

Care Leavers Annual Report

April 2017 - March 2018

Anji Reynolds, Service Manager

Introduction

Cheshire East has 201 care leavers (end January 2018) aged 16-21 years. Of those 76 are eligible (16/17) who remain cared for and 7 are relevant (16/17) who have left care but are living independently. There are 118 former relevant (18+). In addition we also offer a 21+ service giving support, advice and guidance to any who may wish this support up to the age of 25 now also extended to all who are not in FE education, training or doing an apprenticeship. In some instances we would also consider short term allocation to give continuity if required. We are currently working with approximately 20 young people in this age range.

In July 2016 the Government published their strategy 'Keep on Caring' Supporting People from Care to Independence and sets out the Government's vision in 5 key outcomes for care leavers (below) which underpins how we work with care leavers; much of the work activity we are doing has focused on these key areas and aligned to the Care Leaver Strategy.

Key Headlines

Since my last annual report in March 2017 the service has worked hard to evidence their aspiration and commitment to care leavers in the following ways;

- Published a new and improved Care Leavers' entitlements offer' from the Care Leavers Service April 2017
- Promoted 3 existing Personal Advisor's to Senior PA roles to oversee work with care leavers around EET, Health and Transition work and seen rich rewards from their work
- Held 3 x Tenancy readiness courses and supported 25 young people (1-1)
- Increased the use of Independence Packs – Bronze, Silver and Gold
- Cheshire East is now an ASDAN accredited learning centre since October '17
- Ignition Panel – increased the referrals to over 60 to date with move on plans for all care leavers. There is also interest in this model from other LA's across the North West and it also received national recognition at an awards ceremony in November 2017
- Employed a dedicated UASC (unaccompanied asylum seeker) worker 4 days
- Held our first Christmas Dinner for up to 18 care leavers with Pure Insight
- October 2017 Care Leavers week – held a Poetry competition and Benchmarking Event
- 21+ offer has now become a statutory duty from 1st April 2018. Our offer was extended to 21-25 year olds 2 years ago and this past year we have had contact with over 60 care leavers in the past 12 months
- The service ran a programme of activities for care leavers with Stoke City Football Club
- We conducted an annual care leaver's survey which said 94% of care leavers are happy with the support they receive from their PA. We are making improvements so satisfaction is 100%
- The National Benchmarking Forum invited CEC to present on the 21st September about our improvement journey and model of working with 'vulnerability'
- Care Leavers NEET – now reduced to 21% (January 18) from 52% in July 2015.
- Care Leaver weekly football group with regular team attendees and competitions
- Care Leaver's Service 'Making a Difference' award - Team of the Year Outstanding Service: Innovation 2017
- Employee of the Year 2017: Nadine Warde, Senior PA for Health for work with pregnant care leavers and improved health outcomes for care leavers.
- DfE visit in January 2018 by Mr Mark Riddell Care Leaver Implementation Advisor with feedback "Strong operational model. Strong data. Passionate team".

The focus of our work this past year has focused on the following areas:



What are we doing?

Better prepared and supported to live independently / Engagement and Participation



Tracking of 16/17 year olds

Data tracking and monthly discussion with the service manager ensures that for all in care approaching 16 years there is a consistent offer to progress their next steps. This highlighted trends and gaps around pathway planning in particular contingency planning and the need to ensure this is in place earlier.

One local authority in the West Midlands stated; *"I spent a very interesting and productive morning this week within the Middlewich office looking at what you do for care leavers. I was extremely impressed, real focus on good transition planning for care leavers - miles ahead of (LA name) in many areas."*

Independence Packs

Re-designed the Gold, Silver and Bronze Independence Packs to make this tool more relevant to young people 14+. The service has also designed a Platinum version to complement the above.

There has been an increase in the use of Gold, Silver and Bronze independence packs. More SW staff, providers, carers and PA's are using the packs at present. At the end of 2017/18 Q3 there were 38 Bronze packs, 16 Silver and 19 Gold done to date. Our focus will be to introduce

	<p>these more to 14+ so when young people turn 16 we can then move them onto doing ASDAN modules (see below).</p> <p>The SW and PA staff is working collaboratively to develop independence skills with our care leavers. The increased use in the bronze and silver packs shows that staff is starting to work earlier on independence skills with 16 year olds and younger whereas previously there was a culture of delaying independence work until 18 plus and a lot of this work was seen to be left to the Personal Advisor.</p>
<u>ASDAN accredited learning centre</u>	<p>In October 2017 we became an accreditation centre for ASDAN and this allows us to work with care leavers towards a Level 2 qualification. Training for 10 staff took place in December 2017 with further training planned.</p> <p>This means we are able to deliver a wide range of flexible short courses and qualifications to care leavers. The flexibility of the courses means learners can study independently without having to attend an education provision. The course should allow us to work with the hard to reach NEET care leavers who have historically not engaged in EET activities.</p> <p>The 3 Senior PA's for EET, Health and Transition work will run two 'independent living' courses in Crewe and in Macclesfield. The courses will run two days a week from the 11th September 2018. At the end of the course care leavers could progress to a level one or two qualification.</p> <p>As with any course that we run, the co-ordination and support to ensure attendance at these courses involves a great deal of organisation to include venues, additional staff, transport and recruiting care leavers participants.</p>
<u>Tenancy Readiness Course</u>	<p>There are two tenancy ready courses planned for 2018. The first course is in Macclesfield commencing on the 06.03.18. The second course will take place at Crewe Hub commencing on the 05.06.18. In total there are 9 referrals for the Crewe course and 6 referrals for the Macclesfield course thus far.</p> <p>There is also a third course specifically targeted at (UASC) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. This will involve the use of interpreters and planning a course which is tailored to their specific needs.</p>
<u>Risk Assessments</u>	<p>When Ofsted visited in 2015 they highlighted the need to ensure that our young people who are living in the YMCA have risk assessments. As a care leaver service, all our 16+ young people living in semi-independent provisions all have a risk assessment in place. We have done work with the Business Intelligence Team to ensure we have a tool on Liquid Logic to support this work in the care leaver service so we can evidence these risk assessments are in place and an alert system to ensure these are reviewed or if a new risk is identified.</p>
<u>Annual Questionnaire</u>	<p>Last year we did a care leaver annual questionnaire which highlighted satisfaction with the service offered to care leavers from their PA. This helpfully gave suggestions to the service about improvements to their offer and some ideas are already being implemented.</p>

Focus of work for 2018

- Increase the number of referrals to the ignition panel and facilitate young people to attend their meetings.
- Re launch the independence packs including the introduction of a platinum pack to be used with care leavers in their own property. Champion the packs across foster carers, PA's and social workers and accommodation providers.
- Promote and support bi-monthly 'meet the manager' events re Q&A sessions with CLs
- Organise a third tenancy ready course for (UASC) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- Promote the use of ASDAN courses in developing independence skills.
- Review the 60+ care leavers referred to Ignition and consider impact and outcomes March 18
- To work closely with the new Care Leavers participation worker to increase wider participation of care leavers and consult with them regarding The Local Offer.

Housing and Accommodation

Experiencing stability and feeling safe and secure / Achieving Financial Stability



Ignition Panel

IGNITION panel is an innovative project that has been established to support young people to have the best, most appropriate transition for when they leave care. Ignition is for young people aged 15½ plus who are thinking about where and how they would like to live when they leave care (we think the earlier we can plan the better the experience!). Making sure our young people start independence at the right time and in the right place provides the best chance for a positive journey to adulthood and will support the best possible life chances. The panel shares ideas, suggestions, good practice etc. to develop an action plan that will support each young person to achieve their future living goals. This may be accessing a taster house, supported lodging or being supported through a semi-independent setting with a phased transition to move on to their own tenancy. There are over 60+ eligible and relevant care leavers that have been discussed at Ignition Panel.

Placement Sufficiency

There are a number of properties for care leavers aged 16-17 year olds.

- 4 YMCA ring fenced flats through IGNITION panel
- 1 x 2 bedroom IGNITION flat
- 3 ring fenced beds at YMCA foyer 16/17 year olds.
- 5 ring fenced beds at Watermill House, Macclesfield
- West Street - 4 beds secured at West Street in Crewe area

<p>Universal Credit/Housing Benefit</p>	<p>There is now an established link with the DWP lead Debra Washington who has attended our service meetings and recently at the one held in January 2018. The Team Manager is working on a revised joint protocol between the DWP and CEC care leaver's service given the changes to benefits, working practices and turnover of staff in DWP which has meant the single point of contact may not always be as accessible.</p> <p>Mike Woods (EET champion) will establish contacts in the local Job Centres throughout CE as part of his role.</p> <p>Exemption to paying Council Tax to care leavers has been in place since April 2016. Over 2016/17 we paid out £56K approx. on council tax exemption policy to care leavers. Our care leaver cohort is 64% (Within CE) and 36% outside of CEC we will have the 2017/18 detail end of March before the next financial year. If we look at our first year of implementation of CT exemption we supported 82 care leavers in total inside and outside of the borough.</p> <p>Significantly we were the first LA in the country to offer a Council Tax exemption to care leavers up to 25 years and have led on this and given advice to other LA's across the North West and nationally. 42 LA's have now offered a CT exemption to date.</p> <p>We have good relationships with housing providers through the Ignition Panel. We also have a CEC Housing Officer who sits in our service one day every fortnight to assist care leavers with housing matters.</p>
<p>Home Choice</p>	<p>PA's work closely with Home choice in Cheshire East to register care leavers before they turn 18 years old so they can bid on properties. We now track this data so we can review progress.</p> <p>Care Leavers should be supported to access safe and appropriate accommodation. This should also include relevant information and detail any Staying Put policy arrangements, support from housing services and any other assistance that is available to care leavers in maintaining any tenancy.</p>
<p>Challenges and Work Focus 2018</p> <p>All care leavers are given automatic band B status. Care Leavers with complex needs who may have challenging behaviour and debts can affect the priority banding. Intentionality is being challenged and the time taken to appeal can be longer than we would like this to be. Corporately this offer to care leavers needs to be in line with other LA's across the NW where some have an appeals process which takes no longer than 3 days and decisions are made in a timelier way.</p> <p>We are also in discussions in setting up monthly meetings to check bidding and consider any debt issues arising through non-payment or poor money management. This way we can ensure our care leavers can remain in their tenancies without fear of eviction for non-payment and we can also have greater oversight of care leavers who may present as homeless and consider how best to support them.</p>	

Improving EET outcomes

Over the past year and with the additional capacity offered to the service through the NEET Champion PA role this has strengthened existing EET links, improved communication, and ensured there has been regular flow of information and opportunities for young people. There has also been bespoke work with young people such as tailoring traineeships, providing apprenticeships and looking at college and university courses and applications. A great deal of input has been given to doing preventative work with EET young people – by providing support and work placements.

Improved access to Education, Employment and Training



EET PA Champion role	<p>Senior PA Mike Woods, a former job coach is funded by the Innovation Bid and has completed targeted work with 39 care leavers over the last quarter and succeeded in getting young people into some form of positive activity, apprenticeship offer, training course or job role.</p> <p>58% of our care leavers 18-21 are in EET. Our NEET figure 18-21 year olds (Feb) overall comprises 29% (31 young people). 13% (14) are working towards an EET pathway and are on a re-engagement provision. Last quarter this was at 36%, thus showing an improvement. Our target for 2017/18 was 45% which has been exceeded. The senior PA role supports care leavers achieving an employment pathway and he has done various tasks to support their success including tutoring, supporting apprenticeship providers and responding to queries, writing CVs, job coaching, going out and helping the young person buy suitable attire for interview. Overall in the past quarter he has supported the work in the following ways;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved recording and tracking of statistics, giving greater visibility of current position and trends by developing our recording system. • Consultations with Personal Advisers and SWs. • Provided traineeships for young people – 7 traineeships • 7 young people were successful in getting apprenticeships. • 7 young people secured full time paid jobs. • 4 young people went onto college courses. • 7 completed Stoke City FC Course. • 16 care leavers were attending University courses in September 2018, highest in 3 years.
Stoke City FC course	<p>Between September – November 2017 the Stoke City course ran and this finished with 7 young people completing the course which provided work based placements.</p> <p>Becoming part of the Stoke City FC team has meant so much to one care leaver that he stated <i>'really enjoyed the course, and am very happy with</i></p>

	<i>the outcome for me’.</i>												
16+ EET Panel	<p>The NEET champion has set up a new panel comprising of key professionals within EET to look at young people who have not engaged in EET. The vast majority of care leavers now have a CV which helps to raise their aspirations.</p> <p>This panel specifically target long term hard to engage young people 16+ who have not taken part over long periods of time. These young people have historically not engaged with our service, so we are working with professionals across services to look at alternative ways of addressing their status. The Panel meets monthly to discuss all young people 16 – 21 who are NEET. A number of barriers preventing take up of EET will be looked at by this panel.</p> <table><tr><th><u>% young people NEET</u></th><th><u>Percentage</u></th><th><u>Number of YP</u></th></tr><tr><td>October</td><td>27%</td><td>36</td></tr><tr><td>November</td><td>23.7%</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td>21.6%</td><td>27</td></tr></table>	<u>% young people NEET</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of YP</u>	October	27%	36	November	23.7%	30	December	21.6%	27
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Targeted Emotional and Mental Health work	<p>We have a group planned for young people who are NEET, supporting them through targeted work with their mental health and the barriers that prevent them accessing EET. We have a dedicated worker 15 hours per week who gives additional support to this work doing 1:1 and mindfulness work with care leavers.</p>												
NEET Mental Health Group	<p>We have 12 young people across our services that are not engaging in EET due to their mental health. In setting up a support group that is PEER led we hope to look at getting them ready to access education, training or employment which can often benefit and support positive mental health. This group starts as a joint project with the Youth Service at the HUB on 1st March 2018: we are initially looking at 5 young people to take part.</p>												
Cygnet	<p>The Cygnet programme has been successfully bid for by Employ and 10 young people have been referred to them and 3 have started placement at this time. The number of young people who are NEET has decreased and proactive steps are in place, reducing the numbers further. We are focused on providing choice and opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations. The aim is to focus on young people 16+ who are not engaging and who are not in education, employment or training, using a multi-agency approach.</p>												

Challenges and Focus of work 2018

We need to continue to be pro-active in our work engaging young people and help them to make positive informed choices whilst encouraging and supporting them. The majority of young people who are NEET are engaged in a positive activity and we will continue to work and support them in education, training or employment.

The ambition and the aim for Cheshire East is to be the 'best' in the country by breaking down barriers and providing solutions and having a 'can do attitude.' We continue to have an excellent working relationship with **Community Recycle Cycles** who have been used by PA's

to access bikes for young people who need some form of transport. The **'Wheels to Work'** scheme will be run by our EET champion and we will look at how we solve transport issues on an individual basis. This is to ensure that transport is not a barrier in our young people accessing education, training or employment.

In Cheshire East at the moment we have **27** young people (21.6%) who are **NEET**, made up of:-

- 12 young people who are unable to work due to mental health issues.
- 5 young people who are pregnant or parents.
- 6 young people who have a physical or learning disability.
- 3 young people who are in custody.
- 11 young people who are able to work.
- 1 young person. (UASC).

The primary focus is to ensure we support and encourage young people "above and beyond" to assist young people have the confidence and the life skills to support them get back into work.

Over 2017/18 we have focused a great deal on achieving better health outcomes for care leavers. It is apparent that some of the barriers preventing care leavers for taking up EET relate to their emotional well-being. Our PA champion Nadine Warde has worked hard with the team across five key health areas to promote work activity across mental and emotional well-being, sexual health and identity, health passports, pregnancy and parenting.

Improved access to health support



Targeted worker – Emotional Well-being

In looking at further reductions in the number of young people who are NEET we need to prepare and plan so our young people are ready to embrace and take up the opportunities that we have for them. We are working with young people around their mental health and also working with parents and engaging with them in looking at education/employment opportunities.

A PA worker is dedicated to 15 hours of targeted work towards 'Emotional Well-being' and led on work to research, provide resources and tools to support assessment and support.

Parent's Group

The Parents Group started on 20th October 2017. The aim of this group is for PEER support, to reduce isolation, obtain health advice, make new friends, improve social development of their children, develop parenting skills and improve outcomes. 6 young mothers and their children attended and this enabled positive relationships to be made.

Emotional Well-being	The 'emotional well-being tool' is used with 16+ care leavers by SWs and PA's as a self-assessment tool to target the right support to address the care leaver's needs. It's had huge success and there is good evidence that scores are reducing when PA's reassess 3-6 months later. In total there have been approximately 100 completed in the past year since March 2017.
Health Passports	<p>Health Passports - Assigned to Kirsty Savage (16+ Nurse)</p> <p>The starting age for completion of the Health Passport is seventeen and 3 quarters. At the end of January 2018 30 Health Passports were completed. Kirsty has now created a consent form for the Health Passport to try and get around the previous issue regarding health sharing information with Social Care, due to their confidentiality restrictions and policies.</p>
'Pregnancy and Parenting'	<p>South Locality Positive Parenting Groups</p> <p>Currently we have 26 Care Leaver mothers. 14 of these have been identified as living within a distance which will allow them to attend the parents group in Crewe. To date we have run 4 Positive Parenting Groups in the South of Cheshire East at Oak Tree Children's Centre in Crewe. In total to date we have had 7 mothers and 7 children access this particular group. This has helped to reduce isolation for them and offer activities which promote the mother and child relationship. Additionally the group provides stimulation, activities and socialisation for their children, to encourage overall development.</p> <p>North Locality Positive Parent Group - The first North Locality Positive Parent Group will be held on the 8th February at Ruby's Fund in Congleton. There are currently 5 mothers who attend this group.</p> <p>Parent Emotional Wellbeing Worker - The start date for this post was the 2nd October 2017. The Emotional Wellbeing Worker will support any mothers where their proceedings. To note, there are no care leaver mothers within the Cheshire East locality with children in care proceedings. Nadine continues to attend the Steering Group at Motherwell to ensure that the needs of Care Leaver Parents are met by this new role/worker.</p> <p>Direct 1:1 and group support for Care Leaver Fathers via 'Dads Stuff' - It was identified that Cheshire East care leaver father's may find it difficult to attend the 'Dads Stuff' group, due to the group setting. The centre manager has given her agreement to two male workers providing this targeted support to them. They can support the fathers with their overall parenting; attend meetings (CIN or CP) and support with other life issues via advice or referral to other services. Additionally the fathers still have the option of attending the 'Dads Stuff' group, if they feel comfortable. To date 1 care leaver father out of the 9 has attended this group. The father received emotional support and practical advice.</p> <p>The role of the Family Nurse Partnership has been an excellent resource to young mothers and we are pleased this offer has been extended from aged 19 to all care leavers up to the age of 25.</p>

Sexual and Physical Health	<p>Care Leavers Drop in – One Stop</p> <p>The Care Leavers Drop-in was set up at the YMCA in Crewe. Care Leavers could access support from the 16+ nurse Kirsty around sexual and physical health. Additionally they could access support around other general life issues (housing, benefits, education etc.) from the PA at the drop-in. The first drop in ran on the 19th October.</p> <p>Going forward in 2018 the health drop-in is to move to Macclesfield. This is on the bus route, at a convenient location/building and within the town centre providing easier access. The Drop in will run on the last Tuesday of every month.</p>
Domestic Abuse	<p>Healthy Relationships - Love Doesn't Hurt</p> <p>Links have been made with the Families Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – Council and Partnership Manager. A meeting was held on the 13th November 2017. The outcome was that specialist training will be provided to the PA's on the 16th March 2018. This training will upskill PA's to be able to carry out direct work with their young people who are reluctant to access Domestic Abuse Services, or preparing them for engaging with Domestic Abuse Services.</p>
Substance Misuse and Offending Behaviour	<p>Reduction, Abstinence and Positive Behaviour Steering Group</p> <p>The PA Health Champion has created stronger links with East Cheshire Substance Misuse Service and the first Steering Group took place on the 17th January 2018 and will be held quarterly. There are a number of care leavers who appear to use or misuse substances, which impacts upon their emotional wellbeing resulting in offending behaviours for some.</p> <p>The outcome was the first steering group was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Substance Misuse Worker will attend the Pure Insight Drop-in (Macclesfield) on a weekly basis. It is expected this this will begin in April however, if numbers of attendees increase sooner. • Substance Misuse Worker is attending Watermill House weekly on a Friday. • The Young People's Substance Misuse Worker will do joint visits with P.A's and Social Workers, to break down the barriers of Young People accessing support around their Substance Misuse issues. • Substance Misuse training can be made available to PA's, Social Worker, foster carers and mentors with two dates proposed for April. It is envisaged Foster Carers support will give more insight into preventive work and safety awareness, to young people aged 13 + • The Substance Misuse Service will develop a Cheshire East Substance Misuse Screening Tool for all professionals to use with young people.

Challenges and Focus of work 2018

We still experience some challenge with supporting care leavers who have a mental health need. The Camhs role ends when care leavers turn 19 years and care leavers are placed on waiting lists for an adult's service through their GP's. Kooth is an online commissioned service but also works with care leavers up to 19 years. Ideally we would like to see services being offered to care leavers beyond this age so there are no gaps in service provision and any need addressed without delay to them. A recent evaluation of SDQ scores on children aged 14-16 years also suggest that a growing number of children have scores above 18 which equate to need for support.

Working with care leavers is key to strengthening our knowledge of their needs and targeting support to them. Over 2017/18 we have successfully re-engaged some who chose not to work with us. Many PA's see their young people every 2 months and we have a very high compliance rate of visits done within 2 months. At the end February 2018 – 89% care leavers had a visit within 2 months. 11% are exception visits outside of 2 months. Currently there are 4 care leavers 18-21 who choose to have no contact with the service and efforts are still being made to engage them in different ways.

Participation highlights

Christmas Dinner

18 care leavers from across Cheshire East came together for a Christmas dinner. This event gave them an opportunity to meet other Cheshire East care leavers. This in turn;

- Strengthens the partnership between the care leavers team and Pure Insight. The leaving care team raised £100.41 by organising a Christmas jumper day at Cledford House and taking the 'Pure Insight' collection bucket to other offices.
- Two care leavers who attended commented they suffered from anxiety and would normally avoid group settings. They felt attending the meal will help them attend group activities in the future.
- Eating out places a responsibility on care leavers to behave appropriately in public and respect others.

-Created an annual Calendar of care leaver events over 2018

- Set up bi-monthly 'meet the manager' events to increase participation and consultation with care leavers.

Football Team

- Organised for 8 care leavers to participate in a local 6 A side football league. This was paid for via a crowdfunding page in partnership with Voice for Children. Following a meeting with Cheshire FA we now have a football kit and new footballs

Cheshire East leaving care football team pictured below took part in a 12 week 6-A-side football league.

The £150 league fees were funded by a crowdfunding page set up in partnership with Voice for Children.

Football gets me out of the house and helps me forget about any problems I have.

I've not been working and had a lot of problems. Football is the one thing I look forward to each week.



- 8 Care leavers took part in the league over 12 weeks many of them attend nearly every week.
- Despite being bottom of the league at one point the care leavers kept attending each week and putting in the effort to move up the table.
- Improved relationships between care leavers, some who wouldn't normally socialise with each other outside of football
- Several UASC attended the football sessions - this is one of the highlights of their week being able to attend an organised activity in a good facility.
- Developing an improved relationship with care leavers and staff. We have noticed care leavers who attend are more comfortable talking about other problems in their lives.
- Having a better relationship means the care leavers who attended were more likely to listen to PA advice and attend other appointments with PAs.
- Improved emotional wellbeing many care leavers told staff they look forward to football and it is a highlight in their week. Many of them have not had the opportunity or support to attend social activities.

Over 2018, the service has organised –

A group of care leavers to meet with Mark Riddell DfE Care Leaver Implementation Adviser in January.



The care leavers who attended gave their PA's feedback telling them they felt listened to and their points were heard.

21+ Offer

New statutory guidance commencing 1st April 2018 is now published 27th February. This states that all local authorities need to implement a 21-25 Offer to care leavers. This raises new challenges facing the service. We have been operating a 21+ offer since April 2016 and this has provided us with some rich data. In the past year there has been contact with 61 care leavers. This tells us from the data that a number of our care leavers come back to us for a service mainly at age 21-23 years and then tapers off. The primary reasons for this are financial.

General welfare is highlighted as being high but this was as a result of an annual service contact call to care leavers which we conducted last in 2017. Under the new guidance we

must make attempts to hold annual contact with all care leavers 21-25 years and we will endeavour to do this end of March 2018.

The breakdown of those reasons for receiving services under 21+ is shown below;

Contact Reason	Primary	Secondary	Total
Employment & Training	2	2	4
Financial	14	2	16
General Welfare / Enquiry	41	1	42
Health	1		1
Housing	2	4	6
Family	1	1	2
Total	61	10	

With the rising number of care leavers returning with a need, this creates higher demand on an existing resource. We have 20 care leavers open to the service who we continue to work with 21+ which now equates to one FtE PA post. The government have outlined a 4 year funding proposal under a new burdens assessment and additional funding will be available to LA's rising to £12million at the end of this tenure.

We have benefited from having had additional funding a dedicated UASC worker sitting with the service. The feedback and impact of their role on the young people is evident e.g. *"As a solicitor who has represented young people seeking asylum for the best part of a decade, I have worked with many local authorities all across England. I must say that, in my opinion, Cheshire East is amongst the top authorities in providing care and support to these youngsters... I believe a similar role should be created in all local authorities in which Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are placed."* This funding ends in July 2018 but the government has given CEC additional funding to assist with additional resource to support UASC.

We have also had additional funding to support a dedicated NEET PA Champion in the service. The impact of this role has been immense as care leavers now have a work pathway and the target set at the beginning of the year has been exceeded with only a small number of care leavers not in EET. The funding for this job role ends in October 2018 and this role will have to be met from within the existing budget to continue this good work.

The Local Offer

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires each local authority to consult on a published local offer for its care leavers which needs to provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local authority. The increasing demand for a service to support the emotional needs of care leavers is apparent and services do not extend beyond 19 years specifically for care leavers. Time waiting for counselling via GP for example means care leavers do not receive a timely service to meet need. Through data tracking we have identified a cohort where emotional and mental health needs are identified. Often a service is not yet meeting this need due to time waiting. PA's have suggested a therapist within the service could respond more readily to this need.

The local offer needs to set out not just the offer from children's services. The timescale for publishing this offer is not specified but a suggested timescale is 6-9 months from the time 1st April 2018 when guidance comes into effect.

Care Leaver Covenant

The local authority will also be encouraged to consider the 'Care Leavers Covenant' which should detail any offer from organisations other than the local authority. Spectre First will oversee this on behalf of the DfE.

All local authorities must have regard for 7 corporate parenting principles when discharging its functions to children cared for and care leavers. This offer needs to set out what support local authorities will provide to care leavers and consideration will need to be given to who ultimately signs off as a corporate offer from across the council/commissioning partners.

Corporate Parenting

The recent DfE visit highlighted the operational model was very strong but practice was impacted by the lack of a Corporate Offer. The role and function of the Corporate Parenting was viewed as needing to be strengthened as he perceived there was limited buy-in from key partner agencies. This gives an opportunity to re-focus the Board and to address need across health, housing and any adult services provision to better support care leavers as they move towards adulthood and increasing independence. Mr Riddell will revisit the service again in the summer period and will wish to review the progress and the strength of the local offer on his return.

Anji Reynolds

28th February 2018