

## Children in Care/ Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET) Promotion Action Plan Update

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 16 November 2022

From: Mark Cowdell, Countywide NEET Manager and Corporate Parenting Service.

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: To provide the Sub-Committee with an update on progress toward increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training (EET).

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

### Officer contact:

Name: Mark Cowdell  
Post: Countywide NEET Manager  
Email: [mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 507218

### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam/ Councillor Lucy Nethsingha  
Role: Chair/Vice Chair  
Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) / [lucy.nethsingha@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.nethsingha@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The numbers of young people in education, employment and training (EET) is a key positive outcome measure for children in care and care leavers so measurement of those in EET and those not in education, employment and training (NEET) is carefully monitored.
- 1.2 In 2018, an overall Cambridgeshire NEET reduction strategy was developed which had action plans for different vulnerable groups sitting under it. An action plan was developed for Children in Care and Care Leavers. This action plan was provided at this sub-committee meeting in November 2021.
- 1.3 In 2020, it was decided that officers would be given the task of pulling together a NEET strategy across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and ensure that all the different services supporting this work are working together to help improve performance across our vulnerable group.
- 1.4 This report is to provide an update since that time.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The current DfE (Department for Education) EET figure for care leavers aged 19 to 21 for Cambridgeshire is 49.0%. This was for 2021 and unfortunately the 2022 figure has not been published yet. This is in comparison to an EET figure 52.0% for East of England Average and an EET figure of 54.3% for Cambridgeshire Statistical neighbours.

Care Leavers	% in EET (DfE Annual Published Data)			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
EAST OF ENGLAND	51.0%	52.0%	53.0%	52.0%
Cambridgeshire	47.0%	47.0%	44.0%	49.0%
Cambridgeshire SN	51.8%	53.9%	54.1%	54.3%

- 2.2 The above table shows that although Cambridgeshire is still behind our local and statistical neighbours, the gap between Cambridgeshire and these neighbours has been narrowed and excellent improvement of 5.0% made from 2020 to 2021. This is reflective of the work that is being done to highlight the importance of increasing our vulnerable young people into education, employment or training.
- 2.3 We have provisional data for 2022 and although it has not been published and therefore cannot compare with local and statistical neighbours, the provisional figure for 2022 is 197 young people being in EET out of 364 which is 54.1%. This shows another increase by 5.1% from 2021 result which is equivalent to about 18-19 young people. It will be interesting to see how the result compares with local and statistical neighbours when the results are published later this year by DfE. This provisional result is again reflective of the work that is happening to raise the profile of vulnerable young people and their need to be in education, employment and training.

- 2.4 To support with the collation of accurate monthly data, a form has been devised and embedded into the case management system and will be reviewed monthly to gather what each young person is doing in EET and if they are not in EET, what are the barriers.
- 2.5 As a wider NEET picture for Cambridgeshire, there has been a lot of work completed recently through the NEET strategy by shining a light on this work. Cambridgeshire consistently achieves an average result of 3.0% for NEET and Not Knowns, for 16-18 year olds. This result means we are within the first Quintile and score well in comparison to local and statistical neighbours.
- 2.6 By developing a quarterly reporting document called “NEET on a Page”, this has helped us to highlight the results for Cambridgeshire including splitting down the vulnerable groups such as Care Leavers, young people known to Youth Offending Service, young people who have an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans) for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) needs and teenage mothers. By improving reporting, we can see more clearly where we are performing well but also the areas we can further improve, and we are able to then focus resources to make improvements.

### Children in Care/Virtual School activities to promote Education, Employment and Training (EET)

- 2.7 Promoting EET is high on our agenda and one of the key areas that has been looked at to help address EET promotion and thus increase attendance and engagement within education, employment and or training has been reviewing and analysing key themes for our younger cohort of care experienced young people. Below are a few examples of how we are working to help promote EET.
- 2.8 Early identification and analysis of PEP data – currently this is focusing on year 11s, however the future aim is to begin this starting from year 9 onwards, working closely with colleges and training providers to capture where there is a potential risk of NEET and considering alternative options to promote EET.
- 2.9 Linking with out of county support services for our young people placed outside of Cambridgeshire.
- 2.10 Inclusion work – tracking post 16 attendance, providing early interventions with regards to attendance and disciplinaries.
- 2.11 Refer to Form the Future (careers and guidance support) and working closely with the Aspirations Officer to promote positive activities.
- 2.12 Individual careers guidance sessions offered for years 9-14 – timely advice, accessible to both young people placed within and outside of Cambridgeshire. Sessions include ‘feeling stuck,’ career maps, applications and apprenticeships.
- 2.13 Offering bespoke training courses to our care experienced young people age 14+, which includes first aid course, Barista training with food hygiene and youthwork workshop.
- 2.14 Summer activities – this project enables young people to keep fit, improve their wellbeing, and keep their English skills up to date. Funding has now been secured from the Cambridge

Community Foundation to continue this work for our UASC young people, to provide football and a 'taster session' art, careers and sports offer in Cambridge and Peterborough. This will also include cooking sessions.

- 2.15 Partnerships via MyCambridge – we have several offers from partner groups which currently include sound engineering courses, hospitality work trials and bursary places for filmmakers (Junction), music taster experiences (Cambs Music), development of curatorial and retail volunteering, design mentoring (Cambs Libraries), access to Year 10 work experience (Form the Future), access to gaming and e-sports festival educational activities.

### Activity to support Care Leavers

- 2.16 We have refreshed our work with the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) through local Job Centre Plus. Our protocol has been updated to facilitate more frequent joint work between personal advisers and work coaches. Universal credit training has been provided for personal advisers with the overall aim to reduce benefit issues and encourage more care leavers into work. We have promoted Kickstart within our services supporting care leavers.
- 2.17 We are in close contact with the work of the NNECL (National Network for the Education of Care Leavers), a network of higher and further education providers which supports us and young people with access to up-to-date information and materials. We have collaborated with the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (NEACO), which delivers targeted and regional outreach activities across East Anglia as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). NEACO aims to support the most disadvantaged young people in England to progress into higher education and we have jointly produced booklets and increased the number of university open days with the overall aim to increase opportunities and numbers of young people in Higher Education.
- 2.18 Partnerships have been established with Form the Future (Regions of Learning) for 1:1 career guidance for young people at risk of being NEET aged 16-19 and to Ignite for those aspiring to self-employment. We have taken part in consultations with these organisations to ensure that they are aware of the specific needs of our young people and to break down barriers caused by perception and prejudice. We work with the three main further education colleges (Peterborough College; Cambridge Regional College; College of West Anglia) and together have enhanced the career guidance offer for care leavers, e.g., priority for guidance appointments. We have developed a Job-Hunting Pack (with a version for our unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people). This pack accompanies the "Stepping Out" preparation for adulthood work which staff and carers use as a tool to support our work with rising 18-year-olds.
- 2.19 A nine-month project was completed this year in partnership with the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum and the Care Leavers Covenant which focused on establishing long term relationships with the construction industry, supported by the Esme Fairburn Foundation. Using this as a model, we intend to focus on another industry in 2023. Part of this work has led to a workshop attended locally by Keir and Persimmon Homes to raise the profile of our young people to establish the connections to provide opportunities.
- 2.20 Funding has been allocated to implement an externally provided mentoring service for care leavers. The service will recruit mentors with the primary aim of supporting our young

people into work and education. Adverts for expressions of interest are due to be published during November 2022.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

#### 3.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority

#### 3.3 Places and Communities

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

- Working collaboratively with the communities to support with local need and supporting our vulnerable young people into suitable EET.

#### 3.4 Children and Young People

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

- Working across the partnership with different agencies including community partners to help to overcome barriers to EET for our vulnerable young people.
- Supporting our young people in care and care leavers to achieve positive outcomes to enable them to make transition into adulthood successfully.

#### 3.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Source documents guidance

#### 4.1 None

### 5. Accessibility

#### 5.1 An accessible version of the information contained in the table in this report can be obtained from [mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)