

4 April 2019

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STRATEGY TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER, LEAVING CARE AND WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES WHO ARE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update members of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee on the strategy to reduce the number of children looked after, leaving care and with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET.)

2. Background

- 2.1 A key priority which emerged from the inspection of Children's Services in 2018 was around the need to reduce the number of children looked after and those leaving care who were not in education, employment or training. Whilst figures for children in the 16 to 18 years category were relatively low at levels below national average the key issue was for young people in the 19 to 21 age group where there were significant numbers of NEETS at a figure well above national average.
- 2.2 The initial step to understand the issues and challenges around reducing NEET figures for this specific group of young people was to engage with a wide range of statutory and non- statutory partners. A conference was organised in January 2018 with wide participation from SCC, Gentoo, Voluntary Sector, DWP as well as service managers from across TFC including the Participation Team, Next Steps, Education, Connexions and the Virtual School. The outcome of the conference was the creation of an audit of the current position and action planning to identify actions for improvement work. Out of this initial action planning the following work streams have been identified with specific tasks to be undertaken. Partners have identified which group matches their knowledge and expertise and a chair has been appointed for each group.
 - i) Strategic management group. This group is chaired by Linda Mason the headteacher of the Virtual School and has the responsibility for overseeing the creation and implementation of the action plan. This

group is responsible for the strategic planning and governance of the work including holding working groups to account and driving improvement.

- ii) Resources and funding Group. This group is chaired by Steve Renwick TFC'S Director of Finance and has the responsibility for identifying how current resources can be best used and to identify any additional funding opportunities moving forward.
 - iii) Directory/Pathway group. This group is chaired by Karen Wood from Pallion Action Group and has the responsibility for reviewing all current opportunities within city and creating a pathway document which can be used to identify and communicate the wide range of support available across services in the city.
- 2.3 To support the work streams a project coordinator post has been created and is currently being advertised. This role would be to coordinate actions across the three work streams, manage meetings and connect the partners as a single point of contact. This role would also support the strategic group specifically around collecting data and reporting on the impact of the work.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the information set out in this report.