

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Support for Care Leavers</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Pinaki Ghoshal</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Gerry Brandon</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 296348</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 At full Council Meeting on 14.12.17 a Notice of Motion was tabled regarding support to care leavers. A resolution was made for a rapid review of the statutory and non-statutory support available to care leavers in the City. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee of the outcome of this review and to provide recommendations as to how the Council could provide additional support to care leavers up to the age of 30 who are resident in the City.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Children Young People and Skills Committee:

- 2.1 notes the support offer available to care leavers living within Brighton & Hove.
- 2.2 notes the development of a Local Offer for Care Leavers up to age 25 which will build on the existing supports in place.
- 2.3 notes that there is no current provision in the city for care leavers age 25 and over and no statutory duty to provide this.
- 2.4 agrees the proposal that representations are made for Share Foundation to become one of the Mayor's nominated charities, thereby enabling contributions to be made to increase the value of Junior ISAs care leavers have access to at age 18.
- 2.5 agrees that when the Beyond Care Leavers Trust is established that representations are made for this to become one of the Mayor's nominated charities in order to provide support to care leavers up to age 30.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is corporate parent to 409 Children in Care (CIC) (as at 31.01.18). Additionally, the Council, via the Leaving Care Service,

provides advice, support and assistance to 236 care leavers. Leaving care support is available to those young people up to age 21, or age 25 if in Higher Education.

3.2 Brighton & Hove City Council provides a range of support and services to care leavers:

- Access to an independent living skills course from ASDAN (an educational charity) with provision of 60 hours of work that can be completed at the young person's pace. It covers issues from career management to cooking on a budget
- Council Tax exemption for care leavers living in the City up to age 25
- Advice and support from a Personal Advisor from the Leaving Care Service up to age 21, and up to age 25 in higher education.
- Mentoring support from a range of community and voluntary sector organisations (e.g. Trailblazers; Downslink YMCA; Band of Brothers; Sussex Police Mentoring)
- A health passport to enable young people to have a record of their medical history (which is often not known to them). This also contains details on how to register with a GP and access other health professionals
- Staying Put enables young people to stay with their foster carer up to age 21
- Access to supported accommodation such as YMCA; Stopover; Foyer
- Access to independent accommodation – a joint housing protocol ensures care leavers can access affordable social housing when they are assessed as ready for independent living
- £2170 setting up allowance to purchase essential items (washing machine; cooker; fridge etc.) for all care leavers moving into their own home
- Funding of costs associated with higher and further education such as travel; books; laptop and software; special clothing; field trips; exam fees; internet access.
- Additionally for care leavers attending university - £2000 annual bursary; rent on a flat; house or halls of residence; travel to and from university every term and removal costs; accommodation during university holidays.
- Weekly allowance equivalent to a single person's allowance if in fulltime education and benefits cease on a care leavers 20<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Any expenses (e.g. travel; clothing etc.) incurred in undertaking voluntary work are reimbursed
- Funding for passport; birth certificate; provisional and full driving licences

3.3 Care leavers also have access to savings accrued on their behalf during their time in care. All children that have been in care for at least a year have a Junior ISA which is operated by the Share Foundation, a charitable foundation appointed by the Department of Education to manage the Junior ISA scheme on their behalf.

3.4 Children placed in foster care have savings accrued by their carers, at a rate of a minimum of £5 per week, which they are able to access once they turn 18. This is in addition to their weekly pocket money/allowance.

- 3.5 From 01.04.18 children in care (CIC) who have a Junior ISA will have their savings deposited on a quarterly basis with Share Foundation. Some older CIC have Child Trust Funds and these are in the process of moving over to the Share Foundation – savings will be paid into these on a quarterly basis. For those CIC not eligible for a Junior ISA – i.e. those CIC who have not been in care for at least 1 year, savings will be paid into a specific BHCC bank account for CIC savings. This will be transferred to the Share Foundation at the point a child becomes eligible for a Junior ISA.
- 3.6 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 under the Children & Social Work Act 2017, local authorities will have a duty to consider what advice and support care leavers require up to the age of 25, regardless of their education, training or employment status. As stated above, support up to age 25 was previously only available for those care leavers who were in Higher Education.
- 3.7 The Children & Social Work Act 2017 requires that local authorities promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes for care leavers, to encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings and prepare them for adulthood and independent living. Local authorities will be required to publish a Local Offer to care leavers stating what services are available to them. These will include services relating to health and well-being, education, training, employment, accommodation and participation in society.
- 3.8 Brighton & Hove's Local Offer must be in place by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 and will build upon those existing supports and services already in place, as listed in 3.2.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Care leavers from Brighton & Hove have a range of practical, emotional and financial support available to them. From 01.04.18, the support offer will extend to all care leavers up to age 25. Under the Children & SW Bill 2017, local authorities have to develop a Local Offer for care leavers by September 2018. This will be an opportunity to build upon the existing services and supports in place.
- 4.2 All care leavers who have been in care for at least a year have a Junior ISA which is managed by the Share Foundation.
- 4.3 There are currently no mechanisms by BHCC to continue support to care leavers post 25.
- 4.4 Additional support to care leavers could be provided in the form of greater financial support. This could be achieved by charitable contributions being made into the Share Foundation, for example by being one of Brighton & Hove Mayor's nominated charities. Care leavers will have access to these monies once they reach 18.
- 4.5 The option of making similar charitable donations via the Mayor's Office should be considered to provide support for care leavers up to age 30. This could be achieved via contributions to the Beyond Care Leavers Trust which is in the

process of being established, and aims to provide financial support to Brighton & Hove care leavers up to age 30.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 As part of the development of the Local Offer there will be full consultation with care leavers and stakeholders in order to effectively build upon the current supports available.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 For the Committee to note the support offer currently available to care leavers up to age 21 (up to age 25 if in higher education) and that this will be extended to all care leavers up to age 25 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 when the Children & Social Work Act 2017 comes into force.
- 6.2 By 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, BHCC needs to develop a Local Offer for care leavers to ensure access to services that support health and well-being, education, training, employment, accommodation and participation in society. This will be an opportunity to build upon the established supports and services already in place.
- 6.3 From 01.04.18, regular contributions will be made to CIC's Junior ISAs via savings accrued on behalf of CIC by their foster carers. It is proposed that BHCC further support these contributions by exploring Share Foundation becoming a nominated charity of the Brighton & Hove's Mayor. Care leavers will have access to these savings at age 18.
- 6.4 There is currently no provision to provide support for care leavers up to age 30. The possibility of the Beyond Care Leavers Trust (once established) becoming a nominated charity of the Brighton & Hove Mayor should be explored, thereby providing a means by which support for care leavers up to age 30 could be provided.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The funding available in 2017/18 to support care leavers is £2.846m including staffing support, accommodation and other expenses. The current forecast however, suggests that this will overspend by a further £0.123m. Increasing demand is putting additional pressure on this budget, which is likely to continue in future years.
- 7.2 The 2018/19 budget has been planned on the basis of a service for care leavers up to the age of 21 and 25 for those in full time education. There are no resources available within this budget to extend support to the age of 30. At this point, with the information available, it is not possible to accurately assess the level of funding that would be required to extend the service. Further work will

need to be done to determine the necessary increase in funding to support this activity.

*Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis*

*Date: 14/02/18*

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The report sets out how the Council proposes to meet its statutory duties to advise and support all care leavers up to the age of 25 when the Children and Social Work Act 2017 is implemented in April 2018. As this is an extension of our current statutory duties to care leavers, the Council must be mindful of managing its resources effectively to meet its duties to all the children in its care.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Name Hilary Priestley*

*Date: 15/02 /18*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 An EIA has not been completed

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 None

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 None

