

Corporate Parenting Panel report



16 March 2021

PROGRESS ON CARE LEAVERS EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Ref number / Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	All wards / list individual wards

Executive Summary

It is a priority for MK that our looked after children and care leavers get the best from school and college and are able to secure good employment opportunities. In many ways this is more challenging now than ever. As good parents we are ambitious for the children and young people in our care and our care leavers. We have high aspirations for our children and young people to receive a planned and stable education that enables them to fulfil their educational, social and emotional potential so that they have the qualifications they need to pursue their career aspirations.

In order to ensure our young people, have access to the best possible education, training and job opportunities that meet their needs we have worked hard at securing a good level of education, employment and training amongst our looked after children and care leavers. We are mindful that many of our children looked after and care leavers have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school and these gaps in their learning are likely to be a significant barrier to their progress, but we know that investing in and caring about their future and recognising that education is their passport to better life chances.

What we have done so far?

- ✓ Ensured a well-established and respected Virtual School, offering the same service, or equivalent, to all our out of area (OOA) students.
- ✓ Provided opportunity for Care leavers (18+) to attend optional English training to improve their qualifications in and functional skills.
- ✓ Ensuring children missing education and learning remains low, in December 2020 this figure was less than 5%.
- ✓ Career planning is now incorporated within all Personal Education Plans.
- ✓ The Governing Body holds the Virtual School to account.
- ✓ The Virtual School offers termly training to Foster Carers to develop the expertise and awareness of foster carers in education and employment.

We are aware however that we need to ensure our Pupil Voice is heard and acted on in relation to apprenticeships and employment opportunities and that there is more consistency in our Personal Education Plans. We have therefore ensured all Personal Education Plans (PEPs) do all have a pupil voice section, where opinions about school and training are completed by the young person and we have now moved to a new EPEP delegation portal that is able to support our young people and ensure professionals are able to include their view in the best way possible with the view of increasing the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs). The Virtual School also tracks Attainment and progress, attendance and exclusion and the number of PEP's completed are monitored monthly and relevant professionals are challenged.

However, we recognise that we need to develop further the education, training and employment offer available, ensuring it reaches out to the most vulnerable and challenging children and young people. A support in us achieving this is the Virtual Head is ensuring Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) spending is bespoke and appropriate and focuses on improving the employability of our young people.

A key vehicle however for us having achieved improved outcomes in this area has been through the development of an Education, Employment and Training Panel (Operational Group). Its overarching aim has been to work together to increase the numbers of care leavers aged 16 - 25 who are in Education, Employment or Training (EET). It has built on the work of the 16+ LAC NEET Panel and has a focus on work readiness, skills development and mental health and wellbeing, as well as identifying EET opportunities for individual young people.

The meeting has oversight of all care leavers aged 16-25 who are not in education training or employment (NEET) including young people whose opportunities are limited currently because of their learning or mental health needs or because they are young parents and helps develop options and plans to support individual young people aged 16 - 25 to access opportunities and reduce barriers. It also has oversight of care leavers who are at risk of long-term NEET and develop contingency plans to ensure they can be maintained in their current setting or generate suitable alternatives.

An important feature of the meeting is to reflect on young people who have done well so that organisational learning can be retained for the future. This includes ensuring the voice of the young person is reflected in individual plans for the young people and consider the barriers in achieving the outcomes that we would all wish for.

It has been difficult to progress all we would have hoped over the last year with the pandemic challenges that have been faced but are confident that the positive improvements that have been made put us in a good position to continue to improve our EET outcomes, particularly through the clear focus within our 16-25 Team.