



Portsmouth

CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

A REVIEW INTO EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG ADULTS AGED 18-25

Date published: 7 March 2024

Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, reports prepared by a Scrutiny Panel should be considered formally by the Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Member within a period of eight weeks, as required by Rule 11(a) of the Policy & Review Procedure Rules.

PREFACE

The Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel undertook a review into Education, Employment and Training opportunities for our care experienced adults aged 18 to 25. This topic has been discussed with various council officers within the Children, Families and Education directorate, as well as many external professionals.

We watched videos of our young adults giving us an insight into how they feel about the help the Council has given them, plus how else we can help them in the future. We also had information from colleges and training providers on how education, training and other partners support our care experienced young people to participate and progress. Also, other partners came to speak with us about how they are also involved, which we found to be a great help.

We feel that we have two main concerns; the first being more training for educational establishments and employers taking on our young adults, many of whom have suffered a great deal of trauma in their young lives and need a lot of care and understanding from those closest to them in schools or the workplace.

Secondly, I feel that more could be done in getting our care experienced young adults into the workplace. As a Council more can be done as we have thousands of different kinds of employment and as the corporate parent to these young people whom we have a responsibility to, we should be more pro-active in helping them into employment. I also feel more pressure could be put on local and national businesses who operate in the city to help us get these young people into the workplace.

I would like to convey on behalf of the panel, our thanks to all officers and external witnesses who have helped us into making the review a success.

Councillor Brian Madgwick
Chair, Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.

Date: 7 March 2024

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1. Aims of the Review

The aims of the review are to:

- Explore how we can support and enable more of our care experienced young people to access education, employment and training opportunities that meet their needs;
- Review the current offer and the help and support care experienced young adults receive to help them access such opportunities;
- Consider what more we could collectively do as a Council to create more opportunities; improve our offer to our children; and through this improve the education, employment and training outcomes for care experienced young adults.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1. Consideration is given to developing a strategy to secure sustainable funding and resources for: the Careers and Employability Hub; and the Employability Academy which is run from the Hub. This would be a mix of external funding and PCC resources building on what has already been put in place between PCC and our partners.**
- 2. The Employability Academy considers expanding trauma informed training for all educational establishments as well as employers.**
- 3. Work should be undertaken with Shaping Portsmouth to agree a communication that can be sent to the business community outlining the benefits of employing care experienced young adults and ask that they consider ringfencing a number of posts. A shorter version should also be prepared for Members so they can circulate it to their business contacts.**
- 4. Officers from the CFE Directorate liaise with the Council's Business Development team and Portsmouth Social Enterprise to promote the Employability Academy and ensure businesses become more involved in offering apprenticeships.**
- 5. Consideration be given to care experienced young adults being provided with a bus pass for a month to enable them to get to their employment or training before they receive their first salary payment. This will be part of the Care Leaver offer.**
- 6. A progression pathway for Personal Advisers (PAs) be explored which could develop their skills and help the council to retain them. PAs are vital in helping getting care experienced young adults into education, employment and training.**

- 7. The Council continue to build on existing campaigns to increase the number of foster carers in the city in order to reduce the numbers of care experienced children being placed outside of Portsmouth. This would reduce the cost and keep their valuable skills within the city. In particular, it is recommended that we should reach out to communities that currently do not have many foster carers.**
- 8. Cabinet Members are requested to work with their directorates about identifying opportunities for care experienced young adults within the council and explore whether a number of posts in each directorate could be ring fenced for them.**

3. Background

On 15 June 2023 the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (henceforth referred to in this report as "the panel") met informally with the Deputy Director of Children Services - Education, Mike Stoneman to discuss ideas and topics for a review in the 2023-24 municipal year.

The Panel learned that too many of our care experienced young adults are not being offered the range of opportunities they need to enable them to access suitable education, employment and training which in turn is limiting their aspirations and achievements. It was therefore thought this was a good topic to put forward to Scrutiny Management Panel. The Scrutiny Management Panel agreed this topic on 26 July 2023.

The Panel met formally on 4 occasions and received evidence from the following witnesses:

- Sam Bushby, Deputy Director Children and Families
- Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Education
- Amanda Percy, Post 16 Skills and Campaigns Manager, Education
- Tina Henley, Headteacher of the Virtual School & College, Education
- Keely Mitchell, Head of Adolescents and Young People, Children & Families
- Sarah Read, Service Leader, Children & Families
- Care experienced young adults
- Personal Advisers (PAs)
- Education providers including City of Portsmouth College, Prince's Trust, HTP Apprenticeship College, HSDC (Havant and South Downs College) and University of Portsmouth

4. The National Context

When a child is cared for by the Local Authority, the Council becomes their corporate parent. As a result, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children and young adults who are looked after by us. A care experienced young person is someone who has been cared for by the Local Authority and they are supported until they are

25 years old. A child or adolescent in care, or our care experienced young adults look to us to be the best parent we can be.

Care experienced young people (care leavers) in England are over ten times more likely than their peers to be not in education, employment or training (NEET). Overall, nearly one-third young people were NEET compared to just 2.4% of the general population. A significant number of the young people were identified as 'economically inactive' due to disability including mental health issues. Of the care experienced young people that were in employment over two thirds were in short-term employment, including part-time or poorly paid and zero-hour contracts. In 2023 The Department of Education reported on research completed by the Nuffield Foundation and the University of Oxford. The research showed through the collection of data that the legacy of earlier disadvantages, such as childhood trauma or disruption to schools, gets cemented in early adulthood. The research shows a strong link between economic inactivity and higher levels of special educational needs during Key Stage 4, including attending a special school. This was particularly marked for young people who are care experienced, of whom 62.4% were identified as having a higher level of need.

Below are the detail of our statistical neighbours, the Southeast and England overall since 2014 to 2023. This shows that we are broadly in line with our statistical neighbours in the South East:

Portsmouth - Statistical Neighbour View												
Change Authority		Portsmouth	Topic		Looked After Children	Indicator						Care Leavers - NEET (%)
Care leavers who were in not in education, training or employment (%)												
Statistical Neighbours		2014	2015	-	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change from previous year
801	Bristol, City of	50.00	46.00	-	44.00	42.00	35.00	37.00	32.00	31.00	29.00	-2.00
882	Southend-on-Sea	39.00	33.00	-	39.00	44.00	44.00	30.00	17.00	20.00	32.00	12.00
355	Salford	22.00	22.00	-	35.00	28.00	29.00	24.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	0.00
851	Portsmouth	18.00	28.00	-	42.00	39.00	33.00	26.00	31.00	31.00	34.00	3.00
874	Peterborough	49.00	41.00	-	42.00	45.00	44.00	41.00	42.00	38.00	34.00	-4.00
831	Derby	34.00	27.00	-	41.00	32.00	49.00	42.00	39.00	39.00	38.00	-1.00
852	Southampton	46.00	47.00	-	46.00	46.00	49.00	50.00	54.00	45.00	42.00	-3.00
331	Coventry	51.00	51.00	-	53.00	46.00	53.00	52.00	52.00	48.00	42.00	-6.00
879	Plymouth	31.00	33.00	-	46.00	52.00	48.00	39.00	51.00	45.00	46.00	1.00
373	Sheffield	47.00	44.00	-	39.00	40.00	49.00	47.00	49.00	46.00	46.00	0.00
894	Telford and Wrekin	43.00	48.00	-	43.00	49.00	40.00	37.00	47.00	48.00	48.00	0.00
	Statistical Neighbours	41.20	39.20	-	42.80	42.40	44.00	39.90	41.50	39.20	38.90	-0.30
989	South East	-	37.00	-	36.00	33.00	33.00	34.00	39.00	34.00	35.00	1.00
970	England	38.00	39.00	-	40.00	39.00	39.00	39.00	41.00	38.00	38.00	0.00

The recommendations from the Nuffield Foundation and the University of Oxford research included the following:

- Local Authorities should provide strong routes for young people to go into (and back into) post-16 education and training.
- National government should provide additional 'top up' funding for care experienced young people to participate in apprenticeships and other schemes to ensure that they are not financially disadvantaged.
- Young people leaving care between 14 and 16 should be considered as an 'at risk' group with respect to complex transitions into adulthood.
- Stronger links should be created with local employers to improve young people's knowledge of the range of opportunities available to them.

- Targeted pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship support should be available to prepare young people with the most complex needs to take steps towards work-related opportunities.
- Education providers and employers should have greater awareness of trauma and mental health needs for care leavers and other care-experienced young people.

Nationally the Care Leaver Covenant allows public, private, and voluntary sector organisations in England to pledge support through work experience, apprenticeships, and free/discounted goods and services. The Government has reported that, as of September 2023, over 400 businesses have signed this covenant and are offering employment opportunities to care leavers. It has also reported that the organisations that have signed the covenant will offer, between them, over 1,000 employment opportunities between December 2022 and December 2025

5. The local picture

Here in Portsmouth as a corporate parent we want the best for our children, adolescents and young adults so that we can see them reaching their potential at school or college, gaining employment that meets their needs; being healthy and enjoying good relationships with their peers and families. Working together as partners we have the opportunity to offer our children and young adults opportunities including leisure, hobbies and interests. We want our children, adolescents and young adults to have the opportunity to enter adulthood equipped with the skills to lead successful independent lives and to make their way in education and employment, to become respected and valued members of their communities.

At this time we know that not all our Care Experienced Young adults are being provided the opportunities to flourish as we would like. The table below explains how many children NEET/EET and those are that are EET:

368	Portsmouth Care Experienced Young Adults
177	Young Adults Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)
189	Young Adults in Education Employment of training (EET)
2	Young Adults whose situation is unknown
5	Young Adults in an Apprenticeship
87	Young Adults in Training and Employment
15	Young Adults in higher education
82	Young Adults in education other than higher

This is further broken down in the below:

Care Experienced - not previously seeking safety / asylum

30/01/2023

30/01/2024

Activity Status	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
EET	87	42.65%	86	41.75%
NEET	112	54.90%	119	57.77%
Not Recorded	5	2.45%	1	0.49%
Grand Total	204	100.00%	206	100.00%

Care Experienced - Formerly seeking safety / asylum

Activity Status	30/01/2023		30/01/2024	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
EET	115	66.47%	104	64.20%
NEET	55	31.79%	57	35.19%
Not Recorded	3	1.73%	1	0.62%
Grand Total	173	100.00%	162	100.00%

There are currently 162 care experienced young people in Portsmouth who came into our care seeking safety and asylum, and there are 43 children in our care currently seeking safety and asylum. PCC offer support in terms of accessing courses and colleges for studying English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL). It is very difficult for young people who are not permitted to work whilst their application is progressed, and they are awaiting leave to remain.

We have 170 care Experienced young adults living outside Portsmouth City Council Boundaries.

We know that for some young people accessing education employment or training (EET) can present with challenges. Providing a platform for our young people not only supports them to engage with work or training but also supports young people from a heightened risk of long periods out of employment, offending behaviour, teen pregnancy and ill health. 69 of our young adults report mental health to be a barrier to accessing education, training or employment, 28 young adults have recognised disability.

We need to think differently about the opportunities for our young people including looking to our cultural partners who are well positioned to offer innovative approaches to some young people who have struggled with formal learning.

6. Evidence and Conclusions

Personal Advisors

Care experienced young adults have access to a Personal Advisor (PA) until the age of 25, unless at 21 they choose not to have one anymore and the Council agrees to this. This is a statutory duty. PAs provide the young people with support into work, education or training and they also provide support in finding housing, managing finances and provide emotional support. Their view of their role is that

they walk alongside the young people whilst they make their choices, and the PAs can pick them up when they make mistakes.

The Council completes a survey each year for young people and 62% of the care experienced young people completed this. 86% said they felt supported by their PAs in relation to education, employment, and training. This had increased by 8% on last year which was encouraging and reflects the positive relationships the personal advisors form with their young people. It is evident that Personal Advisors play a critical part of the route to any success of our care experienced young adults.

Careers and Employability Hub

The Careers and Employability Hub supports our care experienced young adults to access work opportunities. A new framework was developed after the withdrawal of the DWP from the Portsmouth Youth Hub. The Hub also offers drop ins at the youth centre at Paulsgrove and officers said that they would like to do more. Careers advisors will travel to the north of the city to meet individuals. There is a specialist carers guidance worker who works with the care experienced young people. She works directly in the hub and PAs can refer their young people to her; young people can also self-refer to her. This has been in place for almost two years and is having a positive impact.

Referrals continue to be received from PA's for Care Leavers who are ready to engage in EET. All young people are checked for their Universal Credit status with DWP work coaches. The advisers then email both PA's and work coaches with contact details for both to ensure partnership working. Any young people who require additional support are then allocated to a Careers and Progression Advisor or an Employment Advisor for 1-1 support.

Our DWP colleagues regularly check with the specialist careers adviser for any young people who have a care leaver marker when they make applications for Universal Credit, we can then link up the professionals working with the young people to ensure holistic support.

Allocated workers work in partnership with young people's work coaches and PA's to support young people into EET.

Currently the hub has 39 Care Experienced young people open for support

Support offered includes:

- CV writing, interview skills, soft skills, employment application support
- Delivery of careers guidance
- Access to opportunities
- Support with travel
- Supportive workshops and information sessions.
- Applications to FE and other training providers.
- Access to IT to support online course attendance.
- Sign posting to partners for opportunities such as The Princes Trust programme.
- Consulting with external partners to support attendance at courses.

- Personal and safety support as necessary to support young people.
- A friendly, welcoming, relaxed environment with access to a variety of professionals who hold a multitude of information to support our young people. Working together to support young people to avoid DWP sanctions for non-attendance.
- Visits to Universities as requested by young people.

The adviser regularly provides information, advice, and guidance to PA's to support progression with their young people. The majority of live referrals are engaged with their case worker.

Partnership working continues; Careers and Employability works with Boost, Princes Trust, Abri, Reach 4 skills, Learning Skills Solutions, as well as our local colleges' and universities.

The specialist work coach, PA's and Work Coaches have built better relationships and are able to correspond with each other on behalf of young people, where there is a risk of young people being sanctioned.

The Careers and Employability Hub is now also offering regular jobs fairs at the civic offices and will be offering an Apprenticeship fair during apprenticeship week.

The Hub continues to make connections with education/ employment and training providers and now has a dedicated Employment Advisor responsible for organising events. The Learning Place will be working in partnership with the hub to offer maths and other courses.

A variety of courses, employment opportunities and training has been offered to young people within this quarter to include SIA, CTEC, college applications, university applications and visits, maths courses, work experience, apprenticeship opportunities, Princes Trust courses and traineeships.

Employability Academy

To build on this the Local Authority has launched The Employability Academy that brings together opportunities, support, resources, and expertise to help our young people to overcome barriers, raise aspirations and make a successful progression to employment and training.

This will be offered to young people for a minimum of six weeks, with the opportunity of work experience at the end of the academy. Care experienced young people will then return to their job coach equipped with employability skills. Someone from the DWP will work at the Portsmouth Careers & Employability Youth Hub at least once a month to support the Employability Academy and see Care Leavers who would struggle to attend the main job centre.

What will this include:

- Careers advice and guidance
- The iCan development programme
- Aspirational Visits

- Work experience
- Employability workshops
- Apprenticeships
- Mentoring
- Education and training
- The Careers and Employability Hub
- Aspirational visits

Partners will include:

- Young People
- Portsmouth City Council
- Shaping Portsmouth
- Solent Careers Hub
- The DWP
- NHS Employment
- Key employers
- The voluntary sector

The offer will be based in the Careers and Employability Hub and build on current work being carried out to support care experienced young people.

In partnership with Shaping Portsmouth, we are developing training for employers to become care experienced ready. The aim is to ensure employers can recruit, support and retain our young people. We will support employers by:

- To ring fence roles for Care leavers
- Ensure simplified application processes
- Clear job descriptions
- Safeguarding & trauma informed line managers
- Learning & development opportunities
- Care leaver covenant- inclusive employment toolkit
- Aspirational visits
- Work experience
- Onboarding support and employment support

Delivery is already in place and current successes include:

Work Experience- John Lewis Partnership

- 5 young people identified and invited for taster day- 2 attended
- 2 of those young people successfully completed Work experience at Waitrose Southsea
- Both young people should move into employment once the roles become live.
- Continued communications with John Lewis to ensure successful transition to employment.

Education Opportunities

- Supported one young person to gain work experience through Basketball4 Buckland initiative
- Application completed for funded level 2 Principles of Youth Work with National Youth Agency -successful

- Supported for further volunteering opportunity with PCC Youth Workers
- Currently completing qualification with support.

Continued support:

- Further young person supported to return to college to complete Maths Functional skills in preparation of applying to university.
- One young person completing Rail Futures programme in partnership with DWP
- One young person supported to complete Security Licence qualification in partnership with Princes Trust
- One young person supported to enrol and attend college
- One young person supported to apply for an apprenticeship with Civil Service

The Virtual School

The Virtual School & College works with young people from the age of 4 up to the age 18 and this would encompass the start of the care experienced journey. Each young person has a personal opportunity plan (POP) meeting to discuss their education, employment or training. Where they are not in education, employment or training (NEET) the Virtual School & College works with the Post-16 Skills Manager to formulate an action plan to support them to go back into education, employment or training (EET). In the current Year 12 cohort there are 64 young people including 22 young people seeking asylum. 8 of these are NEET which includes one new Mum; all but one of these have plans for September. In Year 13 there are 53 students including 14 young people seeking asylum. 14 of these are NEET including 2 new Mums, 4 actively working with career and progression advisers, 3 looking for apprenticeships, 3 looking for employment and 2 with limited engagement.

How can we support and enable more of our care experienced young people to access education, employment and training opportunities that meet their needs

The panel learned that some young people had experienced significant trauma and as a consequence lacked confidence due to their previous experiences. They may have had difficult experiences with education, at times impacted by moving homes and attending a number of schools. Young people have often experienced abuse or neglect and this impacts on relationships and trust. PAs are a vital support for care experienced young adults and they will work to understand why care experienced young people are not attending education, employment or training and look at ways to solve the issues identified. Care experienced young people can also need help to manage their time, appointments, using public transport and planning ahead. PAs spend a great deal of time helping young people with skills when they start on a college course or start employment. The team provide financial help towards clothes for interviews or the workplace as they often do not have suitable clothes.

When young people first start a college course or job, they can feel that they are different and judged. The team are working with employers to ensure that the young people receive a welcoming and supporting environment, that is nurturing.

Apprenticeships care leavers' bursary

The bursary is eligible for apprentices who are in care or who are care experienced. It is paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to the apprenticeship training provider once the apprentice has been on the apprenticeship for at least 60 days. The bursary amount is £3,000 payable in instalments over the first year of the apprenticeship.

The provider must pass it on to the apprentice within 30 days of receiving it. For the payment to be made, the eligible apprentice must tell the training provide that they are care experienced and provide written confirmation from their local authority. Training providers should ensure candidates and apprentices have an opportunity to say if they are a care leaver and give the apprentice a choice as to whether this information is shared with their employer.

Amanda Percy, Post 16 Skills and Campaign Manager, PCC, said that if young people want that support, they will continue to give it. There are care experienced young people who do not enjoy their apprenticeship and the personal advisors will support them in their next steps. Some care experienced young people do not want to declare that they are care experienced with colleges.

Education and training providers

The Panel received evidence from HTP Apprenticeship College, City of Portsmouth College, Havant and South Downs College and the Princes Trust.

HTP Apprenticeship College

HTP Apprenticeship College is a private independent training company, with their head office in the Isle of Wight and they have had an office in Portsmouth since 2005. HTP does not have a full-time provision as other colleges in Portsmouth have; their offer for this geographical area is apprenticeships and also traineeships. The reason they have not helped more of NEET young people is that they have not had the referrals to be able to build up that partnership.

The college offer a more traditional study programme for 16–18-year-olds which extends to 25 for those with an Education Healthcare Plan (EHCP). They also run a traineeship provision, which sits before an apprenticeship, and allows young people to have tasters in different sectors with the hope that they will progress onto an apprenticeship or into employment or further education. Most private companies invest in the young people and want them to stay on at the end of the apprenticeship. The ambition is that 95% of the time they will go into substantive employment.

The college work proactively with young people if they are referred to them and work with employers if they have vacancies; for example, Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust (PHUT) who they have some good apprenticeship vacancies with. The college work with employers all across the south within approximately 1.5 hours of

Portsmouth. The culture for HTP is to help young people and they are happy to receive referrals from organisations in the city to work proactively with people to find them a way forward to meet aspirations. The college can then advertise through the government 'find an apprenticeship' service and link with partners such as the Solent apprenticeship hub. It is vital to build partnerships with stakeholders and employers and he felt this is where there is a gap currently. HTP have now offered a pre-apprenticeship programme for children we care for and care experienced young people.

City of Portsmouth College

There is a vast range of provision on offer ranging from entry level through to degree level. They have provision for students with EHCPs and specialist level 1 provision across a range of vocational areas where students get additional support because they are care experienced or have issues at home, to encourage them to stay on programme.

The vocational courses prepare students for the world of work; work experience is built into their courses. The college work closely with Amada's team at PCC and receive lots of referrals from the Council and external agencies. She felt that the college do know how to support those students who need additional support. If a student does not succeed on one course they have different systems in place to support them to find one that is a better fit for them.

It was felt that the City of Portsmouth College is very flexible. The start of the year has begun but they are still taking on students who had not made their minds up and they take new students all the year round. In terms of what could be better, she felt that they do have behaviour issues and attendance can be an issue. The staff try to support them and it does sometimes help over time.

The college work closely with schools and pupils in years 8,9,10 and 11 to offer taster days and hold open evenings with parents and young people. Some young people come in have a clear plan on what they want to do and how to do it. There are careers advisors if young people are still unsure on what pathway they wish to take.

The college hold independent living skills for their level 1 students and their SEN provision. This includes budgeting and money management, and a certificate is awarded at the end of this course. This is compulsory and timetabled in for their lower-level programmes.

Havant and South Downs College

There are 3,000 full time students at HSDC and half of those are from Portsmouth They offer foundation learning from E1 up to higher education and adult learning and offer English and Maths only for their vulnerable students that are unable to manage a full programme. There are two members of PCC staff who work in the colleges in the Autumn and Spring terms to look after the care experienced young people.

Charlie from Havant and South Downs College felt that the communication between the Council and the colleges could be strengthened, and questioned whether they

could be involved at an earlier point with students with additional vulnerabilities. HSDC have 111 Looked After Children with 23 from Portsmouth. It is a combination of when they receive handovers from schools and schools cannot share information with colleges until they are enrolled with them legally. They are regularly attending the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) meetings held weekly so are aware of risk through this.

Senior leaders at HSDC are trauma informed and the college run bespoke programmes. They are also doing further work on relational practice.

Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust offer a range of programmes across the southeast to progress young people who are NEET, including care experienced young people between the ages of 16-30. This is done in several ways; either enrolling a young person straight into a programme with a fixed outcome that meets their needs or setting up a longer-term pathway of support for a young person, who may need confidence building, employability training and additional support from external organisations prior to progressing towards their end goal.

Trauma informed practice

Amanda Percy advised that there are 169 (including children we care for and care experienced) young people who are NEETs aged 18-25. When the young people leave the virtual school, they are RAG rated as to the risk of becoming NEET and any young person rated red is put into a NEET prevention programme. A lot of the young people may not be looking for a college place but employment. There is a separate piece of work around the general NEET population where the Council rely on referrals from schools to say they are concerned about the risk of NEET and then the Council work with the colleges to try and place those young people. It is important to have a broad range of options for our young people. There is a shortage in Portsmouth of 'roll on, roll off' provision; if a young person drops out of a course in November, we do not want them to have to wait until the new academic year to be able to start a new course. The Enham Trust provide this, and they cannot offer any more places currently.

Amanda said that through the employability academy they are working to ensure that employers and teachers are care experienced ready and have some training around trauma and how to support these young people. Portsmouth is a trauma informed city and schools receive free training on this. Charlie added that for further education this is not offered, and they fund this themselves. She added that they can share with the permission of the young person that they have experienced trauma or if they feel it is a need-to-know basis. One discussion that the academy steering group is having is looking to have a kite mark for employers to indicate when they are ready to take on a young person.

Sarah said she would like to open opportunities in the Council and to link the young people to areas that they are interested in. Sam Bushby said that there are wanting to create opportunities across all directorates and to consider what is possible in terms of opportunities within companies that we commission / contract with and also asked what Members could also create through community connections. She said that when a contract is awarded it might be possible to ringfence a certain number of jobs for care experienced young adults. Amanda Percy added that the Council's

Housing department have agreed to become a corporate sponsor and offer work experience placements and mentoring and sit on the academy steering group. It was the intention to go to all the remaining directorates to get them on board.

What more could be done as a Council to create more opportunities; improve our offer to our children; and through this improve the education, employment and training outcomes for care experienced young adults.

There are some great starting offers from Shaping Portsmouth and Solent LEP but more is needed. There is no longer any funding for traineeships which is a pre apprenticeship year and which helps a lot of young people become work ready. The council is now looking to see if it can provide these opportunities working with our partners.

As many of the care experienced young people have had negative experiences, workplaces and colleges need to understand this and sometimes they are very rigid with their programmes. It was felt that trauma training for all colleges in the city and all staff employing a care experienced young person, so that they understand the impact of trauma and how to deal with this and support the young person.

More communication between providers and the Council would be welcomed to help get care experienced young people onto courses.

What we aspire to achieve:

- Full opportunities across the city to offer care experienced young adults opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships or similar.
- Develop work tasters for our children we care for, and care experienced young adults across the city which will be supported by personal advisors. Particularly within Portsmouth City Council where every directorate is committed to offering a certain number of work tasters. They will also be looking at all those services the Council contracts with and looking whether it is possible to build in a social element to ring fence roles for care experienced young people.
- Creating a post for an apprentice within the Employability Academy.
- Additional support for our care experienced young people starting employment and mentors in the workplace for support.
- To work with Skill Mill for children and young adults open to Youth Justice Service
- We have several care experienced young adults who are waiting for their Recourse to Public Funds and therefore would like to develop their potential through a programme of learning and creative activities and work towards integration in the UK through an active programme of volunteering.

To develop the service and specifically the proposed Care Leaver Employer Academy the following needs to be progressed:

- Collaboration with local providers could allow for programmes to support progression such as summer taster classes.
- Group workshops designed for Care experienced young people

- Engagement with employers for Work experience, traineeships, and apprenticeship opportunities
- Improved outreach provision.
- Partnership working with Youth Justice to deliver specific progression activities.
- CAS specific to care experienced young people.
- Volunteering opportunities, work experience and more ESOL and other opportunities for our UAM and those with no recourse.
- Increase the time spent with DWP partners in our Youth Hub to build on their Care Leaver knowledge of trauma informed practice and ensure all Care Leavers accessing Universal Credit through the Youth Hub are monitored and do not slip through the net.

Feedback from young people

Feedback from the participation team survey that took place in February

The annual survey that goes out to all children, young people, parents, carers and care experienced people that access support from children and families services. This is a key way to track and monitor the important areas of support being provided and the quality and consistency of the offer. During February 2023 they surveyed 338 care experienced adults and of that 226 (67%) took part in the survey. This is the highest rate it has been and the satisfaction rate has increased which is really positive news.

Quantitative Feedback from survey of care experienced people 2023

Do you think your personal advisor supports you well?

97% Yes 2% Sometimes 1% No

Do you feel supported in your employment, education or training?

86% Yes 8% Sometimes 7% No

Questions from Scrutiny panel

1. What are the best things about having a PA?

" The support we get. Even though we are adults it's nice to know we have the support to move forward with our lives and the support on coming out of care and how the world will be a bigger place"

"The PA I have now, Emma is genuinely the best person I've seen and spoken to. She just sits and listens, she helps me where she can to the extent she can. She's thoughtful and remembers my brother and sister. Helps with letterbox contact. I really enjoy seeing her"

"She always sticks to her word and keeps me in the loop, I have only had her as my PA for a short while and I cannot fault her! I was very nervous when I learned that my old PA was retiring because she was so good! But XXX is like a younger XX and she supports me really well, I had some things happen over the weekend and XX was on the phone to me first thing Monday morning!"

"Whenever I need her, she's available. Always listens to me and is a great support"

"She's very involved, which at this age is important because you feel supported and less alone when going into the big world. Additionally, she respects that you are an adult and let's you be to your own devices, BUT you know she's there if you need her"

"Support me no matter how many tantrums I have and no matter what I am facing through my hardship times I have said many times I wanted to change my PA when I'm in tantrum but really I don't I couldn't have a better PA"

"Whenever I need her she is always there for me, she tries to help me in every way she can. She always responds to my messages quite quickly to"

"He doesn't treat me like his 'in charge' of me, let's me take control of the relationship. if I need something he is there to support and is amazing at it. doesn't pester me to do stuff and allows me to go at my own pace"

"Takes my interests into account and works with me to achieve my goals"

"She works very hard to make sure that I am happy and safe"

"She is amazing at supporting me and making sure I receive whatever helps me move forward with my life"

"Helps me with everything I need help with, I don't need to ask her twice about the same thing. She will just get the job done"

"She always listens to what I have to say and any issues I have and then she supports me to the best of her ability. She always there when I need her"

"The support she gives is the best. the way she approaches things with me is easy to understand"

"Yes first of all I would like to say thanks for her. she is really good person which she gave me the provides complete support"

"She is really approachable and easy to talk to. She is honest and respectful and actually listens to you"

"Helps me through life and offers me support with anything that I need - guides me in the right direction"

"He is there when I need him for example when I need help with my mental health"

"I can call her and know I will get a reply, she is reliable and has my best interest, she will help me with any issues I have and I feel relaxed and can talk openly without feeling awkward"

2. What would you really like to be in the future?

"I've always wanted to help young people like myself to understand what support they can get as many care leavers"

" I am interested in becoming a social worker as I have been through the care system and i would like to give back"

" Just the best version of myself that I lost along the journey of being a child in care"

OFTSED Inspection of Portsmouth City Council local authority children's services 2023:

" Leaders have plans to develop an employment academy and create more employment and apprenticeship opportunities, but these are not yet in place. Care-experienced young people told inspectors that they want more opportunities. For example, there is currently only one apprenticeship available for care-experienced young people within the council. Many care-experienced young people applied for this role, showing the level of interest in such opportunities"

3. What do you think might stop you from achieving this?

"Cost of bus ticket for travel"

"My mental health and biological family"

"helping with housing situations"

"Support us to get part time jobs"

Adam then showed the panel three videos of care experienced young people which were made for Care Leavers Week. The videos can be viewed on the links below and a summary of each is included below:

Elyas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWOIKdo0aUo>

20 years old who came to the UK with no English and did not know about the culture or lifestyle. He went into care and experienced many placements. He gained his A levels then went to college after which he moved to London to study podiatry at university. He experienced complications with being able to work as he was not a UK citizen, problems with accommodation and he was also diagnosed as having a learning disability. He had to work 10 times harder than others but proved to himself he can do it.

Michael

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAcCRSzwC7A>

Went into care at 10 years old and he had a good foster family. It was a shock as new surroundings and moving to the countryside. He went to College and felt it was an achievement to be able to live independently despite having medical problems and learning disability but had the support that he needed. He now works for South Western railway and has ambitions to progress in his role. He was helped from the Prince's Trust to get into this role.

Emily

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMyADlQkQ24>

Went into care with her Sister's Mother-in-Law. She had trauma due to past experiences prior to entering care. She was moved to a foster carer and started a new school, all was going well but she was suddenly pulled out of school by her outreach worker and moved to another foster carer without being told in advance and this led her to have trust issues with her new foster family. She later moved to a hostel and made some bad life choices but decided she wanted to get a job and moved into a temporary flat share. She met her partner and they got their own flat but she was then treated badly by him but felt like she couldn't speak up about it. She then has met another partner and is being treated well and is enjoying working.

There are a high proportion of unaccompanied minors who are seeking safety or are unable to work as they are waiting for their leave to remain and this is frustrating for them.

The Panel then received a presentation (Appendix 3) giving the young people's experiences of being care experienced and how this has impacted their ability to gain employment and remain in education.

Members learned that young people seeking asylum cannot go onto practical courses at college until they have their English and Maths GCSEs. Many speak English very well and they are ready to progress to learn a skill and they are held back. It was suggested that if they could study Maths and English alongside their practical course, this would help keep them motivated.

The young people were asked if they had tried an apprenticeship, and only one had. This person said that although they enjoyed it, the distance to get there was an issue as they had to rely on their foster carers to take them so finding places closer to where they live would have helped. Reasons why they had not tried an apprenticeship were the pay received not being enough to live from and getting to the apprenticeship and not knowing of apprenticeships. Young people living in their own accommodation must pay a service charge on their rent and if they are earning this can affect how much housing benefit they receive, and this means the pay might not be sufficient enough for them to live on.

In terms of barriers to getting into employment, the main themes were a lack of experience and the cost of transport to work and haircuts and clothes to look smart for work. In addition to this young people seeking asylum are not able to do an apprenticeship whilst they wait for their leave to remain.

When asked what the Council could do to help young people get and keep jobs ideas included event days where they hold interviews, mentorship opportunities and help in the first month with paying for transport, food and haircuts.

Many care experienced young adults experience anxiety and low self-esteem so entering the workplace is very difficult for them. They have experienced instability and they are impacted by their life experience. Sarah felt that mentorship opportunities would be a great way to help. The Council have many departments where young people could spend a week alongside somebody. The Council have recently taken part in a national programme where they linked with John Lewis. Five young people went to Waitrose in Southsea to have a look around at

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the different areas of work and two people were selected to do a five-day taster there. There is now an interview process and it was hoped that they will get offered a job. Links with businesses were improving slowly.

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment would be carried out when the Cabinet makes its decisions based on the recommendations set out in this report.

8. Budget and policy implications of the recommendations

The following table highlights the budgetary and policy implications of the recommendations being presented by the panel:

	Recommendation	Action By	Budget & Policy Framework	Resource Implications
1	Consideration is given to developing a strategy to secure sustainable funding and resources for: the Careers and Employability Hub; and the Employability Academy which is run from the Hub. This would be a mix of external funding and PCC resources building on what has already been put in place between PCC and our partners.	Mike Stoneman / Amanda Percy Strategy to be in place by Sept 24	Within existing budget and policy framework. Existing staffing arrangements in place through Careers & Progression Team + short term funding in place for care experienced apprentice DWP direct support no longer in place for C&E Hub Funding through Youth Investment Fund is supporting the move of the C&E Hub from the Civic Offices to Chaucer House	Officer time External funding will be required for resources and training materials

	Recommendation	Action By	Budget & Policy Framework	Resource Implications
2	The Employability Academy considers expanding trauma informed training for all educational establishments as well as employers.	Mike Stoneman / Amanda Percy	Within existing budget and policy framework.	Officer time - building on existing arrangements with education settings and employers.
3	Work should be undertaken with Shaping Portsmouth to agree a communication that can be sent to the business community outlining the benefits of employing care experienced young adults and ask that they consider ringfencing a number of posts. A shorter version should also be prepared for Members so they can circulate it to their business contacts.	Mike Stoneman / Amanda Percy In progress	Within existing budget and policy framework.	Officer time Work already in train to deliver this recommendation
4	Officers from the CFE Directorate liaise with the Council's Business Development team and Portsmouth Social Enterprise to promote the Employability Academy and ensure businesses become more involved in offering apprenticeships.	Mike Stoneman / Amanda Percy In progress	Within existing budget and policy framework.	Officer time Work already in train to deliver this recommendation
5	Consideration be given to care experienced young adults being provided with a bus pass for a month to enable them to get to their employment or training before they receive their first salary payment.	Sam Bushby / Keely Mitchell. In progress	The new draft care leaver offer specifies that support will be provided, based on a level of need, if this not provided by the college	Whilst we provide bus passes when needed, not all young people receive these and we do not have budget to provide them to all. We are currently applying for additional funding from the Equibus scheme. If successful, this

	Recommendation	Action By	Budget & Policy Framework	Resource Implications
				would provide some funding for a 2 year period.
6	A progression pathway for Personal Advisers (PAs) be explored which could develop their skills and help the council to retain them. PAs are vital in helping getting care experienced young adults into education, employment, and training.	Sam Bushby / Keely Mitchell. In progress	There is work underway to develop and finalise the workforce development offer for our PAs	Officer time. Work is already in train to deliver this recommendation
7	The Council continue to build on existing campaigns to increase the number of foster carers in the city in order to reduce the numbers of care experienced children being placed outside of Portsmouth. This would reduce the cost and keep their valuable skills within the city. In particular, it is recommended that we should reach out to communities that currently do not have many foster carers.	Sam Bushby / Mark Jowett In progress	The foster carer recruitment strategy is currently being reviewed	This requires officer time; however this is already a priority and work is in train. There are no additional resource implications for this
8	Cabinet Members are requested to work with their directorates to identify opportunities for care experienced young adults within the council and explore whether a number of posts in each directorate could be ring fenced for them.	Cllr Pitt as Leader / all Cabinet Members	Within existing budget policy framework	No resource implications

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Scoping Document

Appendix 2 - minutes from the ECYP meetings

Appendix 3 - Supporting Your Futures presentation by Hannah Woods and Sarah Read presenting the voices of care experienced young people

Background Document

[Evaluation of the Care Leavers Social Impact Bond \(SIB\) programme \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Meeting Date	Witnesses
13 July 2023	Keeley Mitchell, Head of Service Adolescents and Young Adults Tina Henley, Head of the Virtual School and College
20 September 2023	Sarah Read, Service Leader Emma Hayward, Personal Advisor Hannah Woods, Team Leader Adam Murphy, Participation Worker
18 October 2023	Simon Attrill, Recruitment Lead, HTP Apprenticeship College Tess Cole, Vice Principal, City of Portsmouth College Charlie Miller, Director of Student Progress, Havant and South Downs College Marissa Bartle, Service Delivery Manager, The Princes Trust (written evidence)
9 November 2023	Sarah Read, Service Leader Hannah Woods, Team Leader Adam Murphy, Participation Worker Georgia Sperring, Apprentice Participation worker Amanda Percy, Post 16 Skills and Campaign Manager All giving the views of care experienced young adults
7 March 2024	Sign off meeting