



Cheshire East

TOGETHER for Children and Young People

Cheshire East Cared For Children and Care Leavers Committee December 2024



Care Leaver Ambassadors

- In Cheshire East we have 5 Care Leaver Ambassadors.
- As ambassadors, our role is to be the voice of Care Leavers.
- Today we want to talk to you about the Local Offer.

Local Offer Review

- The Local Offer is a document that explains what services and support are available to Care Leavers.
- The Local Offer is reviewed every year to establish what changes and updates need to be made.
- This year we presented the results and recommendations from the Care Leaver survey and used this to start conversations on important topics.
- The Care Leaver survey, was conducted between October 2023 and January 2024, with themed focus groups following this to identify recommendations.

Local Offer Review

On 13th November, we were part of the Local Offer Review event and gathered feedback from young people on the themes of:

- Care Leaver Service
- Education, Employment, Training, Apprenticeships
- Housing, Safety and Pathway Plans
- Family and Health
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Other Recommendations

We would like to share with you the feedback and recommendations gathered on the day.

Local Offer Feedback

Care Leaver Services

- Out of hours support needs improving. Expanding evening and weekend services is a priority, utilising the Hubs, Cheshire East services and partnerships with external agencies like Pure Insight to provide social activities, mentorship, and therapeutic support.
- The Leisure Pass to be offered as a leisure budget so that the funding can go towards other leisure sports and activities – such as horse riding, boxing, team sports, hobbies such as sewing clubs etc Young people may also need support to start attending leisure activities such as gym sessions.

Local Offer Feedback

Education, Employment, Training and Apprenticeships

- Increased financial support for parents: Care leavers who are parents need support with childcare or family-related costs. Funded child support could help parents who want to work but struggle with additional expenses.
- Support with accessing and completing English and Maths qualifications to enable progression into further education opportunities, such as apprenticeships. Courses should be delivered in settings that young people can access easily, such as online or at the Care Leaver Hubs.

Local Offer Feedback

Housing, Safety and Pathway Plans

- Starter Kits for young people moving into homes (housing, kitchen tools, bedding, etc.) For example, a 'Moving in Pack' with essential items provided for young people when transitioning to independent living, including: Kitchen items: Plates, cups, cutlery, glasses, pots, pans, utensils; and Household items: Bedding, basic toolkit, cleaning products, and food starter set.
- There should be more housing options available to young people and in the areas that they want to live. Also there needs to be better understanding and support with the Homechoice process. A dedicated housing officer within the team could act as a mediator between the Leaving Care Service and Housing.
- Setting Up Home Grant, there is a £1000 gap in funding based on when you turn 18, we feel that the offer should be standardised for all Care Leavers regardless of age. In addition to this, costs to cover non-negotiable aspects of tenancy, such as flooring, are huge costs that don't leave much left to 'set up' and make a house a home. This is especially problematic if we are to move and there is no grant left to pay for new carpets a second or third time, or if the grant has been used whilst in semi-independent accommodation to purchase items.

Local Offer Feedback

Family and Health

- We would like more emotional support. Social events like group activities, days out, or special occasions (e.g., a Christmas party) would help young people build networks as well as emotional support to combat loneliness and isolation. Young parents, especially those feeling isolated or unsupported, would benefit from more emotional and social support, not just practical or task-focused visits.
- We would like to have Laundry and Washing facilities (showers) available to us as part of the Hub offer. In addition to this, there should be more practical help and support for young parents, such as being able to access nappies, maternity clothing, and creche facilities.
- There is no standard 'new parent' gift for Care Leavers. There needs to be an increase in financial support for parents as there are significant costs associated with purchasing items such as a pram, car seat, nursery furniture etc.

Local Offer Feedback

Preparing for Adulthood

- Independence needs to start before 16 years old. Independence preparation should be gradual and start before the age of 16, with support from foster carers, residential staff, and semi-independent housing providers. This could include skills-building around managing a household, cooking, and budgeting.
- We need to improve the Independence Packs. Could we further consider the ASDAN model for independence packs, ensuring that the language is not patronising, with tenancy readiness based on real skills and assessments over time.

Local Offer Feedback

Other Recommendations

- More support accessing tech equipment and Data. Support to provide essential tech equipment (laptops, tablets) and support for digital connectivity (Wi-Fi, data plans), would help care leavers to stay connected with essential activities and services such as job applications, study, and accessing mental health support.
- Bus passes for care leavers up to 25 years old.



Any Questions?

