

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 24 September 2018
SUBJECT:	Care Leavers' Local Offer
LEAD OFFICER:	<p>Eleni Ioannides Executive Director, Children Families and Education</p> <p>Philip Segurola Director Early Help and Children's Social Care</p>
CABINET MEMBER:	<p>Report from the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel Councillor Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning</p>
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:	
Ambition 2 – Helping Our Residents to be as Independent as Possible.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT: There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: Not a Key Decision	
<p>The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below</p> <p>1. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Cabinet is recommended to approve the Offer and the Council's commitment to prioritising the needs of Care Leavers, and to note that the offer will be regularly updated and enhanced.</p>	

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires Local Authorities to publish a 'Local Offer' for care leavers by September 2018 covering the following areas
- Health and Wellbeing
 - Relationships
 - Education and Training
 - Employment
 - Accommodation
 - Participation in Society

- 2.2 The local offer detailed at Appendix A has been compiled in consultation with care experienced young people and will be published in September 2018.
- 2.3 This Council is committed to, and ambitious, for its care leavers and to ensuring that looked after children and care leavers receive priority in our services. The Council will be looking at all opportunities to prepare care leavers and to focus specifically on housing and employment in the first instance.
- 2.4 The Offer will be regularly reviewed to ensure that all services and opportunities for care leavers are publicised, and known and understood by them. The Offer is evolving and expanding and therefore the offer will be web based and regularly updated.

3. DETAIL

Context

- 3.1 The Local Offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local authority, including information about their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that the local authority chooses to provide. The Offer should set out what support all local authority departments will provide, having regard to the seven Corporate Parenting Principles for looked after children and care leavers as follows:
- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
 - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
 - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
 - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 3.2 The Local Offer should be easily available and accessible to all care leavers, which means it is available in a number of formats and languages as appropriate. Personal advisers are expected to share and promote the offer with care leavers they work with and make sure they are aware of the services they are entitled to.
- 3.3 The Croydon Local Offer is intended to be a comprehensive document which goes beyond the minimum requirement of what has to be published and which can act as a directory or reference point for a range of services that young people can access. It does however outline clearly what the statutory offer is for care leavers at a range of ages and circumstances.

- 3.4 The language used is intended to be friendly for young people, and a young person's journey is used to illustrate how the offer works in practice.
- 3.5 Following feedback, an 'Offer on a Page' summarising the key elements of the offer will also be produced as an easy reference guide.

Publication and Distribution

- 3.6 A number of methods are proposed for distribution in order to ensure the offer is accessible to as many young people as possible.
- 3.7 The online version of the offer gives the optimised way of accessing it, as this version contains hyperlinks, videos and an audio-narration. This will be uploaded to the Croydon website as soon as possible after sign-off. Personal advisers, social workers, foster carer and independent reviewing officers will be encouraged to support young people to access it in this way.
- 3.8 An initial print run of hard copies will be completed in order that all current care leavers can have a copy. Personal advisers will ensure all the young people they support have a copy.
- 3.9 Translated versions in the top 5 languages used by care leavers will be made available on the web– these are Albanian, Pashto, Tigrinya, Arabic and Dari.
- 3.10 During the autumn of 2018, progression towards launch of the Care Leavers App will be completed. This will allow young people to access key information on their smart phone or tablet, and is available off-line. This app also has a translation facility and, along with a range of other features, allows care leavers to see the local offer summarised in an easy to read and accessible way.
- 3.11 Further work will be undertaken during autumn 2018 about production of a version with symbols suitable for people with learning disabilities.

Next Steps

- 3.12 Work will continue on expanding the offer wherever possible by ensuring that in line with the Corporate Parenting Principles, the whole council offer is developed. This will be done as part of the ongoing improvement journey in Children's Services and the development of a louder voice from care experienced young people.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Care leavers have been consulted in drawing up the Local Offer in the following ways:
- Encouragement to complete feedback forms whilst attending the Turnaround Centre and engaging with their personal adviser
 - Consultation session in June 2018 about use of a Care Leaver App to assist with access to the local offer
 - Consultation session in August 2018 about the draft Local Offer documents
 - Attendance at the Children in Care Council to talk about the Local Offer

- 4.2 Care leavers have been positive about the layout, content and style of the written Local Offer and the provision of an audio version, and have also welcomed the moves to commission a care leaver App as a key way of knowing their entitlements.
- 4.3 They have given feedback about where they see gaps in the offer, which are primarily in relation to suitable, affordable local housing, support for emotional needs, and council tax relief for Croydon care leavers living in other Boroughs. These issues will be addressed as the Offer develops to encompass the council's renewed priority for ensuring suitable support for care leavers.
- 4.4 A number of Croydon council departments and external partners have contributed to the offer, including Housing, Gateway, CALAT, Croydon Works, Early Help, Youth Participation, Looked after Children health services
- 4.5 A presentation about the offer took place at the Chief Executive's Corporate Leadership Team meetings on 22 August 2018 and 29 August 2018. A range of offers from other council departments are being progressed for inclusion in the first revision of the offer in early 2019.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of the Care Leavers' Local Offer.

Approved by :- Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment and Risk

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

The Solicitor to the Council comments that there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in the report other than those already outlined.

Approved by: Jacqueline Harris Baker, Director of Law and Monitoring Officer.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report for Croydon Council employees.

Approved by: Nadine Maloney, Head of HR Children, Families and Education on behalf of the Director of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

Equalities and diversity considerations are key elements of practice in delivering services to care leavers. It is imperative that all supports and services for children, young people and their families are sensitive and

responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, identity, language, race and sexual orientation.

8.2 Croydon has a diverse population of children and young people and some notable identifying characteristics within its population of Care Leavers. In comparison to the wider population, there are a higher than average number of care leavers who speak English as a second or additional language. More care leavers are from ethnic minorities than in the wider population and there are significantly more male care leavers than female.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

9.1 Not applicable

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

10.1 Not applicable

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

11.1 This report is for information only.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Not applicable

CONTACT OFFICER:	Wendy Tomlinson, Head of Service, Looked after Children and Resources
APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:	Appendix 1 – Care Leavers Local Offer
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	None