

BRIEFING NOTE FOR CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ON 13 JANUARY 2016

CARE LEAVERS HOUSING, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Purpose:

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide information about Care Leavers' accommodation, education, employment and training, and to share feedback about the achievements as well as challenges and barriers experienced by care leavers.

Background:

Care Leavers' accommodation, education, employment and training are always high on the agenda of the Council's LAC Leaving Care Service. Due to the high number of care leavers population in the borough, finding suitable accommodation or having a feasible housing plan has always been difficult. In spite of the odds we have managed to provide suitable accommodation for our care leavers once they turn 18. This has only been possible due to our partnership working with Housing department and mostly with private landlords.

The EET figures have seen an increase compared to the previous years and this is mainly due to our commitment to achieve the best for care leavers and our persistent work with the different stake holders.

Current situation:

Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers

We currently have **483 (69%)** young people in Education, Training and Employment. The team is focused on finding the right education and career path for young people. In addition to the hard work and commitment shown by the Personal Advisors and Social Workers, it would not have been possible to achieve this level of EET figures without the contribution and support from the stake holders with common interest. We also have an Economic and Well-Being Worker on the team who together with a PA has implemented Fast Tomato-Online Career Advisory Service. They have been working solidly with young people and stakeholders, and taking on new initiatives (eg- My Money Works- from BNK) to enhance care leavers' budgeting and independent skills. As such they have been asked to present their work at colleges both inside and outside of the borough.

We organise monthly NEET to EET Strategy Meeting where representatives from ***Bluetouch Consultancy, DWP Job Centre Plus, Virtual School, Croydon Human Resources department, BELS (Business & Education London South) Fast Tomato*** meet to discuss ways to engage with care leavers especially the hard to reach and complex ones, and get them to participate in one of the projects aimed at enhancing their life skills and potential.

We work directly with ***Drive Forward, Princess Trust, Working Chance*** and ***Bright Futures***.

We also organise ***University Finance Events*** on a regular basis.

Issues and Challenges:

Recently there have been cases where funding for college courses (for those over a certain age) have been an issue and this is putting pressure on both the care leavers and the service.

Care Leavers with no definite immigration status are also finding it hard to receive funding for University and most of the time this service has had to foot the bill.

Housing for care leavers:

We have **646 (92.3%)** young people in suitable accommodation and majority of the accommodation is House of Multiple Occupancy. The total number in **STS** accommodation is **48 (6.7%)** which is not ideal when compared to large number of care leavers.

As discussed earlier, Housing for care leavers is an area which needs to be addressed at high level and a strategy needs to be in place. There are ongoing complaints from advocates about suitability of housing for care leavers, especially care leavers with mental health needs or behavioural issues. There are times, when **SNAP** are not able to find them accommodation due to the high level needs and there is not much option left for these care leavers.

Another issue is finding accommodation where the rent may be affordable once the Care Leaver becomes 22yrs of age because of changes in benefit changes. There are also housing issues faced by care leavers who complete their University degrees where they end up being homeless.

As we all know finding accommodation for care leavers is always a problem, whether it is through Sponsored Tenancy / Landlord Bond Scheme or private landlords.

Some of the success stories in housing and EET:

- We were able to negotiate with housing department for a care leaver with complex needs to be given social housing in the area that allows her to remain near significant support network, and sustain her economic wellbeing and stability.
- Four young people from **NRPF** team have been awarded Tuition fees from a Charity to attend University.
- HMV is being sponsored by Capgemini to complete her degree and work is guaranteed.
- 3 care leavers are doing well as apprentices at **KPMG**.
- RS is part of Chelsea Football club and is on sponsorship at St. Joseph's college

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