

<b>31 July 2024</b>		<b>ITEM: 11</b>
<b>Corporate Parenting Committee</b>		
<b>Local Offer for Care Leavers</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Luke Froment, Service Manager CLA		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sheila Murphy, Executive Director, Children's Services		
<b>This report is</b> Public		
<b>Version:</b> Final		

## **Executive Summary**

This report sets out how the Local Authority meets its statutory duties and responsibilities to young people leaving care to provide a published Local Offer so Care Leavers are clear about what support will be offered to them by their corporate parent as they move into adulthood.

The published Local Offer has been updated and relaunched during the Care Leavers week in October 2023 with the aim of enhancing the previous offer to Care Leavers and adding clarity in relation to discretionary elements over and above our statutory duties.

With the formation of our new Care Leavers forum there will be ongoing consultation with our young people to ensure the local offer continues to be reviewed in line with the views and needs of our young people.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 For the Committee to note the statutory duties of the Local Authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers**

**1.2 For the Committee to have oversight of the Local Offer and be involved in the ongoing review of delivery across Children's Services and Partners.**

## 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The DfE has published guidance in relation to Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 which requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers.
- 2.2 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 both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support a local authority chooses to provide.
- 2.3 Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to seven corporate parenting principles when discharging their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers:
- To act in their best interests and promote their physical and mental health and well-being.
  - To encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings.
  - To consider their views, wishes and feelings.
  - To help them 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 them.
  - For those children and young people to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
  - To prepare them for adulthood and independent living
- 2.4 The local offer should set out what support all local authority departments will provide (not just Children's Services), having regard to the corporate parenting principles.
- 2.5 The local offer should include details of the services and support that may assist care leavers in, or moving to, adulthood and independent living that the local authority provides in relation to:

**Health and wellbeing:** This will include services that teach about support and enable good health and wellbeing. It should include links to, or information about, universal health services that might be particularly relevant to care leavers, as well as specific health and wellbeing services targeted at them.

**Relationships:** having strong and supportive relationships is crucially important for care leavers as they move to independent adult life. Local authorities will want to consider the services and/ or support that is available to help care leavers

develop and maintain positive social networks and to understand what positive relationships look like.

**Education and training:** Care leavers should be supported to access appropriate education or training that will enable them to fulfil their goals. This will include the statutory support available to care leavers, such as the £2,000 bursary for care leavers in Higher Education, as well as any other support from the local authority; and signpost to universal information such as careers advice and financial support for young people.

**Employment:** this will include information to care leavers about general employment support, such as careers support and links to local Job Centre Plus. Local authorities should also include any other employment support that they or partners deliver that is specifically available to care leavers, for example, any apprenticeships that the local authority offers, in particular where such opportunities are ring-fenced for care leavers.

**Accommodation:** Care leavers should be supported to access appropriate and suitable accommodation. The local authority should include relevant information about their Staying Put policy, the support available from Housing Services and any other assistance that is available to care leavers, such as advice on maintaining a tenancy.

**Participation in society:** this will include links to and information about activities, events, or volunteering opportunities available in the local area that care leavers can get involved in.

### 3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

The Local Offer was most recently updated and relaunched during Care Leavers Week in October 2023.

There were a number of enhancements made to the offer in terms of additional practical support provided to Thurrock's young people and increased clarity in how the information is presented.

Some of the key areas that have been a focus in this enhanced offer include:

- Marking cultural celebrations; Birthdays, Christmas and Eid
- Supporting consultation work involving our young people
- Consistent support for driving lessons and obtaining a provisional license.
- Support to privately rent accommodation.
- Support with cost of utilities
- Support with educational resources
- Support with Job interviews

In preparation for the updated offer, in July 2023, there was consultation with 19 care leavers (approximately 7% of the care leaver cohort):

This work helped us to understand which elements of the proposed enhanced offer our young people felt would be most helpful:

1. What are your first thoughts about the new financial offer?

[More Details](#)

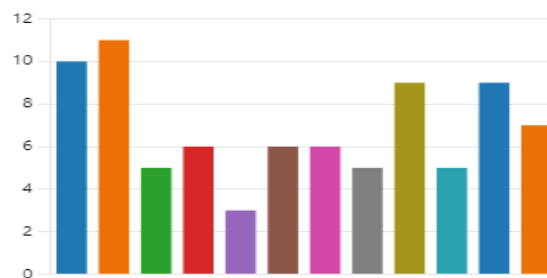
● It's great	18
● Don't know	0
● It's not great	1



2. Which, if any, are the most important to you? (Select as many as you like)

[More Details](#)

● Birthdays – (£50 for 16,17,19,2...	10
● Driving lessons – a contributi...	11
● Christmas – All Care leavers to ...	5
● First aid box – up to £10 value ...	6
● Consultation work – Young pe...	3
● Prescriptions – Cost of prescri...	6
● Private renting arrangements ...	6
● Utilities cost – Gas, electric, wa...	5
● Job interviews - £100 towards ...	9
● Gap year - £500 to support livi...	5
● Books and materials - £100 pe...	9
● Council tax – From the point a ...	7



Young people were asked to highlight any areas where they felt the support, they receive from the aftercare service, could be strengthened, and highlighted some areas that have been incorporated into the Local Offer or wider practice within the Aftercare service:

- Marking Eid
- Support for driving lessons for all care leavers regardless of circumstances.
- Continued support post 25
- Sharing the local offer widely

With the formation of our new Care Leavers forum there will be ongoing consultation with our young people to ensure the local offer continues to be reviewed in line with the views and needs of our young people The Local offer document is shared with our young people by their allocated Personal Advisor (PA) from the age of 16 and PA's have provided hard copies of the document to their young people upon visiting them.

We have also contacted all young people under the age of 25 who are currently closed to the Aftercare but remain eligible for a service and shared the link to the digital local offer with them.

The Local Offer has also been shared at recent events including the Good practice Week Marketplace event and the Children in Care Awards.

The local offer can be found on the Thurrock website at:

[www.Thurrock.gov.uk/bigwideworld](http://www.Thurrock.gov.uk/bigwideworld)

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 To inform members of, and invite members comments on, the current Local Offer published by Thurrock council.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Further consultation will take place within the Care Leaver Forum. This work will inform future updates to the Local Offer.

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 Young People who have been in care of the Local Authority are a corporate responsibility and will have an impact on wider corporate policies and performance.

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall, Finance Manager**  
**19/07/2024**

This report sets out how the Local Authority meets its statutory duties and responsibilities to young people leaving care to provide a published Local Offer, that ensures Care Leavers are clear about what support will be offered to them by their corporate parent as they move into adulthood.

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report, and all costs associated with the services covered by this report, must be contained from within existing budgets in cost centre CA064; a total budgeted amount of £1.098m for 2024-25

##### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight, Interim Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a legal duty on a Local Authority to publish its local offer which includes information about the services it offers to care leavers under the Children Act 1989, as well as other services it offers that may assist care leavers in preparing for adulthood and independent living.

The local offer must be updated from time to time as appropriate. Before publishing the local offer, or any update, the Local Authority must consult with such care leavers and other persons who would appear to be representative of care leavers in its area.

This duty is further explained in the Department of Education guidance published in February 2018.

Any specific employment schemes for care leavers will need to be compliant with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee, Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities**

The Service is committed to practice, which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy.

The Child Looked After and Aftercare services are committed to support all children in the care of Thurrock Council to be safe and well and to reach their potential. Individual needs assessments and plans are made for each care leaver taking into consideration their identity, culture, history and social requirements. The Local Offer informs each needs assessment.

A Community Equality Impact Assessment for the Local Offer will be subject to ongoing review and update to ensure that plans are in place to mitigate the risk of disproportionate negative impact for protected groups and all other communities the process considers. Opportunities to maximise positive impact will also be considered through the assessment process.

The Anti-Racist Practice standards set by Thurrock Children's Services are applicable to this report and service.

### **7.4 Other implications** (where significant) – i.e., Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

None

### **8. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

### **9. Appendices to the report**

None

**Report Author:**

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