

LB Bromley Children's Services Improvement Governance Board

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| Subject: | 16+ CLA NEET |
| Date: | 21 st April 2017 |
| Lead Officer: | Helen Priest, Head Teacher, Bromley Virtual School |
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1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to address the current 16+ CLA and Care Leaver cohort of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and the strategic and operational work currently being undertaken with them as well as the short and medium term plans to improve engagement with this age group of care-experienced young people.

2. Recommendations

Members of the Governance Board are invited to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

3. Background

There are 18 Bromley CLA aged 16-18 who are not engaged in education, training or employment (as at 13/04/2017). Characteristics of this group of young people are shown in table 1, below.

| Characteristics | YR12 | YR13 |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Whole cohort number | 30 | 59 |
| Number and percentage of NEET | 7(43%) | 11 (20%) |
| Number of YP with identified SEN | 1 | 5 |
| Number of Young people with YOs involvement | 3 | 3 |
| Number of young parents/pregnant YP (G6) | 2 | 2 |
| Number with physical/mental health problems (G4) | 0 | 1 |
| Number who became CLA after YR11 | 3 | 7 |
| Type of accommodation | Foster care 4 Semi-ind 3 | Foster care 0 Semi ind 11 |
| Number actively seeking ETE | 4 | 3 |

Table 1. showing characteristics of NEET Cohort

Analysis

These young people have a high level of special and additional needs, often not properly addressed during their school careers. Most of them are became CLA in YR11 or later, though they have often been known to social care for many years.

In the YR12 NEET group, only one young person had been in the care of the local authority for the whole of YR 11, with all of the others becoming CLA late in the academic year or since the end of the school year 2015/16. One young person is an unaccompanied minor, who arrived in March 2016, but the remaining young people n cohort had all missed large periods

at school during KS4 and most did not finish YR11. The Virtual School provided 1:1 tuition in school for only young person to facilitate attendance and the young person successfully finished the year and sat exams.

Only 1 of the current group of YR12 NEETs started the academic year without education provision; that young person was already a young parent. All 5 of the young people who started the academic year in FE colleges had left the course or had been off-rolled within 2 months, mostly as a result of poor or non-attendance issues. One young person, in an alternative post-16 provision also failed to attend and has subsequently started and stopped several other programmes. He continues to battle with mental health problems and is engaged in frequent low-level criminal activity.

A larger proportion of young people in the YR13 group have been CLA for longer, with 4 of them actually in care during YR11. Of those 4, however, 3 young people failed to complete the academic year or sit examinations, either because of refusal to engage with school or because of periods missing from home or care. Most of the young people have been accommodated since the end of YR11 and were NEET before they become CLA. The pattern of disengagement has continued for a number of young people, some of whom have never engaged with education, training or employment since YR11. Several of the young people have been offered and even started numerous courses with a range of providers but have been unable to sustain engagement.

One remarkable feature that the young people across both these year groups have in common is that most of them live in semi-independent or supported housing. Only 4 of them in YR12 are in foster homes (2 in mother and baby placements). It is easy to conclude that 16 and 17 year-olds living in semi-independent accommodation, often with chaotic lifestyles are not capable of sustaining engagement and attendance in education or training without significant additional support. Some of these young people might fare better in a school environment rather than a much larger FE college, but 6th form entry is restricted to children who have achieved 5 A*-C or, in some cases 5 As and Bs. Most would benefit from another year in KS4, enabling them to focus on core subjects and achieve some level 2 qualifications, without the pressure of deciding on a vocational option and then combining both in their first year of college while navigating the unknown waters of living independently.

Although young people have an allocated Social Worker until they are 18 years old and are then provided with a Young Person's Adviser, these professionals do not have the skills or the knowledge base to provide careers information, advice and guidance. A worker from TYS (Hayley, managed by LK) spends 5.5 days a fortnight supporting young people from the leaving care team on NEET issues, identifying pathways to EET. The rest of her time is spent in the youth service. She is much valued but finding this dual role very stressful. All agree that resourcing of this area needs to be reviewed in order to offer the level of support required for the approximately 60 young people aged 16-18 and 180 young people 18+ in the service.

Understanding Need

Analysis of this cohort shows that young people coming into care in mid-late adolescence have high levels of previously unidentified needs. These include:

- Unidentified special needs
- Frequent school changes because of exclusion (or the threat of it), or relocation
- Poor attendance leading to disengagement
- Family dysfunction/domestic abuse
- Mental and emotional health issues

The act of accommodation and the provision of a safe place to live are not sufficient to ensure re-engagement. Despite the intervention of professionals, these young people fail to secure qualifications at the end of KS4 and do not have the skills to motivate themselves or the confidence to plan their futures.

There is no lack of college and alternative provision for YR12 starters; courses are available at every level. Almost all of the cohort had a YR12 destination and enrolled on their courses in September. Regular attendance is an issue for many despite warnings that they will lose their places. For young people dealing with trauma and shame, each day away makes it harder to return and young people sabotage their placements by disengaging before they are off-rolled or excluded. Because their funding is linked to attendance, education and training providers are not able to be sufficiently flexible to allow young people to get back on board without being penalised.

When working with the ETE support in the Leaving Care Team, many of these young people express a wish to find an apprenticeship rather than attend a college course. Although some have genuine vocational goals, this is generally because they find classroom situations stressful (but do not know that they will have to undertake a training or classroom element) or because that they want or need to be earning. Whatever the reason for wishing to go down this route, what they find is that there is a shortage of level1 and level2 apprenticeship places. Competition is strong and their CVs are thin and their interview and assessment skills let them down. The apprenticeships on offer through the local authority programme are likely to require higher levels of literacy and numeracy than these young people can offer at this stage. This group of young people need intensive IAG support along with preparation for interviews. Work experience and apprenticeship searches through BEBP will continue to be of value.

CLA and care leavers who are NEET occasionally ask for support to re-take their GCSEs or even for an opportunity to take them for the first time. There is no provision for this in Bromley at present. Even at YR12, young people can only undertake GCSEs or functional skills alongside a vocational programme. Though it is possible to find an alternative provider that is willing to register a young person as an examination candidate, there is no provision for tuition or enrolment on an actual course and enrolment for retakes is dependent on finding a an institution registered for the same examining boards.

There are 2 key factors underlying all of the issues described above:

- A lack of the sort of support that good parents provide for their children, even into their twenties. It is hard for family life to be recreated for this group and many of them would reject it if it was. Additional key-work or outreach support can work, however, in supporting young people to improve their daily routine and to fill some of the gaps that exist for young people who do not live in a family home.
- The need for an education provider that will allow young people to engage for short,

intensive revision programmes, preferably with high levels of support and enrolment for examinations, at points in the academic year other than September. This provision would need to be flexible enough to allow young people to re-engage if they fail to attend for a few days or weeks.

Strategies for reducing NEET numbers among post-16 CLA

There are a number of strands to this work, some of which are already underway.

- Compilation of a directory of provision by the Preparation for Adulthood team, as part of the local offer. This will be a useful tool for all professionals working with and providing guidance to CLA and care leavers.
- A review of resourcing and ETE support for 16+ CLA and care leavers, with a view to increasing the hours provided by the current ETE worker (currently providing 5 days per fortnight).
- Bromley Apprenticeship Programme has a focus on care leavers with our own young people being targeted for places. The Virtual School and the 16+ Leaving Care Team are working with managers across the authority to assess the accessibility of the various offers and to identify apprenticeship-ready young people. Young people will be supported to apply and attend interviews. Further support, at whatever level is appropriate will be provided for any young people who are successful in achieving an apprenticeship in the local authority as well as to their line managers and training providers
- Investigation of possible access to the KS5 vocational provision for SEMH in Bromley. This, smaller provision might be more suitable for CLA aged 16-18 and would also provide the required access to level 2 academic qualifications.
- The creation of a local Functional Skills Partnership with a local SFA funded provider or with an alternative provider (possibly ESF funded). The provider would enrol young people only as examination candidates. This would enable young people to access opportunities for tuition and examinations in qualifications at level 2 and below without being on roll in a school or engaging in a vocational programme. This will require higher level of outreach and support work but has the potential to create opportunities for success for young people who have not, so far, experienced any.
- Our relationship with Bromley College (LSEC) needs developing. IT has been agreed to explore a possible 'Pathways to Engagement' project with Bromley College or other provider. A payment-by results project, this would be a 6-8 week roll-on/roll-off scheme, possibly using an existing provider for individual support for young people. The programme would help young people to acquire skills for work with possible pathways into mainstream college, apprenticeships or employment.
- Following a model used in other authorities, the Virtual School Head Teacher is considering using top-sliced Pupil Premium Plus funding to employ an information, advice and guidance (IAG) specialist to attend all Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings for YR11 CLA. This will ensure that there is a greater focus on transition for these young people and a clear pathway to post-16 engagement is identified for each.

4. Supporting Documents

Table showing circumstances of individual NEET CLA aged 16-18.

| Identifier | Gender | In/Out of Borough | Type of accommodation | Current situation | KS4 Outcomes | SEN | YOS Triage/Order | Notes |
|-------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------|------------------|--|
| YR12 | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | F | IN | Semi Independent | NEET | 1 GCSE, English (c) | No needs identified. | Order | Applying for construction courses for September 2017 |
| 2 | M | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET G4 | No quals. | Statement | Order | Offered tuition by VS. Did not engage. Various alternative provisions started and abandoned |
| 3 | F | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET | no quals. | No SEN | Triage | Hopes to re-take GCSEs |
| 4 | F | IN | Foster care (mother and baby) | NEET G6 | Eng D Maths E | No SEN | No | Pregnant |
| 5 | F | IN | Foster care | NEET | 5xA*-C (not Eng/Maths) Btec L2 pass | No SEN | No | Working with Hayley. Turned down JACE opportunity but has applied for work and another preparation for work programme |
| 6 | M | OUT | Foster care | NEET | No quals. UASC late entry | No SEN | No | Working with Hayley, BEBP and Affinity Sutton. Looking for an apprenticeship/work experience and looking for a college place next year. Punctuality is an issue. |

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|-------------|---|-----|---------------------|------------|--|-----------------------|-------|--|
| 7 | F | OUT | Foster care | NEET | 2xGCSE (not Eng/Maths) | No SEN | No | Young parent |
| YR13 | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | F | IN | Semi Independent | NEET | Btec level1 Health and social care | No | No | Being encouraged to meet with Hayley. |
| 2 | M | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET | No quals. Frequent periods missing education | No | No | Met with TWIN apprenticeship on the 19/01/2017 who went through his options, including; art, design, music and construction opportunities. will meet again in March to meet a tutor to discuss his options. Lee has shown an interest in photography and stated that he wants to become a Vlogger. Alos wishes to re-take GCSEs. |
| 3 | F | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET G6 | | No | No | Young parent |
| 4 | M | IN | Semi Independent | NEET | No quals | School action Plus | Order | Currently not engaging in any constructive activity. Not wanting to do education or training and wants to do construction. Youth support worker at YOS (Andrew) is linked in . But has been breached to return to court on the 18th April and likely to be given custodial sentence. |
| 5 | M | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET | 6xGCSEs Maths C | No | No | Disengaged |

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|-----------|---|-----|------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|
| 6 | M | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET | No quals. School refuser | Statement | No | Has a diagnosis of conduct disorder and autism. He believes that now he's moved to out of borough, his local connections will secure him a job. |
| 7 | M | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET G4 | No quals | Statement Autism | Order (Probation) | Recently released from YOI |
| 8 | M | OUT | Semi Independent | NEET | No quals. Frequent placement changes. | Statement Autism | Order | Lifelong Learning Traineeship commencing on 24/04, with Wandsworth Skills Project. 4 days p/w plus work placement |
| 9 | M | IN | Semi Independent | NEET | No quals. | No | No | Missed meetings with Hayley. Trying to establish contact. Cannabis use. |
| 10 | F | IN | Semi Independent | NEET G6 | No quals. | EHC | No | Young parent |