery of comprehensive wrap around services for some care leavers will remain a challenge as they enter into adulthood. The improved planning and developments in local services will provide a platform for these cases to be negotiated more effectively.
19. The Care Leavers Association have been awarded an innovation grant from the DFE, to work with CCGs to develop specific health services for care leavers. This work will develop the understanding within CCG's of the specific needs of care leavers and service developments such as the Southwark Children and Young People's health strategy.

### **Actions being taken**

20. Ensuring that all care leavers have a detailed health plan at the point of leaving care which highlights their transitional needs and services required to meet need.
21. The LAC Strategic Group has been established to improve co-ordination between the different parts of the looked after system. This incorporates leaving

care. The group considers partner agency contributions and opportunities to improve the delivery of services to children and young people.

22. Key area's for focus will be:

- Improved planning and co-ordination of health services for care leavers.
- The development of a health passport.
- Ensuring that 'The Southwark Offer' incorporates clear information for young people about health services and access.
- Developing feedback from young people leaving care about their health needs and support required to inform individual planning and future service delivery.

### Community impact statement

23. Southwark Looked After Children services works to promote the best possible outcomes for children in care. The care population is diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnicity and we closely monitor these protective characteristics to ensure we understand specific needs and are able to deliver services that address these needs. It is recognised that placement stability, engagement in education, access to leisure and healthy lifestyles all help to build resilience for young people to successfully achieve economical wellbeing and make a positive contribution. Effective performance monitoring supports these objectives and enables us to identify areas where improvements may need to be made.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care	
<b>Report Author</b>	Jane Scott, Head of Care	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
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Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
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