

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE & LEAVING CARE WHO ARE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

To: **Children and Young People's Committee**

Meeting Date: **7 July 2020**

From: **Executive Director People and Communities**

Electoral division(s): **All.**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Outcome: **What is the Committee being asked to consider?**

Actions being taken to support more of our young people leaving care to continue into education, employment or training.

What are the potential and predicted outcomes?

That more young people leaving care in Cambridgeshire remain in education, employment or training, with the result that they experience improved lifelong outcomes.

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to:**

- a) Note the progress being made in supporting more of our young people to remain in education or move into employment or training, and:**
- b) Request a further report on the progress made and any on-going impact of Covid-19 in this area for the September 2021 Children and Young People's Committee.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contacts:</i>	
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Young people leaving care are likely to have experienced more difficulties and challenges than children and young people growing up within their families. These difficulties will often have had an impact on access to education, with some children and young people experiencing disruption to their schooling, while others often struggle to make the progress they might otherwise have been able to have achieved because of emotional and other trauma that they experienced before coming into care.
- 1.2. While many of our young people achieve very well despite such adverse childhood experiences, the combination of factors such as these mean that young people in care and leaving care are more likely to be Not in Education, Employment or Training [NEET] than their peers.
- 1.3. This report provides a brief overview of the relative performance in Cambridgeshire in relation to supporting young people in care and leaving care to remain in Education, Employment or Training [EET], actions we are taking to improve outcomes in this area, and a brief summary of potential risks resulting from the impact of Covid-19.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1. Historically Cambridgeshire has reported comparably lower numbers of children in care and care leavers that are in Education Employment and Training (EET) than regional or statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.2. Data on the proportions of young people who are EET and NEET is reported to the DfE on an annual basis. The data reported is an annual snapshot of the status of young people aged between 17 and 21 as on their birthday. Rates for Cambridgeshire, our regional and statistical neighbours and the national position between 2017 and 2019 is reported in the table below:

	Cambridgeshire	Regional Ave	Statistical Neighbour Ave	England Ave
2019	47.0%	52.0%	54.8%	52.0%
2018	47.0%	51.0%	54.0%	51.0%
2017	37.0%	50.0%	49.1%	50.0%

- 2.3. The table shows that Cambridgeshire has been less effective than regional and statistical neighbours in securing employment, education and training for young people leaving care. That said, there was a considerable improvement between 2017 and 18, although this stalled between 2018 and 19.
- 2.4. Part of the explanation for lower relative performance in Cambridgeshire is likely to include differences in the characteristics of the leaving care population. While otherwise statistically similar to Cambridgeshire, our statistical neighbours include Bath and North East Somerset, Gloucestershire and West Berkshire, none of which are likely to have more than a small number, if any, former Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people among their populations of care leavers. While many former unaccompanied asylum seeking children

are highly motivated to learn, and to do well in education and training, it remains the case that a significant proportion face added barriers to accessing learning and employment.

- 2.5. Regardless of factors such as these, we continue to prioritise supporting all of our young people in care and leaving care to remain in education, move into training including apprenticeships or into employment according to what is in their best long term interests.
- 2.6. We monitor our performance on a monthly basis, and the most recent available data for young people in care and leaving care aged 16 and above who are continuing in education, employment or education is as below:

Month	16+ CIC/Care Leaver EET %
May 2020	63.3%
April 2020	64.1%
March 2020	63.1%
Feb 2020	62.1%

- 2.7. There are a number of activities, grouped together under the heading of the 'NEET Reduction Programme' that have been taking place to improve our performance in this area and these are now showing signs of positive impact for young people. The first of these was the implementation of NEET reduction meetings at the beginning of this year. These are chaired by a Service Manager in our Corporate Parenting service and include our specialist Personal Advisor for education, team managers from our children in care and leaving care teams as well as the NEET team, and representatives from the virtual school.
- 2.8. All young people who are currently NEET are discussed, and actions agreed that will help to support them to move into education, employment or training. This includes considering whether or not a particular young person is yet ready to be supported into these activities. Some young people who have significant mental health issues or who are dealing with a range of other issues or changes in their lives will not be yet ready to be supported into education or training, for example.
- 2.9. Unsurprisingly, it is those young people who are most settled in relation to their living arrangements that are most likely to remain in education, employment or training, or to return to these activities after a period of having been NEET. A focus of attention of the group is also therefore, to help to provide stability to those who are less settled, as a first step towards moving them out of being NEET.
- 2.10. Under the banner of the NEET Reduction Programme, and assisted by our now reducing population of children in care [down to around 700 from over 780 in summer 2019], we have established a number of other initiatives to help support our children in care to remain in education, employment and training as they move into adulthood. One of these activities is to support and build aspirations for our children in care and in education. Currently focusing on children in year 9, we ensure that are helping all our children in care to identify their interests so that we can support them to develop aspirations for the future. From this knowledge, we encourage children to attend events and other activities to help them in achieving their goals.

- 2.11. We are also developing a mentoring scheme following a successful pilot. Under this scheme, young people are trained and supported to become mentors to peers and young children, with the aim of helping to build confidence and develop interests further. We currently have a total of 12 young people who are trained as mentors, with another 11 ready to begin training. The programme will formally launch during this summer, 2020.
- 2.12. We have also established a partnership with Timpson and Partner companies to support our young people leaving care. Timpson's has a long standing and very positive record in providing employment opportunities to vulnerable adults, and it is really good that they are helping to support our care leavers by providing work experience to any of our care leavers, wherever they may be in the country. This means that young people living outside the county can also benefit from this programme.
- 2.13. The Beats Programme was established in summer 2019 and is a flexible programme in English as a Second Language that can be joined and left at any point in the year. The programme is very popular with our unaccompanied young people, and has been successful in re-engaging some young people in college after they had previously dropped out. Other young people have been able to move up an academic year as a result of the support they have received with the development of their English Language. The programme is a joint one operating across both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.
- 2.14. It has been easier to identify young people who may be vulnerable to becoming NEET as a result of the improved reporting tools available through LiquidLogic, which 'went live' in February 2020. While this will help us to improve outcomes in the longer terms, there are some current difficulties in comparing reporting data now with older data as reported by the ONE recording system that LiquidLogic replaced. These issues will, however, reduce as time moves on.
- 2.15. While the initiatives we have put in place to support better outcomes in relation to more of our young people remaining in education, employment and training are now having some impact, there is a risk that the position for our young people, and particularly those who are most vulnerable, will be negatively affected by the fallout from Covid-19.
- 2.16. While those who were always aspiring to a place in further and higher education are likely to be less affected by the epidemic, those who were looking for apprenticeships and employment with training may find it less easy to obtain work. We do not yet know the extent of any economic downturn that will follow the Covid-19 epidemic, and whether the economy will bounce back quickly, or take longer to recover. Previous economic downturns have, however, tended to have the greatest impact on young people and people in lower skilled occupations.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Engagement with education, employment and training is associated with a range of positive outcomes for young people and is generally recognised as a resilience factor in supporting long term positive mental and emotional health.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- An increased proportion of the population supports a strong economy and the general quality of life of all people in the community.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Good engagement in education provides a strong basis for life-long positive outcomes for the individual and their children in the future.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

There are no significant implications in this area.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	No Name of Financial Officer: N/A
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	No Name of Officer: N/A
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?	No Name of Legal Officer: N/A
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Lou Williams
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	No Name of Officer: N/A
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Lou Williams
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	No Name of Officer: N/A