

CUSPE Research Project: Improving Outcomes for Young People Leaving Care

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Director of Children's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: The Committee is asked to consider the findings of research into supporting good outcomes for young people in care carried out through the partnership between the County Council and Cambridge University.

This provides an opportunity to review the support provided to young people leaving care by the Council in light of the findings of the research.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the CUSPE report and thank those involved for their extensive research.
- b) Note and comment on the officer assessment of the research recommendations.
- c) Consider whether the chair of the Committee should advocate at a national level for increased mental health support for young people leaving care.

Voting: Co-opted members of the Committee are not eligible to vote on this report.

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1. Background

- 1.1. Postgraduate research students undertake pieces of research in particular areas of interest to Cambridgeshire County Council through the CUSPE programme.
- 1.2. This committee report accompanies the publishing of their research report which focuses on promoting the best outcomes for young people leaving care.
- 1.3. The research report was first made available in July 2021. Bringing the report to committee was delayed by the continuing impact of the pandemic, and the need for some discussion with the researchers about the evidence base for some of the findings.
- 1.4. The report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The authors have spent a considerable amount of time investigating the subject matter and they are to be thanked and commended for their work.
- 1.5. While there have been some delays in bringing the report to Committee, the report has already contributed to our on-going review of our offer to young people leaving care.
- 1.6. The remainder of this report provides some contextual information relevant to the research report, before moving on to a summary of officer views as to the extent to which the recommendation would deliver improved outcomes, is practical and/or sustainable.

2. Main Issues

Contextual Information

- 2.1. This is a lengthy piece of research, and a large number of recommendations are made. Some of the findings of the research are based quite extensively on the findings from a survey of young people who had left care undertaken by the researchers. The majority of the respondents made a number of largely negative comments about their experiences. It is clearly important that their voices are heard, but it is also important to recognise that only 10 anonymous responses were received, out of the over 300 young people who have left care and who are aged 18-21 at any one time. The researchers have accepted this and worked closely with the Department to address this in the report, whilst continuing to consider the views of those that did respond.
- 2.2. Such a low response rate means that there can be only limited confidence that views expressed – whether positive or negative – are representative of the views of young people leaving care generally. Young people leaving care have access to advocacy and complaint processes, and ultimately to the Local Government Ombudsman. We monitor all complaints so that we can make improvements to our services where necessary. We have not seen a level of complaints from our young people leaving care that would suggest widespread concerns.
- 2.3. It is also the case, however, that the time that the research was being carried out coincided with some quite wide-ranging changes in the organisation of services supporting children in care and young people leaving care. These changes included the development of specialist teams of personal advisers to support young people in care, alongside the development of specialist teams for children and young people in care. These changes were implemented

because it was clear that we needed to do more to support our young people leaving care than had historically been the case.

Consideration of Recommendations

- 2.4. As noted above, the report makes a large number of recommendations, which are set out in bold below and considered in turn.

Have a permanent funded Accommodation Officer/Team

- 2.5. Accommodation is a common source of worry for young people leaving care and the background to this recommendation is clearly a well-intentioned wish to address these concerns. It is also the case that, especially in some parts of the County, access to permanent affordable housing is challenging.
- 2.6. That said, housing responsibilities rest with District Councils and it is not immediately clear how creating an accommodation team would add value, given the resource implications. Report authors argue that personal advisers do not always have the time to address the accommodation needs of young people leaving care. Officers would argue that this is a fundamental part of the personal adviser role. Officers would also argue that employing a separate team to look after an aspect of the needs of young people leaving care would result in those young people having to make relationships with officers in order to access support, and that it is usually better for a single officer who knows them well to take the lead.
- 2.7. We do need to ensure that the caseloads of personal advisers are at a level that they have the capacity to deliver the support needed by young people, however, and have increased the number of personal advisers in recent years. We continue to keep caseloads under review.
- 2.8. It is worth noting that the proportion of young people leaving care aged 19-21 who are in suitable accommodation in Cambridgeshire is around 90%, which is higher than either the England or statistical neighbour averages.

The Accommodation Officer/Team should focus on improving the current accommodation process by:

- a. Extending the Staying Put scheme from age 21 to age 25;
 - b. Removing the reduction of allowances for carers when YOUNG PEOPLE join the Staying Put scheme;
 - c. Ensuring more frequent visits and rigorous individual assessments for foster placements;
 - d. Allowing priority social housing applications any time before age 25;
 - e. Granting access to all housing options and increasing housing allowance costs for YOUNG PEOPLE waiting for asylum.
- 2.9. Staying Put is the name given to the arrangement where former foster carers continue to provide accommodation and support to young people previously in their care. The scheme is covered by statutory guidance and applies to young people up to the age of 21. The former carer and young person must both want to participate in the arrangement.
- 2.10. It is the case that many young adults remain at home for longer than they have ever previously done, although sometimes this is more to do with the lack of accommodation than a particular

wish to continue living at home. The researchers make the point that this trend is not reflected in the rules around Staying Put.

- 2.11. The issue with extending the scheme to 25, however, is that most young people who remain in these arrangements are taking up a bedroom in a foster home that can no longer be used for a child who needs to come into care. Agreeing to this as a blanket position for all young people leaving care is therefore problematic. What we can and do consider is extending the staying put arrangement beyond the age of 21 on a case by case basis.
- 2.12. Former foster carers receive a reduced allowance for staying put compared with fostering allowances because they are no longer foster carers. They are providing accommodation for an adult, albeit an adult who is leaving care and remains in need of some support. The rate payable is based on supported lodgings rates, which is the closest equivalent to staying put arrangements.
- 2.13. Visits to foster carers and assessments of new foster carers are covered by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering and associated statutory guidance, with which we are fully compliant. Increased frequency of visiting takes place when placements come under pressure, but it would not be appropriate to develop a different approach to that laid out in legislation and associated guidance. A blanket approach to increasing visits would also require an increase in the number of social work staff, which would have financial implications as well as result in a likely increase in vacancies, since there are insufficient social workers for posts available even at the current establishment.
- 2.14. Allowing priority housing applications for young people leaving care at any age up to 25 is something we can explore with district Councils; the county council is not a housing provider and so cannot do this unilaterally.
- 2.15. Young people who have left care and were previously unaccompanied asylum seeking children do not have recourse to public funds. There are limits to the levels of financial and other support as a result that we work within, while ensuring that this group of young people are fully supported, but these have increased more recently. We have asked the service to explore this area further.

Act as a rent guarantor for young people with care experience, with a particular focus on helping those engaged with low-income employment and apprenticeships

- 2.16. We act as rent guarantor in certain circumstances, and provide particular consideration in the areas identified. We are currently exploring a wider scheme.
- 2.17. **Work with District and City Councils to remove homelessness intentionality for young people with care experience**
- 2.18. Intentionality is enshrined in housing law and is not something that can be removed as such. That said, this aspect of housing law can have serious implications for young people leaving care. As with many of the areas covered by these recommendations, how we support young people in practice is dependent on individual circumstances; adopting a blanket approach would be problematic since intentionality usually arises from things like not paying the rent or causing significant levels of anti-social or criminal behaviour in the local community.
- 2.19. It would not be right to simply say to young people leaving care that they do not need to worry about causing a nuisance or not paying the rent. What we do is to work with young people who are potentially placing themselves at risk of eviction in order to prevent that eviction.

Where an eviction takes place, we will identify other housing and we will seek to support the young person concerned to demonstrate that they can be a responsible tenant. We then go back to district councils and advocate for them to provide a social tenancy once more.

Secure emergency accommodation for young people who are faced with homelessness or tenancy breakdown

- 2.20. The county council does not have accommodation of its own to provide to young people leaving care who are faced with homelessness or a tenancy breakdown, but we always support young people in these situations to identify housing, working in partnership with district councils and housing providers. This can be challenging in some situations; housing providers are not always willing to take on a young adult as a tenant when they are aware that previous non-payment of rent or antisocial behaviour has resulted in evictions. This can mean that we must rely on hostel and other forms of emergency accommodation in some situations.
- 2.21. Understandably, some young people are unhappy with accommodation of this kind. Where this is the only form of accommodation available, we continue to work with the young person on supporting them to demonstrate that they have now developed the skills needed to hold a tenancy, and support them to move into more permanent accommodation once this is available.

Provide Council Tax relief to young people with care experience until age 25:

- a. Council Tax relief should extend to Cambridgeshire County Council's young people with care experience living in Cambridgeshire and out-of-county;
 - b. Cambridgeshire County Council should determine the possibility of extending this policy to external young people with care experience living in Cambridgeshire, if they do not already receive this support from their associated LA;
 - c. Council Tax relief should be offered as an exemption not a refund and it should not be subject to means testing;
 - d. In the long-term, Cambridgeshire County Council should apply automatic relief for its local young people with care experience. If an application process is necessary in the short-term, it should be clear, accessible, and include multiple formats e.g. online and via telephone;
 - e. The Council Tax relief rate should be 100% when young people with care experience lives alone or with other care-experienced individuals. The rate should be applied proportionally if the young people with care experience is living with non-eligible individuals.
- 2.22. Cambridgeshire County Council has agreed to establish a council tax relief scheme for all eligible young people leaving care aged between 19 and 21. This will be available to young people living within and outside the county council area.
- 2.23. The council cannot offer this as an exemption as such; county councils are not the council tax raising authority and while it will doubtless be possible to develop protocols with district councils within the county boundary where the county council pays council tax to the district council rather than refunding the young person, district councils cannot simply exempt Cambridgeshire County Council young people leaving care from council tax.

- 2.24. This is because any district council who excluded other young people who had left care living in their areas but who had originally been placed by other local authorities would potentially be acting unfairly and be open to legal challenge. Legal advice has been obtained on this point, and confirms that this is the case.
- 2.25. The research report makes the case for council tax relief to be payable to age 25. The decision of the Council is to offer relief to young people aged up to 21, while establishing a ring-fenced additional fund of £100K for young adults who have left care aged between 21 and 25 who are in financial difficulty. This fund can be accessed to support young people facing a range of difficulties and not only those connected to non-payment of council tax.
- 2.26. The decision not to make automatic relief payments of council tax to young people aged between 21 and 25 is based on the fact that after the age of 21, life pathways for young adults tend to vary significantly. Some young adults who have left care will have graduated from university and have the opportunity to earn reasonable salaries, while others will continue to be struggling with a range of challenges and be in real need of on-going support. In this context, the decision has been taken to target support towards those in this age range that are most vulnerable. This approach will however be reviewed in order to assess uptake of the fund and operation of the council tax relief approach more generally.
- 2.27. The scheme will ensure that council tax relief will apply to the actual amount of council tax payable by the young person, and take into account those living in shared accommodation.

Increase provision of internal work opportunities and work experience at CCC for young people leaving care by:

- a. Guaranteeing interviews for those who meet the minimum criteria for a council vacancy;
 - b. Ring-fencing specific opportunities.
- 2.28. These are all helpful suggestions and are areas of work that are currently being taken forward by the service. There is a need to ensure that any measures that we put in place are in line with other fair access and equal opportunity requirements, and we will seek advice from colleagues within our Human Resources service.

Create a designated money and budgeting page in Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Offer which guides young people in/leaving care to financial services and courses as well as charity/private support.

- a. Cambridgeshire County Council's website should be updated to include available services and courses designated for money management and debt information;
 - b. A PDF or mobile application should be created which provides information on all the financial benefits available to young people leaving care.
- 2.29. The website and local offer has been updated to include available services and courses around money management and information about debt (from end of April 22).
- 2.30. Information on all financial benefits and sources of support is now included within the information pack provided to young people leaving care and is available on-line from the end of April 22.
- 2.31. Developing a mobile application is something that the service has considered. Work is underway on more targeted social media activity in consultation with our young people

leaving care. At present, young people have not expressed an interest in a specific app, although it would make sense to include a broader range of information onto any application, rather than restricting it to financial information. We will continue to seek views from young people on this issue.

PAs and care home staff should have more thorough training and guidance on how to provide financial education.

- a. Training should be focused on how to effectively provide advice on money management, budgeting, saving and spending to young people leaving care;
- b. Clear guidance should be given to these workers to follow when providing financial education to young people leaving care.

2.32. We are in the process of updating our training programme for those working with and caring for our young people, including our foster carers. We agree that young people in care and leaving care need a whole range of support and learning opportunities to help them to prepare for adulthood and increasing independence.

2.33. We do not have children's homes of our own; those care homes that we commission are required to deliver a range of outcomes for those young people in placement, preparation for independence being a key requirement. Our commissioning service works continuously with the homes that provide placements for our children in care, to ensure that those providers are delivering a good quality service in line with their contractual agreements.

Pathway Plans for young people in care should have a specific section dedicated to the development of knowledge and skills required for independent living.

2.34. Pathway plans already include specific sections addressing these areas.

Create a clear and well-advertised guide to accessing available mental health services including charity-based support.

- a. Update the Council website to improve access to relevant information;
- b. Create a downloadable app or a PDF file that can be sent to all YOUNG PEOPLE in/leaving care with all the relevant details from the Local Offer and clickable links to support services/other initiatives (as a minimum a leaflet should be provided with signposting for local and national mental health services);
- c. Create a defined pathway through which YOUNG PEOPLE can access mental health support depending on their age and stage within care. This should include clarity around the transition from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to adult mental health services.

2.35. We do acknowledge the central concerns that young people have about their own mental health and the extent to which some have difficulty accessing services.

2.36. Since the research undertaken by the team took place, there has been a wholesale review of mental health services for children and young people aged up to 18 and in some cases, to 21 or 25.

2.37. Specialist mental health services provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust [often known as Tier 3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services]

provide specialist care to young people up to the age of 18, at which point they transition to adult mental health services.

- 2.38. YOUnited is a new early intervention service which launched on 1st July 2021. It is a jointly commissioned service between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. It has replaced the previously commissioned service delivered by CHUMS, which was the main provider at the time of the research.
- 2.39. YOUnited is a partnership between Cambridge and Peterborough Foundation NHS Trust, Cambridgeshire Community Services, Centre 33, and Ormiston Families. The service has a central referral hub through which Children and young people aged up to 25 years can access range of mental health concerns. Referrals to the service are assessed and allocated to the most relevant level of support. This support could be advice, guidance, one to one interventions, group support, a range of digital solutions which are supported by a practitioner, or specialist child and adolescent mental health support.
- 2.40. As this new service is becoming established, it is exploring how to improve access to support outside of usual hours, and improving the availability of information that is available on-line.
- 2.41. There are a number of voluntary sector organisations that also provide support to young people. These include the 'Someone To Talk To' service, delivered by Centre 33, which provides free and confidential counselling for young people aged 13-25 years at their regional hubs. The service is an outreach support approach to engaging young people who do not traditionally access Mental Health Support.
- 2.42. Advice about the available services can be found through both the Kooth and Keep Your Head websites, and support can also be accessed through the First Response Service, which is available on a 24/7 basis through NHS 111.
- 2.43. Updating information to young people leaving care and who have left care on the changed offer in respect of mental health support is continuing. In order to ensure that there is no duplication of information or any risk of information becoming out of date, the information hosted on the Cambridgeshire County Council website and within the local offer for young people leaving care will largely consist of links to the providers of services including YOUnited.

Develop a comprehensive training programme covering mental health first aid and up-to-date research on childhood adversity and mental health for the Leaving Care Team, PAs, and foster/residential carers.

- a. Develop a programme in collaboration with MHFA England and local NHS clinicians and/or university researchers;
 - b. Ensure members of the leaving care team complete mental health first aid training as a requirement of their role;
 - c. Offer refresher training sessions;
 - d. Intensify mental health training for foster and residential carers (current training is too basic).
- 2.44. We will consider the above recommendations as part of our on-going review of training and development programmes for our staff and our carers. We now have a refreshed clinical offer through our refreshed clinical service, which offers general training as well as bespoke

individual support to our foster carers, with the express aim of supporting carers to meet the mental and emotional health needs of the children and young people for whom they provide care.

- 2.45. The point about some training being too basic is accepted, but there does need to be a range of training at different levels available to our carers and staff, in order to support their continued development. As noted elsewhere, we do not have our own children's homes, save for some short break provision for children and young people with disabilities.

Employ a senior, designated mental health professional with expertise in the diagnosis/treatment of mental health conditions and awareness of broader risk factors common in young people in/leaving care.

- a. Embed mental health workers within the Leaving Care Team to deliver range of emotional wellbeing and self-development interventions.
- 2.46. At the time that the research for the original research took place, the clinical service was in a period of transition away from supporting the previous model of social work that operated in Cambridgeshire to developing into the service as now exists, which is focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in care and young people leaving care.
- 2.47. This revised and refreshed clinical offer supports all our social work and leaving care teams. This service is managed by a highly experienced and qualified clinician.
- 2.48. The clinical service provides training to our staff and carers, as well as providing interventions to support individual children and young people. The service can also help to ensure that young people with more significant needs are able to access the specialist mental health services available.

Adult Social Care should assess young people in care before they leave to identify the support the young people will need once they are living independently. Adult Social Care can then make recommendations and put support in place or refer them for more advanced support before the young people leaves care.

- 2.49. Adult services do become involved in supporting the transition for young people leaving care in the way described here when young people will meet the threshold for support by that services. The vast majority of young people leaving care do not, however, have care and support needs such that they meet that threshold.
- 2.50. This is why services to support young people leaving care are in place; to provide the support that young people need in making the transition to adulthood and on to independence for the vast majority who do not need adult services support to reach independence.

Change the language that is used to describe these young people. "Care leaver" is somewhat dehumanising and should be replaced with more person-centred language such as "young people with care experience" or "young people leaving care".

- 2.51. We agree with this recommendation. 'Young person leaving care' is a more straightforward term, but we will consult with young people themselves about how they wish to be referred. Language is important; it is why the highly impersonal term 'LAC', shortened from looked after child, should never be used. The term 'looked after child' came into use initially because

some thought it was less stigmatising than 'child in care', but when asked, children and young people said they preferred 'child in care' because it made better sense to them.

Encourage communication between Councils regarding mental health support for young people in out-of-county placements.

- a. Relevant councils along with young people should create a plan for how to provide mental health provisions to young people in an out-of-county placements;
- b. Discussions or developments outlined by the eastern region leaving care network should be included in the guide issued to young people in care so if they look to move out-of-county they know what to expect and how to access services.

2.52. These are helpful suggestions and will continue to be considered as we review and revise the local offer for young people leaving care. The young person's pathway plan is the principal mechanism for identifying additional needs and vulnerabilities and ensuring that resources are in place to meet these. For young people living outside of the county council area, access to health services will usually be to those within their area. Our clinical service is able to support this process when needed.

Where it is safe to do so, regulated visits with family members may be beneficial for the mental health of young people in/leaving care

- a. For example, set up Family Group Conferencing with the local charity Break.

2.53. Contact between children and young people in care and their parents and family members is covered by the Children Act 1989. The legislation is clear that there is always a presumption in favour of contact and contact can only be prevented by court order where there is evidence of significant harm or, in the case of older children and young people, where they choose not to see family members.

2.54. It is the case that many children and young people, and particularly those who come into care as older children and young people, very much want to maintain relationships with their families. Although the family may not have been able to provide the stability and security that they needed as children, they are often key forms of support and continuing relationships as young people move into adulthood.

2.55. Family Group Conferences can be a useful tool when seeking to restore contact with family members as well as when supporting a return home for a child or young person where the care plan is for them to return to family. The council has our own Family Group Conferencing service and so it is not necessary to approach another organisation to offer these.

Establish feedback sessions with young people to give them space to express their concerns and for the council to learn how to improve from their experiences of the care system.

- a. For example, bring Councillors from the Corporate Parenting Committee to young people Participation Forums.

- 2.56. There are a number of forums for young people leaving care already in existence, although it is also fair to say that our participation offer to children and young people in care and young people leaving care has been an area where we have sought to make improvements since the research for the report was completed.
- 2.57. The Corporate Parenting Committee has reviewed its terms of reference and model of operation, and now has alternating informal sessions where the children in care council attends and talks directly to Members about their care experience. Direct engagement between Members and young people who have left care is also an important aspect of our participation strategy.
- 2.58. Ensuring that children in care and young people leaving care have direct access to Members [and senior managers] is important, and is an area that we continue to prioritise.

Lobby at the national level to increase mental health of young people leaving care as a priority.

- a. Development of young people leaving care-specific services aimed at those who slip through the gap of CAMHS and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies mental health services;
 - b. Ability to allow young people to remain in care past age 18 if this is the most appropriate solution for the individual in an effort to accommodate personal readiness to leave care.
- 2.59. While the sentiment behind the two sub-recommendations, is understood and acknowledged, as currently worded, both are problematic.
- 2.60. There is no doubt that mental health services are under considerable pressure, and that young people – not just those leaving care – can fall between gaps in provision. In relative terms, however, the number of young people leaving care is small and seeking to set up a separate service for them is not likely to be viable.
- 2.61. Lobbying Government to continue investing in mental health services more generally, and at the point of transition from young people's to adult services, might be a better suggestion. Included in such lobbying could be that access to such services should be prioritised for young people leaving care.
- 2.62. Young people leave care at age 18 because that is when they reach the age of adulthood and all legislation in this area is framed around that age. It is unlikely that seeking to lobby on this issue would have merit.
- 2.63. Locally, we do have the flexibility to enable some young people to remain in their care placements beyond the age of 18 and many do so. This can be either through the Staying Put scheme with foster carers, or young people remaining in supported accommodation post 18.

Concluding remarks

- 2.64. The researchers have invested an enormous amount of time in completing their report. Many of their recommendations are very helpful and have been incorporated into our local offer or are under active consideration.

- 2.65. Part of the task set for researchers through the CUSPE programme is to challenge the local authority to think differently about the way it works and to question established practices so that these can be reconsidered. An example of this is the proposal to extend Staying Put arrangements to young people aged up to 25. In many ways, the value of such a change is easily recognisable for the individual young people within the Staying Put population. Unfortunately, however, such a proposal would ultimately result in there being fewer and fewer foster placements available for younger children at a time when there is both a local and national shortage of foster placements.
- 2.66. We have therefore had to assess the recommendations and to balance these with potential impacts in other areas. This means that while this particular recommendation may not be one that officers are able to support, it has made us consider our practice in this area and continues to reinforce the need for us to ensure that decisions about individual young people are made on a case by case basis, balancing individual needs with the overall availability of resources.
- 2.67. At the time that the researchers undertook their work, our services for young people in care and leaving care were going through a number of changes. These changes were made because we were aware that we needed to improve the quality of our support. As part of these changes, we established dedicated teams for both our children in care and our young people leaving care. We also increased the number of Personal Adviser posts, so that we could reduce caseloads and enable them to provide more intensive support to young people leaving care than had previously been the case.
- 2.68. As noted at the beginning of this section of the report, the small number of young people who returned surveys to the researchers were mostly unhappy about at least some aspects of the services they had received. Those who returned surveys represented a very small proportion of the overall population of young people leaving care – 10 surveys out of a population of 18-21 year olds of just over 300.
- 2.69. As also noted at the beginning of this section, young people in care and leaving care have access to complaints processes and to independent advocacy services. Children and young people in care also have an Independent Reviewing Officer, who oversees their care and/or pathway plan. Independent Reviewing Officers have very robust escalation routes to senior managers and ultimately the courts if the service provided to the child or young person is not good enough. These officers are passionate about securing the best outcomes for children and young people in care and have a clear statutory role that enables them to take action in the event that they have concerns.
- 2.70. Key aspects of our performance in relation to our support to young people leaving care are monitored through performance indicators that are submitted to the Department for Education, and allow for us to compare our position with England and statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.71. This performance information shows that around 90% of young people aged 19-21 are living in accommodation that is suitable – in line with or better than our statistical neighbours. A much higher proportion [29%] of our young people aged 19-21 are living in semi-independent/transitional accommodation than either the England [15%] or statistical neighbour [10%] averages, indicating that we do provide young people leaving care with a longer period of transitional supported accommodation than others.

- 2.72. We are also in touch with 98% of our young people aged 19-21 who have left care – this is also better performance than our statistical neighbours or the England average.
- 2.73. The issues raised by the young people who responded to the survey – worries about accommodation, anxieties about being ready for independent living and concerns about their own mental health – are however all key issues of concern for many young people leaving care. While their views may not be representative of the general experience of Cambridgeshire young people leaving care, it is important that their voices are heard, and that we do all we can as a service to ensure that as many of our young people as possible feel supported and safe through the care system and on into independence.

Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Place and Communities

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

- Young people leaving care need focused and dedicated support from highly skilled personal advisers and other staff to ensure that they are able to make a positive contribution to their communities as they move into adulthood.

3.2 Children and Young People

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

- Young people leaving care have additional vulnerabilities that arise from their experiences before coming into care and, for some, the impact of placement moves within the care system. This increases the challenges of moving to independence and highlights the need for an accessible and person-centred range of support services that support them as they make the transition to adulthood.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

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

- Enabling young people to make the successful transition to adult life, while remaining in learning and training so that they can also successfully enter the world of employment are key aspirations for our young people leaving care as their corporate parents.

3.4 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.5 Health and Care

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

- Young people leaving care have additional vulnerabilities when compared to the general population of young people. They therefore deserve to be able to access effective and responsive support services as they transition to independence.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

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

- The cost of providing council tax relief for young people aged 19-21, and the additional ring-fenced fund for those aged 21-25 has been factored in to expected pressures within the service in the 2022/23 financial year and will be included in budget building for subsequent financial years.
- The costs of implementing other agreed recommendations should be possible to meet from within existing service budgets. Any pressures that do emerge can also be considered as part of the budget build for the financial years 2023/24 onward.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.7 Public Health Implications

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

- Enabling young people leaving care to successfully transition into adulthood supports good public health outcomes, particularly in respect to the promotion of physical and mental health and resilience.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? No
Name of Financial Officer:

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? No

Name of Officer:

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Yes

Name of Officer: Nicola Curley

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Nicola Curley

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes/No

Name of Officer: Raj Lakshman

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents

None