

7 March 2013		ITEM 5
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Economic Well-being for looked after children and care leavers		
Report of: Paul Coke, Service Manager, Through Care Services		
Wards and communities affected: None	Key Decision: Non-key	
Accountable Head of Service: Barbara Foster, Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, Corporate Director, People Services		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: To provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with an update as to the economic well-being of our looked after children and care leavers		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives an update as to the progress of the Diversity in Apprenticeship scheme within the framework of the Care2Work working Group.

The local authority's Ofsted Report dated 27 July 2012 makes positive comments about the provision of economic well-being which was judged as **Grade 2 (Good)**.

This report and its contents are written from an officer perspective.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 Members are asked to support the continuation of the DIA programme for year 2013/14.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1** As part of the Corporate Parenting role the Corporate Parenting Committee have requested a report be submitted in respect to the Department's progress

in addressing the provision of economic well-being for our looked after children and care leavers

2.2 Ofsted, in their report made some very positive comments about this provision:

‘The performance gap between looked after children and the national average of all children post-16 has been narrowed significantly.’

‘The diversity in apprenticeships scheme aimed at care leavers has been very effective in engaging young people in further learning and reducing the rate of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training.’

‘A designated education, training, employment worker in the after care team enables a focus on continuing education and the world of work.’

2.3 The Care2Work Project is a national initiative that was set up to create opportunities and raise aspirations of looked after young people.

2.4 This project came out of a report completed in June 2010, where it hoped to encourage key players to involve themselves in supporting young people achieve their goals and be more prepared for the world of work.

2.5 The Department’s current Care2Work Working Group, which consists of Children’s Social Care, Education, Virtual School, Youth Offending Services, has just drawn up an Action Plan to ensure we target the right services and people in order to make progress in this area. (Action Plan to follow)

2.6 The Diversity in Apprenticeship Scheme (DiA) is just one part of the Care2Work Project.

2.7 In May 2011 the local authority’s Learning and Skills Team secured funding to recruit care leavers onto apprenticeship programmes. The funding from the National Apprenticeship Service ceased in March 2012

2.8 The pilot phase reported the engagement of 15 young people, 6 recruited to apprenticeships and 8 working towards employment. These outcomes led to continuing support by Thurrock Council in respect to care leavers.

2.9 Since June 2012, there have been some changes to the model to improve its outcomes, which are:

- The age range has been extended to 16-24 year olds
- The referring team delivers employability and life skills training with the guidance if required by the DIA Tutor
- Increased work experience opportunities, prior to applications for apprenticeship vacancies is provided.

Due to budgetary constraints the DIA tutor’s contract has been reduced by 20% since the pilot phase.

2.10 The Chief Executive supports the employment of Thurrock’s young people, thus projects like this, as he has stated:

'If Thurrock's young people do not have access to the professional and managerial jobs and other opportunities from the regeneration programme, then we have failed'.

The Department has to report its performance to the DFE in respect to our care leavers aged 19, and whether they are in Employment, Education or Training (EET).

As from April 2013, the Department will need to report this data for young people aged 20 and 21 as well.

3. PERFORMANCE:

3.1 DIA Performance

9 young people currently receiving training and support to move into and sustain employment

- 1 young person is employed by Grangewaters
- 1 young person has started an apprenticeship working as an administrator for the Childcare Training and Assessment Centre
- 2 new mothers are being supported in acquiring accredited qualifications and part time work
- 2 young people have participated in the Princes Trust Programme, with 1 being interviewed for a post at the Port of Tilbury
- 3 young people are continuing to receive tuition by the DIA tutor, with 2 having undertaken work experience
- There are a further 3 young people who wish to work with the DIA tutor
- The DIA tutor is supporting a full time learner who is struggling
- 4 young people previously on the programme have been signposted to other provision

3.2 The current Department's performance figures in respect to 19 years olds in employment, education or training, with a cohort of 30, is as follows:

- 7 young people in education (full or higher)
- 2 young people in Training or employment
- 2 young person is NEET due to illness or disability
- 13 NEET due to other circumstances, including
 - 4 young people pregnant or mothers
 - 1 young person has no recourse to public funds
 - 3 young people have chosen that the Department has no contact with them

- 1 young person was in prison at the time completing this
 - 1 young person moved to live with family members
 - 3 young people are in the cohort on which we will need to report, but as yet are not 19
- 1 young person in part time training/employment
 - 1 young person is currently subject to an age dispute, affecting whether he should be included or not (in practice he is education)
 - 2 other young people are included in the cohort although their cases were closed before their 18th birthdays, and they have no current contact with us
 - Work is ongoing with to 2 other young people to clarify their current occupational status
- 3.3 The Department recognises the need to continue to work to improve the opportunities for our young people, hence the move to have a dedicated worker within the After Care Team (see attached report)
- 3.4 As of the January 2013 within the Through Care Service there are a total of 48 NEET young people aged between 16 and 21.
- 3.5 Of the 48, 32 young people have specific issues such as:
- 3 – No recourse to public funds.
 - 4 – Live 20 miles away from Thurrock
 - 9 – pregnant or young parents
 - 2 – learning difficulty
 - 5 – Severe physical/mental health
 - 3 – Serious mental health issues
 - 2 – In prison
 - 4 – Not engaging with the service

4. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 4.1 This area is highlighted within Corporate Plan under the pillar of **Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity.**

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652772**
mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk

Discussions are being undertaken in respect to the funding of the DIA programme with senior managers within Education and Social Care

5.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Telephone and email: **01375 652054**
lindsey.marks@BDTLegal.org.uk

This report is for information and there are no legal implications arising from the report.

5.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652474**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

Should the DIA programme not continue it will have implications for our care leavers who are a disadvantaged group, which includes young people who have protected characteristics.

5.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

No implications.

6. **CONCLUSION**

This report gives an overview of the economic well-being of care leavers by describing the current situation and respectfully requests that Members support the continuation of the Diversity in Apprenticeships programme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- From Care2Work, Creating opportunities and raising aspirations – Interim Report, June 2010
- Ofsted Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services, Thurrock, 27 July 2012

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- EET Report – Gregg Brown, January 2013

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