

Councillor Frontline Visits Form

Name of Councillor	Sally Ann Holland
Date of visit	17/07/25
Team visited	Care Leavers Team

<p>Quality of practice</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dip sampling, pathway plans, care leaver plans, care leaver ambassadors, feeling supported. - Only two agency staff within team is a positive. - Decisions are thorough with children at the forefront. - EET at 64% is a positive direction. - Supervision is regular and focused, staff feel trust towards the information that is shared, task-centred, child-focused. - Virtual school is brilliant, Pure Insight is good but PAs should be allocated earlier. - One agency staff member explained that they have enjoyed the placement over the past year at Cheshire East so much so, that they intend to transfer permanently from the agency. - Explained that there is positive progress since managers sit in on care plans. - Drop-ins are good. - Everyone brings a different talent to the team and uses skills. - Management support is much better now. <p>Areas for development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changeover from adults is still not getting the required support. Transition is still not straightforward, transition should be at 17 but this is when a care leaver is allocated. - The care leaver hubs would benefit from sexual health sessions, CGL, police and cooking sessions as well as providing plenty of activities. Links to Government/Local Government apprenticeships. Make efforts to stem mixed messages between foster carers, PAs and social workers. - Through the care leaver ambassadors complete feedback on annual summary with participation team.

- Junction 16 app is great but could be progressed, several in the care leavers team mentioned looking at the Manchester equivalent for some ideas which has more information.
- Don't discard automatic translation.
- Ideally the care planning meetings should be 4-6 weekly, lack of confidence in Blinded Faith and believed individuals were left vulnerable to exploitation with such accommodation providers. Felt that the £11,000 per week fees were not good value for money.
- Schooling one time per week, 1-1 tutoring.
- Collaborative agency working, service providers are failing the children, young people that are being placed in them don't get the tools they need, pushed back onto PAs, won't engage.
- Not enough quality service providers, more about the money as opposed to the care.
- Service breakdowns.
- Need a pay grade discussion and teaching/training to progress staffing

Experience of working for Cheshire East Council

Strengths:

- Inviting care leavers to their care plan meetings does help engagement.
- Data and performance care plans are now efficient, strategy visits, 16+ risk assessments and pathway plans, level of information. Team is getting feedback, no last IROs.
- Having Jess back has offered stability and she understands the service, delivery and data. Massive positive change since Jess has returned from maternity leave.
- Strong team, having the pods.
- Homeless supporting and realistic with timescales. Through supervision, speak to the team managers and look to escalate. See people in the hub.

Areas for development:

- They felt left on their own to make large decisions, Annemarie's position was not replaced.
- Risk assessment rational, regular supervision, if someone doesn't want service. Conversation around workload duty caseload of 25.
- Feel that hubs need improvement, purpose-built buildings would work better so they can gain better experience. But feel that hubs play a really important role.
- Struggled with the Ofsted report and how delivery of findings was handled.
- More team managers have now helped support the team, previously disjointed.

- Adult social work role; asylum seeking needs more legal knowledge.
- Visits for some care leavers take all day just for one visit because of the distances/travel time.
- Mileage caps unfair, e.g. 500 miles covered in two days, when the mileage compensated drops when 800 miles has been completed.
- Social workers genuinely care and really do take their corporate parenting role to heart. Visits are more meaningful but lack of time due to number of caseloads, and there should be less paperwork.
- Instruction on how to use AI (copilot) to assist with document writing/paperwork.
- Mobile phones desperately in need of an update.
- Reinstate credit cards for PAs as going shopping for homewares for young care leavers is difficult under the current procedures, setting up their accommodation for the first time is just totally impractical and doesn't add value for the whole experience for the care leaver.
- Setting up an allowance, teaching budgeting is better for the young person.
- They are happy to reuse and repurpose by shopping in charity shops, etc, but the system does not enable this.
- Having to go through admin takes so long that they often lose good deals and offers.
- Suits any PA, signpost to EET this team is trusted and is looked upon as somewhere to go to.
- Apprenticeships need to have job offer at the end, and Cheshire East should be offering apprenticeships to care leavers.
- More staff, need PAs from age 16 years, ambassadors are more present, forum meetings.
- Credit cards, more on accommodation, housing shortage.
- Convert Mountview in Congleton into a care leavers accommodation hub (care leaver team). Dangerous to be placed in an environment that they are not ready for, if they were living independently but close to each other for support this would work.
- Getting management to understand.
- Foster carers need educating on the transition process.
- Difficult to work with agency staff when transitioning from young person to adult.
- Pathway plans - action on how the young person achieves, review offers until 21 years.
- Caseloads are 25 but ideally they should be around 20/22.

Issues to be escalated to Head of Service

Please provide any areas where you require a response from the Head of Service

Please send this completed form within one week of the visit to
childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk