

Paper for Scrutiny Panel – Support to Care Leavers during Coronavirus

This paper provides the information requested for Scrutiny Panel on how Enfield has supported its Care Leavers during the Coronavirus pandemic including their Health and Wellbeing.

CONTEXT	<p>Enfield Leaving Care Service, together with its partner agencies, ensures that care leavers have all the support they need to live safe, and successful lives.</p> <p>Enfield Leaving Care Service alongside Partner Agencies aims to provide Care Leavers with as much support and opportunities available to them to best help them achieve their aspirations and securing the very best possible outcomes for their future.</p> <p>The breakout of the COVID-19 Pandemic has inevitably had an impact on the service we provide. Robust plans have been put in place throughout the pandemic to ensure we continue to provide a service of a high standard that meets the needs of our Care Leavers.</p>
CARE LEAVERS DEMOGRAPHICS	<p>372 is currently the total number of young people open to the Leaving Care Team between the age of 16 and 25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18: 101 (26%) • 18-21: 205 (56%) • 21-25: 66 (18%) <p>At the time this report was completed, in November 2020, we were supporting 155 Asylum Seeking Young People (16-21) under the Leaving Care Service (42%):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 UASCs (16 and 17 years old) within LCT (25% of the total UASC population) compared to 9 UASCs within the LAC Service • 115 Former UASCs (75% of the total UASC population)

	which include Care Leavers over the age of 18.
THE SERVICE RISK REGISTER	<p>This Document set out how service delivery would be adjusted to ensure that the wellbeing of our care leavers would be supported and maintained during the pandemic.</p> <p>It included an up to date Risk Assessment being completed on every young person at the start of 'lockdown' and the outcome of this, being used to determine the regularity of contacts between the case worker and the young person as well as any additional support needed. These Risk Assessments have been regularly reviewed to make sure they remain relevant.</p> <p>At the time this report was completed, in November 2020, 15 Young People (4% of the total population) were rated HIGH RISK as per their most recent Risk Assessment review.</p>
YOUNG PEOPLE IN SEMI-INDEPENDENT SUPPORTED PLACEMENTS	<p>Care leavers in fostering families or residential units benefitted from being in a setting with other people throughout the lockdown period. There was a particularly strong focus on our young people living in supported semi-independent placements, given the potential for loneliness and isolation during this time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Placements (in-house and independent) and Staying Put arrangements: supporting 63 of our young people 16-21 (17%). • Semi-independent placements: supporting 220 of our young people 16-25 (59%).
NATURE OF THE CONTACT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE PANDEMIC.	<p>Initially, the majority of contacts with the young people had to be completed 'virtually'. It was interesting to see how well our care leavers responded to the move to technological communication – their own ease with the different platforms obviously helped with this. However, face to face contact, using PPE, did remain in place throughout for young people in certain circumstances. These included those at risk of immediate placement breakdown, placement moves, new Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, young people who had returned from significant missing episodes</p>

	<p>and where any other safeguarding concerns required an in-person response. The Service maintained a Duty Team presence in Triangle House every day, to ensure an immediate response to any young person in crisis. As soon as lockdown restrictions were relaxed, face to face visits to all young people recommenced and have continued.</p>
<p>SUPPORT OFFERED TO PROMOTE WELLBING AND PLACEMENT STABILITY</p>	<p>In line with Government advice, our care leavers were encouraged not to leave their placements, unless this was for any of the allowed scenarios set out in the statutory guidance. Mitigating factors were put into place to help them manage in this situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significantly increased contact from social workers/personal advisors and key workers to best monitor and address any issues related with the six areas we have highlighted in both our Local Offer and Service Strategy as key in the Care Leavers' pathway for a successful future. These included those related to their Health and Wellbeing; Education, Training and/Employment; Relationships; Housing; Finances; Access to Information and Services. • Checks were made to ensure that every young person had access to internet and their own TV. • Young People were provided with laptops funded by both our Service and the DFE. • additional funding for telephone credits was provided where necessary to allow increased telephone contact with family members and friends while face to face visits could not take place. • Providers were asked to purchase additional food and essential supplies, funded by the Council, to ensure that any young person who ran out of provisions could be given the necessary support. • Every provider was written to, asking them to discuss with their residents, any additional equipment they would like

	<p>to help keep them occupied at home and the service purchased books, garden basketball equipment, card games etc in response.</p> <p>A small number of our young people did break the rules, putting their accommodation in jeopardy, as the providers felt they were then putting other young people at risk of exposure to Coronavirus. Speedy work between the allocated worker, the provider and the young person ensured that no young person was evicted.</p>
SUPPORT TO SEMI-INDEPENDENT PLACEMENT PROVIDERS	<p>During the lockdown period, the placements commissioning team, Access to Resources (ART), contacted every semi-independent provider where an Enfield young person was placed, on a weekly basis, to go through a series of coronavirus related questions. This ensured a proactive approach to identifying any evolving issues and included questions on staffing levels, any examples of symptoms or diagnoses in staff or young people, compliance and hand sanitiser availability. ART provided hand sanitiser to providers who had been unable to source this for themselves. A 24 hour/7 day a week helpline was set up for providers to respond to any coronavirus related problems/questions/concerns they had.</p>
SUPPORT AVAILABLE FROM OTHER RELEVANT CHILDREN SERVICES AND PARTNER AGENCIES	<p>The Health and Education Access and Resources Team (HEART) continued to provide services to looked after children and care leavers throughout this period and specialist CAMHS appointments were delivered by virtual means.</p> <p>The LAC Health Team continued to see Young People by video for their Health Assessment Reviews and followed up any concerns or outstanding health needs with the allocated Social Worker. GPs have prioritised immunisations and these continue to be promoted.</p> <p>A total of 91 Health Assessments were completed on 16 and 17</p>

	<p>years old between March and November 2020.</p> <p>Health assessments explored about the impact of COVID-19 in young people's lives. There is a general sense that the young people, on the one hand, enjoy being home with others. On the other hand, they reported being bored, missing school and friends. Very few have shared that they are not complying with the Government guidelines.</p> <p>LAC Health Team liaises with social workers, foster carers and CAMHS when concerns about mental health arise.</p> <p>Between March and the end of October this year HEART CAMHS received 20 referrals of young people aged 16-18 (for context, this was 41% of our total referrals during the period).</p> <p>Additional services were put into place across Children's Services to support all young people's emotional wellbeing, including those in semi-independent provision, through the challenges of lockdown. These included the online mental health support line, KOOTH, a Domestic Violence Hub and the Summer University Programme delivered through the Youth Service.</p> <p>The Virtual School ran its annual Summer ESOL course for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children using virtual technology. An Education, Employment and Training support worker was appointed to help some of the more complex young people to make the transition into meaningful activity.</p>
CARE LEAVERS LOCAL OFFER AND STRATEGY (2020-2023)	<p>During the last few months, under the auspices of the Corporate Parenting Board, Enfield's Local Offer for Care Leavers has been reviewed and updated. A new Care Leavers Strategy for 2020-2023 has been developed, incorporating an Action Plan which will be reviewed annually at the Board.</p>