

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

To: Corporate Parenting Panel – 29 January 2019

Subject: **Challenge Card Update**

Classification: Unrestricted

<p>Summary: This report provides members with an overview of the progress made on the current challenge cards that our young people have made to KCC, in our role as Corporate Parents.</p> <p>Recommendation: The members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to NOTE the challenge card progress to date and to support the actions being taken to meet the challenge.</p>
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1. Previous Challenges - Rent Guarantor Scheme:

- 1.1 A challenge was issued by the Young Adult Council (YAC) initially 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?’***
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Care Leavers Service began a 12-month pilot starting on 1st July 2018 and is accepting 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, the pilot is initially 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 with a view to the learning underpinning a wider policy change later in 2019. A report will come to Corporate Parenting Panel upon completion of the pilot.

2. Previous Challenges – Interview Panel Timings:

- 2.1 A challenge card was received from our young people who are part of Kent County Council’s *Recruit Crew* in August 2018 – ***‘For Kent County Council to review the timings of when interview panels are set and see if something could be done to better fit in with young people’s availability and schooling commitments to ensure that their participation isn’t disadvantaged.’***

2.2 Young people have advised they wish to get involved in helping shape the services they receive. One of the ways they can do this is to be involved in the recruitment and selection of Social Workers and other key staff.

3. Challenge card progress

The following activities have taken place:

3.1 Rent Guarantor Scheme:

- To date, the 18+ Care Leaver Service currently has 15 young people, where KCC is acting as a Rent Guarantor.
- The Personal Advisor completes a Rent Guarantor application form with the young person who wishes to apply and completes a summary as to why they feel that the young person can hold a tenancy both emotionally, financially and has the skills to meet the requirements. A decision is then made as to whether the young person is able to meet the requirements to oversee their own accommodation.
- Each agreement may be different, for many it will be for student accommodation, for others longer term agreements. The Personal Advisor, Team Manager and Head of Service will ensure that the risk is minimal for the young person.
- We hope to achieve a 'pilot' of 25 cases before we formally review the scheme. Of the 15 current Care leavers 9 are female and 6 are male. The age range is between 19 and 24 years. They have a range of background experiences and current circumstances. We have some at university, some in other forms of education, some in full-time employment, a couple of young parents and others combining study with part-time work.
- The properties leased are both in and outside of Kent, supporting Care Leavers living in Leeds, Medway, Maidstone, London and Nottingham.
- The scheme is proving very helpful for those Care Leavers in areas where access to any social housing is challenging.

3.2 Interview Panel Timings:

- A working group has now been established and is being led by Mark Thorn, Assistant Director for North Kent, who is the lead for Social Care staff recruitment. This group will include Human Resources to look at the best method to progress this challenge. The group are reviewing the current recruitment arrangements and the practicalities of holding interview panels outside of school hours and identify other areas where our children and young people can be involved with the recruitment of staff and development of future services.
- The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel has reviewed the dates and timings of the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings for 2019 and has ensured there are as

many dates within school holidays as possible to enable our children and young people to attend the panel and meet their corporate parents.

- To further support this, our VSK Participation Team are facilitating further opportunities for service users to be trained on an accredited course, 'Interview Skills for Service Users.' This will give them further support and a greater understanding about what is required. A training session has been arranged in South Kent in the February school holidays to further increase the number of trained young people. Additionally, courses will run later in the year in other parts of the county.
- In October 2018, VSK apprentices, alongside young people supported by Headstart, came together to deliver a training session for the Senior Leadership Team on Co-Production and how children and young people can be involved in the design of our future services. All staff made pledges of how they would involve our young people going forward and these included them being involved in the interview process for staff across the directorate. There was agreed commitment to ensure that wherever possible, interview panels would be scheduled to accommodate young people being able to use public transport to access the venue, be at a time that did not disrupt their education or employment and they would be consulted on prior to the process, to consider interview questions and format.

4. New Challenges

4.1 There are no further challenges to present as of 29 January 2019.

Recommendation:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to **NOTE** the challenge card progress to date and to support the actions being taken to meet the challenge.

5. Background documents

None.

6. Contact details

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