

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 25 January 2022

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: ETE UPDATE

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Chief Officer: Richard Baldwin Director of Children, Education and Families

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the education training and employment (ETE) outcomes for Bromley Children in Care and Care Leavers in Bromley.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Committee note and comment on progress made towards the actions identified in the Education Employment and Training Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2020-2022 as laid out in the outcomes and evaluation section of this report.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

Summary of Impact: The ETE strategy was completed in summer 2020 in response to growing concerns about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on opportunities for young people seeking employment and training opportunities. Our ETE figures had fallen to 17% in March 2020 from a consistent 40% in the 12 months before. As set out in page 6 of the strategy; 8% of apprenticeships were made redundant and 36% were furloughed in the initial lockdown. Many of our young people in entry level roles or on zero hours contracts also lost work. Many of our young people struggled to engage in learning online – something we saw disproportionately impact on ESOL learners which resulted in many students leaving courses prematurely. However in May 2020 this bounced back up to 49% but dropped to 41% by March 2021. We recognised a need to review our strategy for supporting our young people to achieve and sustain ETE.

We did achieve significant success of young people making significant contributions to the efforts to combat Covid-19. One young person completed an adult nursing apprenticeship working in front line Covid-19 wards and another young person worked in hotels housing NHS staff. He was recognised by his employer for his commitment during the pandemic.

Sadly many care leavers struggle to achieve and sustain employment or training due to disrupted education experiences, limited formal qualifications, and early trauma impacting on their ability to maintain positive social relationships. Maintaining education and employment can be one of the best ways to boost confidence and self-esteem and as well as build social capital and increase positive friendship networks. Our ETE strategy set out methods to try and formalise a process and workflow to ensure all young people had a clear ETE plan and were offered thoughtful, creative opportunities that matched their skills and talents.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People:

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost
2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
3. Budget head/performance centre:
4. Total current budget for this head: £
5. Source of funding:

Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:

Legal

1. Legal Requirement:None:
2. Call-in: Not Applicable:

Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 Update on ETE strategy objectives:

3.1.1 **To create an ETE pathway for every young person known to our service up to 25 years old, putting their wishes and feelings at the heart of the plan.**

3.1.1.1 All young people have an up to date pathway plan that reflects their needs in terms of placement, health, and wellbeing, as well as ETE. This is updated on a 6 monthly basis and is a key performance indicator for the Leaving Care Service (LCS). As of November 2021 94% of pathway plans were completed in timescales.

3.1.2 **All children in year 11 to receive support to identify a suitable education or training destination for year 12 in line with their abilities and interests. All children in year 11 to have their autumn term Personal Education Plan (PEP) supported by the Virtual School to ensure all young people transitioning to year 12 have secure education and training destinations.**

3.1.2.1 All young people in year 11 and 12 continue to be supported by the Virtual School and receive a termly PEP meeting even if they are NEET. The Virtual School offered training to the Young Person's Advisors (YPAs) in autumn 2020 so they are able to complete PEPs for young people in full time education who may have turned 18. There has been a change in reporting systems from CareFirst to Liquidlogic in July 2021 which has impacted on performance data specifically around PEPs which is being addressed, but in the summer term of 2021 98% of young people had a PEP in timescale. The Virtual School also report that there is evidence of increased professional curiosity in education planning and consideration of the impact of school life on children's wellbeing and ambitions for the future. The Virtual School also work with FreshStart; an independent agency to offer intense support and focus for young people at significant transition points who may need additional support to consider potential destinations post year 12. The Ofsted Focussed Visit (October 2021) reported that 'A proactive virtual school advocates strongly for appropriate educational provision'. We also refer to Maximus, a third sector organisation that offer 1:1 support for young people at risk of NEET from the age of 16, to ensure we have a range of services on offer. We have also partnered with I Aspire, a De Paul social enterprise programme who have offered 1:1 mentoring for young people who are NEET. 92% of Children Looked After started year 12 with a secure place in a sixth form or college in September 2021. This is a 20% increase in the last 4 years. Of the 16 young people (most likely to be NEET) who engaged with FreshStart over the summer, 14 are still in their college place as of November 2021. In total in 2020/21 we had 24 young people enrolled in higher education L4+ courses, compared with 22 last year. We have 8 care leavers who have started an undergraduate course in 2021. We are exceptionally proud of them for continuing with their studies particularly given the challenges of studying throughout the pandemic.

3.1.2.2 We also have two care leavers starting their Assisted Year in Support Employment as newly qualified social workers with Bromley YOS and one other care leaver who has started their MA in Social Work at Greenwich University.

3.1.3 **For any child or young person who becomes, or is at risk of becoming, NEET to be referred to either the Virtual School or an ETE worker for post 18 young people within 14 days of becoming NEET, or when risks of NEET are identified. For all our children who become NEET to be heard at the NEET panel within 28 days of becoming NEET and to be regularly reviewed until they become ETE. For every young person to have their qualifications clearly recorded in their pathway plan and NEET panel referral and for all our children to be offered individual tailored support to identify courses, apprenticeships or employment opportunities that are achievable and realistic.**

3.1.3.1 We reviewed the role and JD of our ETE Officer within the LCS so that, as an alternative to providing 1:1 support to a smaller cohort of young people, they have a broader view of the whole cohort. We created a new workflow so that the ETE Officer completes a three way meeting with the young person and their YPA ahead of NEET Panel to ensure we are reviewing up to date information about the young person's interests as well as accurate information about their qualifications so the panel can match opportunities according to skills and ability. The case is brought to panel within 28 days of the young person becoming NEET. We have panel members from the DWP, Virtual School, Targeted Youth Support, and Bromley Education Business Partnership. We can support additional referrals to Maximus or offer information about relevant courses and job opportunities. Through our work with the DWP we have been able to link our young people into the Government Kickstarter Scheme. We are proud to say we had three care leavers who were successfully recruited into the scheme in October 2021 and employed within Bromley Council, one as the Digital Information Assistant, one as a Market Supervisor, and a third as an Active Involvement Worker in the participation team. Bromley Education Business Partnership also sit within the panel and offer support around work experience opportunities using their links with local businesses.

3.1.4 All young people are offered support in CV writing and interview skills. The team will work with Bromley Education Business Partnership to source suitable work experience placements for young people looking to build their CV and offer access to an annual employability event to meet local employers and explore opportunities. Young people who have been NEET for longer than three months to have the opportunity to come onto the NEET group work programme run by Active Involvement Team.

3.1.4.1 All young people are able to access CV writing and interview support from our ETE Officer at any time. We are also very lucky to be supported by the Bromley Education Business Partnership (BEBP) who have links with businesses in the community to offer work experience placements. BEBP have also partnered with Active Involvement who have run the 'New Beginnings' programme for young people who are NEET. The programme has run three times and takes a small cohort of young people and offers intense support around self-esteem, barriers to ETE, and aspiration building to support people who are longer term NEET to get prepared for employment / education. Of the 14 young people who have attended the programme, all have completed the 6 week course and 7 have been successful in sustaining ETE opportunities including a return to an animal husbandry course full time at Capel Manor and another applicant obtaining a full time Kickstarter role. Sadly the annual employability day run by BEBP has been cancelled this year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

3.1.5 All our young people who have an EHC Plan to have their plan reviewed on an annual basis to ensure suitable support is put in place if they are in education or training. Any young person who has learning disabilities to be referred to the Adult Learning Disability Team for a Care Act Assessment once they are over 16 and for all young people who are NEET due to barriers around mental health or learning difficulties, and who are not in receipt of Adult Services, to be referred to the Transitions Panel for multi-agency discussion.

3.1.5.1 The Virtual School, Social Care, and SEND work closely together to ensure all young people with SEND receive tailored support for their needs. 41% of CLA have an EHC plan which is above national averages. SEND helpfully attend a weekly resource panel to discuss tripartite funding for placements for children with complex needs to ensure there is minimal delay in setting up appropriate resources. The Virtual School and Social Care meet monthly to discuss complex cases and SEND have recently committed to a single point of contact for all CLA to ensure all plans are reviewed in timescale and resolve any difficulties for complex cases. The Transitions Panel has also been in place for over 12 months and is now well established. Young people approaching adulthood are presented for discussion around the support required from Adult Social Care and timescales set around Care Act or Mental Capacity Assessments. The panel continues to hear young adults open to the Leaving Care Service who may have needs that don't

neatly fit within Adult LD or CMHT. This enables professional discussion around pathways of support for those with complex needs and has been successful in promoting positive joint work.

3.1.6 Asylum seeking children to have access to English for Speakers of Other Languages support and tailored social opportunities to create sustainable relationships in the UK.

3.1.6.1 Our asylum seeking young people are supported to access ESOL courses at colleges as well as being provided with legal assistance to regularise their immigration status. The Active Involvement Team have also run a number of social events for our young asylum seekers to come together to celebrate religious festivals as well as offered support for all young people to attend our varied summer programme.

3.1.7 Work with colleagues in HR to identify work opportunities / apprenticeships within the Council and ensure young people are offered adequate preparation for interview. To develop work experience opportunities for young people through the Leaving Care Service or Active Involvement Team, building transferable skills such as involvement in interviewing for new staff and the Young Inspectors Scheme.

3.1.7.1 We have worked closely with HR around the creation of 10 Kickstarter roles across the Council and have been successful in achieving work placements for three of our care leavers. In addition we have two care leavers starting their Assisted Year in Supported Employment as newly qualified social workers in the Youth Offending Service. All young people attending the New Beginnings programme were offered work experience in a variety of settings such as within Bromley Youth Services, Willow Bird of Prey Centre, or Cleaning and Landscape Gardening services.

3.1.7.2 The Leaving Care Service have also launched the Young Inspector's Scheme this year and have trained three young people to work with the Placement Officer to complete quality assurance visits at four semi-independent providers. The young people have fed back to Commissioning and senior managers about their insights into the quality of support and accommodation, offering them additional training as well as providing essential feedback for the service.

3.1.7.3 We continue to involve young people in recruitment of staff including new Team Manager posts in the Children Looked After Service as well as interviewing for the new Director of Children, Education and Families. The Active Involvement Team are also completing a training programme for young people to enable us to have a group of young people who are briefed and prepared to offer this support more broadly across Children's Social Care.

3.2 Update on Outcomes for Young People:

3.2.1 Of the 247 care leavers we are currently working with, 143 or 59% are currently recorded as in some form of ETE which is an increase from March 2021 where we were at 41% ETE.

3.2.2 27 (11%) are recorded as NEET due to illness, disability, pregnancy or parenting.

3.2.3 74 (30%) are NEET due to 'other circumstances'. This cohort includes young people who may have a history of offending, education disruption, placement instability, and adverse childhood experiences.

3.2.4 It is also noted we are seeing an increase in the number of young people remaining in touch with the Local Authority from ages 21-25 (annually this has been an exponential rise of 10 year on year since 2019). This cohort are more likely to have complex needs and are more likely to be vulnerable to NEET; those in ETE are less likely to return for additional assistance. We are working in close conjunction with colleagues in Adult Services to offer wrap around support which in some way may be the reason more vulnerable young people are involved for longer in LCS. It is not surprising therefore that 62% of care leavers aged 18-20, are in ETE as proportionally there

will be a greater mix of abilities within the lower age group who still engage with the service on a statutory basis.

3.2.5 Overall we have made solid progress through use of our partnerships across the Council as well as in HR to identify work experience and opportunities for our young people. We have provided some innovative and creative support for young people to prepare for employment and have made ETE a clear priority for the service. But we strive to improve further upon the progress made so far.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Corporate Policy Implications, Financial Implications, Personnel Implications, Legal Implications, Procurement Implications, Customer Impact Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Education Employment and Training Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2020-2022