

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director, Children, Young People & Education

To: Corporate Parenting Panel

Subject: **Review of the 18 Plus Care Leavers Service**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report is at the request of Members to have an update and review of the Corporate Parenting provision for Kent Care Leavers. It provides Members with a detailed overview of the Kent County Council 18 Plus Care Leavers Service and future development. The report includes the statutory requirements and implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Recommendation: The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to **NOTE** the proposed structure of the 18plus Care Leaving Service to meet the increasing demand of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children transitioning into the Service and the progress to date.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report is to update Members on the resources available to deliver the 18+ Care Leavers Service Business Plan 2018-2021.
- 1.2. The Service is going through a period of expansion following the recent guidance within the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which was implemented from 1st April 2018. The major change was the extension of support to Care Leavers up until the age of 25 years (formerly 21 years).
- 1.3. To meet the requirements of this Act, agreement has been given to increase the number of Personal Advisors (PA) within the Service, to meet the needs and statutory requirements of a projected increase in Care Leavers.
- 1.4. The Head of Service, Paul Startup, has worked to ensure there is a permanent stable team of first line Team Managers across the service, as previously a high percentage of staff were Locum managers. All Team Managers are now permanent members of staff. The service is continuing to recruit a permanent workforce of Personal Advisors (PA's).
- 1.5. The 18+ Care Leaving Service provides all statutory duties, as prescribed in the Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000, to Kent care leavers, aged 18-25 years. The

Service provides care leaving services to both asylum and citizen young people, with no differentiation in the level of service provided to these two cohorts.

- 1.6. The 18+ Care Leaving Service also currently manages an accommodation provision which provides housing options for young people aged 16 to 21 years of age. This service works with the twelve district councils to ensure there are processes in place for Care Leavers to access appropriate housing.

2. Policy framework and legal implications

- 2.1. This paper has taken account of The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations, Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 and its revision in January 2015. This legislation sets out the expectations of local authorities and their statutory responsibilities.
- 2.2. The Care Leaver Service is an Ofsted limiting judgement and therefore, if the service is found to be inadequate, the service provision to children and young people by social care will not meet minimum overall requirements. Ofsted has expectations of care leaving services and these are outlined in their inspection reports. Case law has also outlined the local authority responsibilities to ensure that pathway plans are overseen by qualified Social Workers (SW), whilst stopping short of expecting services to be delivered by SWs.

3. Current structure

- 3.1. There is a Head of Service responsible for the Kent Care Leaver 18+ Service reporting to the Assistant Director, Corporate Parenting. There are two recently appointed Service Managers who are responsible for Transition and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people (UASC) respectively.
- 3.2. The service is split into North West and South East areas, with bases at Worrall House, Kings Hill and Thistley Hill in Dover. The North West area has five teams, each led by a Team Manager and includes a Senior Personal Advisor (SPA) and seven Personal Advisor (PA) posts.
- 3.3. The teams are currently set up on basic principles:
 - PAs hold caseloads of 25 young adults
 - SPAs hold caseloads of 20 young adults and support the Team Manager by holding practice sessions; inducting and training new staff and holding the more complex cases
 - SWs hold 15 complex cases and case work related to immigration issues; they are supervised by the Service Manager (UASC)
- 3.4. The numbers of PAs are being continuously reviewed to take account of the significant increases in the numbers of young people who are reaching the age of

18 in the next two years and those that are choosing to remain open to the service after reaching 21.

4 Statistical overview of our care leavers population

Total number of young people supported by the 18+ Care Leaving Service as at 17/08/18		
UASC	Citizen	Total
884	645	1529

5 Progress update over the last 12 months

Staffing and Team Case Loads

- 5.1 The additional investment given to the 18+ Care Leavers Service has enabled the appointment of two Service Managers. One of the posts covers our UASC population and the other leads on transition.
- 5.2 We have been able to reduce our required Social Worker capacity from five to three by bringing the Social Workers together under one line manager. The Social Workers will be line managed by the Service Manager (UASC) and will focus on the completion of Human Rights Assessments and Age Assessments for our unaccompanied minors.
- 5.3 By reducing our required Social worker capacity, we have created the option of having two Participation & Engagement PAs for the service. These PAs would be used to creatively target our most hard to engage Care Leavers, seeking to engage them in positive meaningful activity. These posts would be managed by the Service Manager (Transition) and we hope to have them in post by October 2018, as a pilot scheme initially with Locum staff, with key targets and deliverables attached to the posts.
- 5.4 These newly created posts will work alongside our two dedicated Education, Employment and Training workers and form a larger team managed by the Service Manager (Transition). This is an exciting development, as it brings together a resource to target our remaining cohort of Care Leavers, some 35% who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The Service has made great improvements in our NEET figures over the last couple of years, but we are left with a significant cohort that are harder to engage and we plan to address this. The figures for those in Education, Employment or Training have improved from 59.3% in January 2017 to the current position of 66%.
- 5.5. There has been additional investment in each of the nine teams across the service. Our need to meet the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 led to a review of the numbers of PAs required to meet the projected increase in the number of Care Leavers who need a service. The capacity of each team has been increased from five PAs per team up to a maximum of seven PAs per team. Each team has a Team Manager and a SPA. We are currently recruiting up to capacity in each team as our Care Leaver numbers increase. At the point this report is written we have six vacant posts across the service. These are kept vacant until we need to fill each post as our numbers increase through 2018/2019.

- 5.6. Over the last six months we have been successful in recruiting a fully permanent Team Manager cohort, having gone from a position of having seven of the nine Team Manager posts filled by Locum Managers. Several of the Locum Managers have converted to permanent Team Managers. We have also recruited new PAs and we currently have only a handful of Locum PAs within the Service.
- 5.7. Our Accommodation Team are also undergoing some changes. There is a wider corporate strategy to have a single placement service. The semi-independent provision used by the 18+ service will transition to the Total Placement Service (TPS). The current timetable for this is set for a move across during October/November 2018. Thereafter consideration will be given to the other accommodation options held within the service to move across.
- 5.8. Each PA will have a desired maximum allocation of cases up to 25 and each SPA will have a desired maximum caseload of 20 cases. This is important to allow each allocated worker the time and capacity to fulfil the responsibilities we have towards our Care Leavers in terms of ensuring each has an updated Pathway Plan, are visited regularly, are in suitable accommodation and are in employment, education or training.
- 5.9. When the service is at full capacity, we would have 1755 open cases. At the time of writing this report (August 2018) the service had 1529 open cases. It is projected that these numbers will increase by 197 before the end of the financial year. The current staffing strategy and agreed additional investment should support the numbers coming through.

6. Performance

- 6.1. Performance has remained strong across the 4 Key Performance Indicators.
 - We are required to keep in touch with our Care Leavers and record that we have done so every 6 weeks as a minimum. Our current performance is Green and above our target of 85%. We are currently in touch with 87.4% of our Care Leavers. Those we are not in touch with are either missing or the harder to engage cohort. A high percentage of those that are missing are unaccompanied asylum young people that went missing almost immediately upon their entry into Kent.
 - We are required to ensure that 90% of our Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation. We currently have 94% of our Care Leavers in suitable accommodation. Those who are not in suitable accommodation mostly consist of those who are in custody.
 - We work hard to ensure our Care Leavers are in Education, Training or Employment. We have improved this area considerably over recent years and have plans (previously outlined) to improve this further. We are still meeting our target of 65%, with a current performance of 66%.
 - We are also required to ensure that our Care Leavers have updated Pathway Plans. Our target is to have an updated plan every 6 months and we need to

achieve 90% of the plans being updated. Currently we have a figure of 97% of our Pathway Plans being updated within this timescale.

7. New Developments and Initiatives

7.1 Development of a 14-25 strategy to support care leavers. We recognise that to achieve our ambitions for care leavers, we need to use the three drivers of improvement to make progress against key issues that our care leavers raised during consultation events:

- Not being adequately prepared or supported to deal with the challenges of living independently
- Barriers accessing education, employment and training
- Lack of stability, safety and security
- Difficulties in accessing the health support they need, help to maintain their emotional health and well-being; and problems achieving financial stability

7.2 The appointment of our Service Manager (Transitions) has enabled us to take some initiative in workings with colleagues in Kent and other partners to develop a strategy that begins to address the critical importance of improved planning for our future Care Leavers at an earlier stage than we currently do.

7.3 Lifelong Links Project

We are planning to identify five young people who might be suitable for a pilot project that follows the principle of Lifelong Links and can enable our Care Leavers to develop a wider secure network of support as they transition into adulthood.

7.4 Transition to 18+ and allocating PA at 17.5 years

We have worked with our colleagues in the Children in Care Service to agree a transition protocol, whereby the 18 plus Care Leavers will offer to undertake transition work with the Children in Care Social Worker after the young person has reached 17, to improve the transition pathway for our Care Leavers.

7.5 Work around missing YPs

We will ensure that we have a comprehensive overview of risk within the service, including risk management screening and risk management. All our missing Care Leavers will fall under the strategic oversight of our Service Manager (UASC) who will have regular liaison and meetings with the Home Office. We will ensure that all missing Care Leavers have appropriate plans in place.

7.6 Community Migration Fund (CMF) posts

The underlying principle of the CMF is that it responds to the needs of the community, as identified by the local authority, where these have been brought about by the impact of recent migration. Any local authority proposal to mitigate the impact of recent migration must evidence this issue, and include evidence of the impacts on, or the views of, the wider local community. Kent has secured funding for several posts, these include a Benefits Advisor (in post); a Mental Health Worker

(coming into post later in the month of August); Custody Worker (advert out, currently a temporary worker in post).

7.7 Drop-ins

The formulation of a structured “drop in” service seeks to meet young people on their terms. It is recognised that, for some, disassociation from societal norms has been a factor in their care history and that formalised, structured and enforced activity might lead to further alienation. The introduction of an informal drop in service provides a transitional “taster” of our services whilst maintaining some level of engagement. It will also provide a stepping stone to more formalised and structured work programmes.

The “drop in” service will deliver constructive activities in a welcoming and safe environment. Utilising effective partnerships and role models the service will tackle issues of exclusion, isolation, challenging behaviour and disengagement.

The key aims of the drop-in service are:

- To offer networking opportunities for young people
- To provide access to advice for education and careers for those who are NEET
- To maintain constructive contact with those isolated/vulnerable CLA/Care Leavers
- To promote re-engagement with care services

We have started our Drop-ins in the following areas:

The Sunlight Centre
105 Richmond Road
Gillingham
Kent
ME7 1LX

KCC Info Zone
3 Palace Avenue
Maidstone
Kent
ME26 6NF

We will be starting Drop-ins at these locations shortly.

- Shepway Youth Hub in Folkestone
- Quarter Deck in Margate
- Linwood Centre in Deal
- Concorde in Ramsgate

7.8 Care Leavers in custody

“Ensure that all care leavers in prison or secure training centres have purposeful visits and an up-to-date pathway plan.”

This a required action for us following the Ofsted inspection in 2017. We have achieved significant progress with our Care Leavers in custody.

- We have contacted every single prison where we have a care leaver in custody. This has helped us establish contacts and develop the links with each prison. This has been particularly successful with HMP Elmley

- We are close to finishing an analysis of where each asylum seeker care leaver in custody are housed, and we plan to roll out community projects. We have mapped out demographics, NEET figures and gang related areas
- We have set up monthly case discussions with HMP Elmley. This will mean that we keep up to date with cases and hopefully this is something that we can look to roll out to other prisons
- We have also set up contacts in HMP Rochester, Feltham and Cookham Wood
- We have audited all our Care Leavers and ensured that each Care Leaver has an up to date Pathway Plan

8. Rent Guarantor Scheme

- 8.1. A challenge was issued by the Young Adult Council (YAC) in June 2017 *'if a young person over school leaving age decided to be fully independent and work full time paying their own rent, would KCC as a 'Corporate Parent' act as the young person's guarantor?* It was agreed at Corporate Parenting panel on 22nd March 2018 that KCC could act in the role of guarantor for our Care Leavers and that the proposal for a pilot scheme would be progressed.
- 8.2. The Care Leavers Service began a 12-month pilot starting on 1st July 2018 and this will accept applications from all eligible Care Leavers to a maximum of 25 young people. Due to the potential financial risks involved in the pilot to KCC and considering the learning from Devon County Council, we are starting the pilot on a small scale, to minimise the risks. The aim will be to build the scheme in subsequent years, to be accessed by a larger cohort of young people and let the learning underpin a wider policy change in 2019.
- 8.3. At the point of writing this report we have 3 successful applications that have progressed. We have other applications pending; however we are experiencing some difficulties with landlords and letting agencies who are used to dealing with individuals and companies as rent guarantors, and we as KCC are not either of these. We hope to work with agents and landlords to get them on board and hope to dedicate a specific resource to this after the changes to the Accommodation Team have been completed.

9. Local Offer

- 9.1 All local authorities have a legal obligation to support young people making the transition from care to independence. It is KCC's responsibility to ensure that our Care Leavers know what services are available to them and what they can expect to receive whilst in care and as Care Leavers. The requirement of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 is to publish the Local Offer in December 2018.
- 9.2 Our offer for Care Leavers has the objective to clearly provide a single document

outlining entitlements and expectations. Kent's Local Offer is being completed in consultation with the Young Adult Council (YAC) and will be presented to Cabinet Committee in November 2018, ready for publication in December 2018.

10. Conclusion

10.1 This paper sets out the proposal for the restructuring of the Care Leaving Service to provide 18+ care leavers with increased resource to manage and support the transfer of UASC into the service.

10.2. The proposed restructure is necessary for the service to meet its statutory requirements under The Children and Social Work Act 2017. Future commitments with the increasing demand for the service, will be planned in the 2019/2020 budget build.

11. Equality Implications

11.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report, but if any equality implications are identified as work on the development of the Service progresses, an Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

12. Recommendation

12.1 Recommendation: Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to **NOTE** the proposed structure of the 18plus Care Leaving Service to meet the increasing demand of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children transitioning into the Service and the progress to date.

13. Background Documents

None

14. Contact Details

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Appendix 1 Total No. of Teams for Total Workload of 1,317 as at 31.03.17 = 8.3 teams

Head of Service KR14

Business Manager

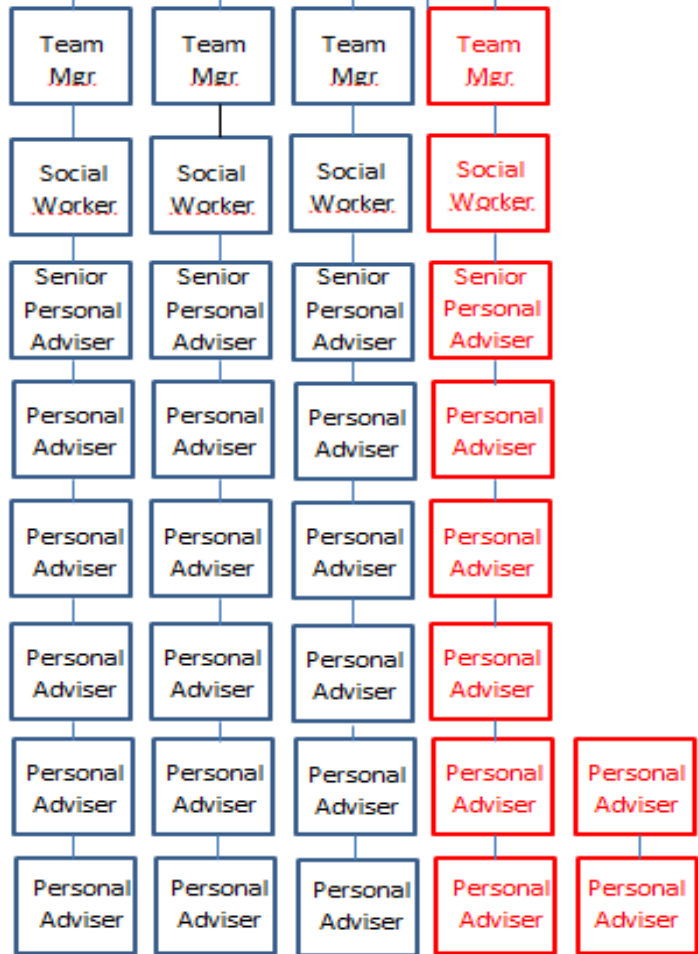
Accommodation Manager

Service Manager KR13

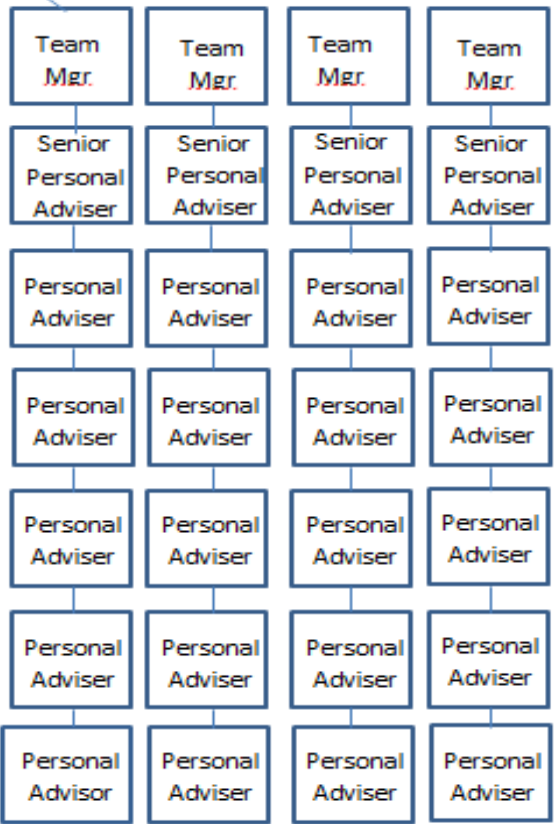
UASC

Growth in red, 2016/17.

CITIZEN



168 Cases 168 Cases 168 Cases 168 Cases 50 Cases **Total Cases = 696**



25 Cases 150 Cases 150 Cases 150 Cases 150 Cases

Total Cases = 621

Appendix 2 – Total No. of Teams for Total Workload of 1,434 as at 31.03.18 = 9 teams

