

## Children in Care/ Care Leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training: Action Plan

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Mark Cowdell  
Countywide NEET Manager

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key Decision: No

Purpose: To provide the Committee with an update on progress towards 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.

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## **Summary:**

Peterborough & Cambridgeshire councils aims to ensure that children in care and care leavers are supported to have high aspirations, are able to access a range of opportunities and have support to remain in education or enter into training, apprenticeships or employment.

In order to support this area of service delivery the council have developed a written strategy document and an action plan that sets out how the Council will support young people.

The NEET Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities has recently been developed, led by Matt Oliver, Head of Service for Think Communities. Sitting under this strategy is an action plan tracker for children in care and care leavers, tracking support to increase access to EET and reduce NEET figures

Staff in the council meet quarterly to review the strategy and the action plans. The senior responsible officer for the children in care and care leavers action plan tracker is Myra O'Farrell.

## **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 with action plans for the different vulnerable groups sitting within service delivery areas. An action plan was developed for Children in Care and Care Leavers and a previous version of this action plan has been brought to this committee in 2019.
- 1.3 In 2020, it was agreed that a NEET strategy would be developed across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, led by Matt Oliver, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated response from all service delivery areas to support this work and improve performance across our vulnerable groups.
- 1.4 This report is regarding the action plan tracker for children in care and care leavers, created in Summer of 2021 (attached at Appendix 1).

## **2. Main Issues**

- 2.1 The current published DfE EET figures for care leavers aged 19 to 21 for Cambridgeshire is 44.0%. This is in comparison to an EET figure 54.0% for East of England Average and an EET figure of 54.1% for Cambridgeshire Statistical neighbours. The DfE definition of this data is "former relevant

young people whose birthday falls between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> March in the given year. The data available is up to 2020.

The 2021 data will most likely be published by the DfE in December 2021.

Table1: Published DfE figures 2020:

Care Leavers	% in EET (DfE Annual Published Data)			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
EAST OF ENGLAND	50.0%	51.0%	52.0%	54.0%
Cambridgeshire	37.0%	47.0%	47.0%	44.0%
Cambridgeshire SN	49.1%	51.8%	53.9%	54.1%

Table 2: Predicted 2021 figures (aged 19 – 21):

CIC & Care Leavers aged 19-21 years old	% in EET
	Predicted Figures 2021
EAST OF ENGLAND	54%
Cambridgeshire	49.1%
Cambridgeshire SN	54%

Table 3: Predicted 2021 figures (aged 16/17)

CIC & Care Leavers aged 16/17	% in EET
	Predicted Figures 2021
EAST OF ENGLAND	62%
Cambridgeshire	61.3%
Cambridgeshire SN	67%

- 2.2 Table 1: shows the annual published figures for Cambridgeshire, East of England and Cambridgeshire Statistical neighbours. The Cambridgeshire result improved from 2017, however between 2019 and 2020 there has been a slight decrease of 3%. During that time, there was a change of recording systems within the council and this has impacted on the quality of the data available, the council are continuing to work on their data capture systems to increase the accuracy of the data. The impact of the pandemic has affected sectors of the employment market, availability of apprenticeships and opportunities for large parts of the year and this has impacted on EET figures for young people.

Tables 2 & 3 show the councils predicted figures from our recent data return which is expected to be published by the DfE in December 2021. The figures

show an increase which would be expected as we move out of the pandemic and confidence and opportunities for young people increase.

2.3 The strategy details four areas of focus as the strategic objectives:

- Shared understanding of data and information.
- Collaborative approach to tracking and early intervention.
- Collective focus on supporting vulnerable young people.
- Joint approach to increasing and developing appropriate opportunities.

2.4 The action plan tracker is split into the strategic objectives. Against each strategic objective, there are between 3 and 6 service objectives and information relating to what actions have been taken and what actions are still to be done. It also highlights whether it is an objective for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough or just one of the LA's.

2.5 This action plan tracker is reviewed quarterly and any relevant updates are shared at a Strategic Leads meeting chaired by Matt Oliver.

2.6 The document (appendix 1), highlights some of the actions that the service is working on and it has a wide breadth of development ideas and improving practice. One area that is a priority is the ensuring we can collate accurate monthly data that can be reviewed regularly by the service and ensuring the right resource is targeted to the right young people. We can then also identify trends around support needs and barriers to learning. It is the service belief that if we can get this right, it will help to improve the performance.

2.7 It should be noted that the current pandemic may have impacted on some of the EET outcomes for care leavers. The employment market has been especially hit hard. The evidence for the overall figures for young people in Cambridgeshire who are "in learning" have increased with more young people attending college or sixth forms. For care leavers in the slightly older age group, many are looking to progress into employment from further education and so this could have impact on the performance. We do not yet have the published data for 2021, however the council data submission suggests that our overall EET figures for 19- 21 years increases to 49.1%. and the figures for our 17/18 years in EET rises to 61.3%

### 3. Significant Implications

3.1 Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications from the strategy

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
None

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

NEET performance is a key indicator of care leaver performance and is considered by Ofsted in their inspection of services for care leavers.

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
None

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
None

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
N/A.

3.7 Public Health Implications  
None

3.8 Environment and Climate Change  
None

4. Source documents

4.1 None.

5. Accessibility

5.1 An accessible version of this report and appendix is available on request from [Mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.cowdell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)