

Leaving Care – Enhancing outcomes in the West of Sunderland

West People Board – 13 February 2017

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the current support available for young people leaving care in Sunderland and review how a new proposal could be delivered within the West of Sunderland, to offer enhanced opportunities for those young people on their journey to leave care, who would benefit from additional bespoke activities, designed to improve their personal aspirations. A key outcome from the proposal is to ensure that lessons learnt and opportunities are shared through a structured process to continue to strengthen partnerships to ensure the very best outcomes for our young people.

2. Background

- 2.1 One third of young people leave care before their 18th birthday. This is in stark contrast to the general population where 50% are still living with their parents at 24. National research has shown that a half of care-leavers believe they are made to leave care too early and say they receive little preparation and support for the challenges of adult life. They too often find themselves lonely and isolated without people to turn to. Systems that are intended to help with the transition may not always work as effectively as they could, particularly if a young person has multiple needs – the result, is that care-leavers make up a hugely disproportionate percentage of people suffering mental and physical health problems, experiencing homelessness and serving prison sentences.

3. Parker Trust Charity – Kayll Road, Sunderland

- 3.1 Parker Trust is becoming a beacon in the community, building a reputation for quality provision for young people and community members in Sunderland. Parker Trust offers more people the chance to get into employment, improve their skills, raise aspirations, encourage personal empowerment and ultimately reduce the impact of the continuing need for diminishing public services. Parker Trust shares the West Area Committee priority to empower people to change their own lives, creating stronger local communities and improve the local economy.
- 3.2 Parker Trust, based in Pallion, empower people and communities – they create an alternative learning environment concentrating on developing ‘hands on’ trades and skills – not just gaining an accreditation or qualification (which is often unreachable for some). They have developed and sustained strong partnerships with statutory, voluntary and public sector as they firmly believe that working together can create a positive change.

- 3.3 Parker Trust considers every organisation as a potential partner. They are creating a trusting, warm, relaxed environment where services delivered are based on trust, strong principled values and a positive culture, not just around outputs being designed and delivered.

4. Parker Trust – what they are learning about young people leaving care

- 4.1 Whilst delivering the WIRES 2 Project, a high percentage of young people who are at risk of becoming NEET come from similar backgrounds - looked after children and children leaving care. Currently referrals from leaving care come through a young person's allocated keyworkers,
- 4.2 These young people have multiple barriers and evidence is proving that a bespoke approach to engage, support and sustain a positive relationship throughout the WIRES 2 Project is starting to make a difference. During delivery of the WIRES 2 Project, Parker Trust has learned that they need more time to offer pastoral support, before trying to engage a young person on any type of education/training process.
- 4.3 Parker Trust has also learned that creating a strong consistent relationship with an individual, implementing robust boundaries and clear pathways yielded a better result, with young people wanting to access Parker Trust and looking forward to doing any work, tasks, training, volunteering and works experience. In fact the young people wanted to access Parker Trust more than they had originally planned for, as they felt comfortable with the services and developed a trust with the worker.
- 4.4 The young people often benefit from signposting to volunteering/ training opportunities, a space for practical work experience, advice on PIP forms etc. Having support agencies connecting through one place such as Parker Trust could continue to support the development of more efficient and effective pathways.
- 4.5 Parker Trust endeavours to find bespoke training opportunities for a young person but the young person may not be able to attend due to certain barriers including paranoia or there may be no staff from statutory organisations or allocated key workers who can take the young person to the training, (as the training is not statutory). Quite often the training can be 'small steps on a journey' and not a college/formal education course, so it is often not a requirement for key workers to ensure the young person attends.
- 4.6 Parker Trust is viewed by the young people as a trusting environment, it has a homely feel and young people want to access provision there. Parker Trust can complement other statutory provision and offer opportunities in a bespoke way, using the knowledge and expertise they have due to the grassroots level they consistently deliver at. Parker Trust wishes to support Care Leavers to

feel emotionally stable and be financially secure, ultimately making a successful transition to independence and a positive future.

- 4.7 Parker Trust understands that all agencies work tirelessly to help a young person reach their full potential and to be self-reliant but they have found that those with more complex needs, have additional challenges and are not as ready to access provision offered by a statutory system.
- 4.8 Parker Trust, working alongside Sunderland City Council want all young people to receive a consistently high standard of statutory support that continues to be developed, utilising feedback from new interventions and ways of working - resulting in care leavers easily able to form healthy relationships, which enable them to make a successful transition to adulthood.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 Parker Trust would like to support the West Area Committee to deliver its priority regarding support for young people, and has developed a proposal based upon local intelligence and lessons learnt to-date.
- 5.2 Parker Trust would work alongside several organisations, to offer an additional bespoke resource to up to 45 young people who have additional needs, which does not duplicate statutory provision via the Sunderland provider framework (Gateway Team, Sunderland Leaving Care Team, but enhances their journey to live independently. The organisations may include:
- Bell House, Centrepont
 - Harbour View, Centrepont
 - Lewis Crescent, Centrepont
 - Dundas Street, Centrepont
 - Swan lodge, Salvation Army
 - Toward Road, Salvation Army
 - Holmewood, Gentoo
 - Burlington Close, Sunderland Council
- 5.3 Parker Trust would offer the following activities within the package:
- Practical skills such as cooking, budgeting and decorating where they can obtain “hands on experience” including up-cycling their own furniture for trainer flats or their own tenancy;
 - Access to Counselling Services within 24hours;
 - On-site benefit advisor;
 - Personal coaching to raise aspirations

- 5.4 Parker would create long lasting positive relationships with an individual and nurture and develop relationships with significant adults such as teachers, police, and youth workers.
- 5.5 Parker Trust would involve care leavers in decisions about their own lives and in the design of services, in order that they are able to influence the structures and processes that govern how they are treated. They would offer one to one support creating a bespoke, personalised, wrap-around support pathway based at Parker Trust - understanding that all young people are different and a one stop approach may not suit all.
- 5.6 This support would be initiated by developing an individualised pen picture and then agreeing the pathway plan of that person's needs, goals and aspirations in a non-judgmental way. Gaining trust is the essential element as experience has shown, it is crucial to achieve positive outcomes. Parker Trust would provide a safe, warm environment so that young people feel comfortable and not overwhelmed.
- 5.7 'Enabling a young person' is the principal of Parker Trust's approach and accepting also that a pathway plan requires flexibility, to suit an individuals' personal development journey. Parker Trust would utilise resources within the City to ensure value for money including the use of training providers to offer accreditation including FACL providers who are OFSTED approved. Parker Trust would manage and co-ordinate the delivery of a specialist support model that is aligned to and compliments statutory care planning for young people.

6. Finance

- 6.1 To make an impact and create this longer-term legacy Parker Trust would require funding for 18 months. Work would be delivered predominately from Parker Trust's premises but can and will be offered outreach to other venues within the West, if required.
- 6.2 Parker Trust has up-cycled/recycle materials donated from the local community and Dulux including furniture, paint, brushes and tools. Parker Trust has a fully fitted kitchen with equipment and qualified volunteers who can facilitate cooking sessions.
- 6.3 Parker Trust works closely with Rose Training who offer FACL funded one-day courses relevant to individuals who wish to progress in education/training. They also work in partnership with Access Counselling who are based one-day per week in Parker Trust's premises. Parker Trust work in partnership with Sunderland West Advice Project and ACES project who would offer benefit/debt/money advice.

- 6.4 Cost for Parker Trust to deliver this project for 18 months is £60,000 to support 45 young people with a bespoke individual package, working in partnership with statutory providers to enhance delivery for those young people who would benefit from one-to-one support, guidance and direction.
- 6.5 Timescales for the project for 18 months would commence 1 June 2017 up to and including, 31 December 2018.
- 6.6 Parker Trust has secured match-funding from ESF Community Grant. Parker would also utilise FREE training from providers to maximise added value for money to support activity costs.
- 6.7 Funding required is therefore £45,000.

7. Sharing lessons learnt

- 7.1 Monthly meetings would be held between Parker Trust and the West Area Co-ordinator. These meetings would measure delivery, achievement of outcomes and enable the chance to share immediate lessons learnt, emerging issues and opportunities to further strengthen partnerships. The meetings would permit the gathering of intelligence and data about the actual usage of the project which in turn allows appropriate monitoring of patterns and trends for demand.
- 7.2 This monitoring would continue to underpin Contract and Commissioning arrangements between Sunderland City Council and other Partners.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Note the content of the report.
- 8.2 Consider and agree a recommendation for Area Committee in relation to:
 - a) Delivery of a 'Leaving Care – Enhancing outcomes in the West of Sunderland project', developing a unique local offer for our young people
 - b) Approach to sharing lessons learnt and opportunities to continue to strengthen partnerships to ensure the very best outcomes for our young people