

JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW: TRANSITION FROM LEAVING CARE TO ADULT LIFE

Report By: Councillor Mrs J.E. Pemberton, Chair of Review
Group

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing and Children's Services Scrutiny Committees of the progress of the Joint Scrutiny Review on the Transition from Leaving Care to Adult Life and to make recommendations as to the way forward.

Progress to Date

2. Following agreement by the respective Scrutiny Committees that the Review be undertaken, initial discussion took place and a range of relevant background documents were assembled.
3. Membership of the Review Group was identified as follows:

Councillor Mrs PA Andrews
Councillor J.W. Hope M.B.E
Councillor J.G Jarvis
Councillor G Lucas
Councillor Mrs J.E. Pemberton (Chair)
Mr R Kelly
Mrs D Strutt

4. The following terms of reference for the Review were agreed:
 - To review the Council's approach to transition issues for looked after children with support needs from childhood to adult life.
 - To investigate how improvements can be made to the transition process.
 - Following the review to advise the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) of the best policy to put in place to implement the improvements identified.

5. Alongside this, the desired outcomes for the Review were identified as follows:
 - For Members of the Review to have considered the various elements involved in the transition process and how these interrelate with those services performed by the Council's partners.
 - To have considered possible areas of improvement to the transition process and make recommendations on improvement for consideration by the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) and the Council's partner organisations.
 - For any future service to be capable of implementation in collaboration with partner organisations.
6. The first meeting of the Review Group took place on 26 February 2007, confirming the terms of reference and desired outcomes. Following discussion, it was agreed that the issues involved were complex and worthy of detailed consideration. Consequently a decision was taken that it was not possible to complete this piece of work to a satisfactory standard in sufficient time to report back to Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing and Children's Services Scrutiny Committees in March 2007 as originally anticipated.
7. On the basis of the discussions, a number of key themes were identified for further exploration by the Review Group. These were as follows:
 - The role of corporate parent continues beyond the age of 18 up to and including the age of 24 for care leavers in continuing education
 - The role of the corporate parent, and therefore the scope of the Review, should cover the role of a wider group of agencies eg CAMHS, Probation, Prison Service etc
 - The primary focus of the Review should be looked after children and care leavers who are the responsibility of Herefordshire but the review should also address looked after children and care leavers in Herefordshire from other Local Authorities
 - Whilst the review will cover those care leavers who have continuing needs such as learning disabilities and mental health problems, those with more profound and multiple disabilities will not be included within the scope of the Review
 - The Review Group should take a particular interest in the issue of appropriate accommodation for 16 to 18 year olds, including supported lodgings, 'halfway house' options etc
 - The Review should be informed by learning from other projects and schemes regionally and nationally eg sexual health, teenage pregnancy etc
 - The Review should scrutinise Pathway Plans and how successful these are in identifying and meeting the needs of care leavers

- Whilst the Review should focus on issues relating to the looked after system and arrangements for leaving care, recommendations for further work outside this scope will be made should this issue arise in the course of this work
- In order to find creative and innovative solutions, it will be necessary for the Review Group to 'think outside the box'

Financial Implications

No specific financial implications have been identified at this stage.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT**
- (a) the Joint Scrutiny Review on the Transition from Leaving Care to Adult Life be taken forward in the 2007/08 work programme for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing and Children's Services Scrutiny Committees;**
 - (b) this Review remains a Joint Review between the two Scrutiny Committees under the wider leadership of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee;**
 - (c) following the establishment of Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing and Children's Services Scrutiny Committees for 2007/08, a new Review Group is established comprising membership from both Scrutiny Committees.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Care Leavers Scoping Statement
Transition from Leaving Care to Adult Life
DfES Statistics November 2006
Leaving Care National Protocol Final Revision
Life After Care Article
Wrong Turn Article