



Leaving Care Service Action Plan

(Response to Mark Riddell Review)

2023-2024

For decision For discussion For information

OWNER

Hilary Loades – Head of Service
– Corporate Parenting

VERSION

V 6

DATE

April 2023
(Updated December 2023)

BFfC Leaving Care Service Action Plan 2023/2024 (response to Mark Riddell Review)

Task	Proposed Way forward	Progress	Lead	Target date	RAG	
1. Corporate Parenting Panel – To adopt the Champion Model Approach						
1a	To develop the Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) with internal partners and external partners i.e., mental health, adult transitions, housing, etc.	<p>Panel's ToR to be reviewed with consideration of how to support the more meaningful involvement of C&YP in care, and which partner agencies should be represented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health ○ Education ○ Mental health ○ Adult transitions ○ Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised SoP for CP Panel have been agreed at Panel and approved by Council on 17/10/2023. 	Hilary L / Roselind M	Achieved	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel representatives from partner agencies are to be confirmed. 	Hilary L / Roselind M	31.01.24	
1b	To consider the need for themed sub-groups based on the priority areas for care leavers i.e., housing, health, mental health, EET, etc.	Will be dependent on 1a being actioned first.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lara P and Maria Y met with RBC SLG on 12.06.23 to train and raise awareness in respect to the Council's Corporate Parenting role and Care Leavers' offer. • Contact has since been made by Leads in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural & Leisure (DP) - Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services (EG) 	Hilary L / Roselind M	31.01.24	

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			<p>Arrangements are being made to meet with them to discuss how we take their interest forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings have taken place with Housing who have increased their 'offer' for this year by an additional 7 places for care Leavers (now offering 23 places). This will be reviewed at the end of the year. 			
1c	To identify elected members and officers who are 'Champions' for themed areas and could chair themed sub-groups when needed.	Will be dependent on 1a being actioned first	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lara P and Maria Y have provided briefing to our RBC councillors around Corporate Parenting, and their potential to champion specific issues appropriate to the needs of our Care Experienced Young People. Agenda item for January Corporate Parenting Panel to identify champions who can take a lead in key areas 	Hilary L / Roselind M	31.01.24	
1d	To employ a Participation Apprentice / Champions on a full-time basis to inform and drive the Panel, the local offer from each key partner agency and to engage with care leavers	Participation Apprentice role to be appointed to work with Emma C (Participation Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JD created Funding subject to outcome of MTFS approval 	Otilia B	31.03.24	

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	up to 25 years and to represent their views.					
2. Adopting a Whole Service Approach						
2a	To review with HR colleagues a Workforce Strategy that 'favours' care leavers (i.e., is this vacancy appropriate for a care leaver (CL), is the entry point a barrier and is a guaranteed interview given?)	Roselind M /Kayon M-J to start discussions with HR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Strategy on apprenticeships for Care Leavers to be reviewed. • Already have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guaranteed interview. ○ Preparation for interview by VS or Elevate. ○ Funding provided for clothing. • Transport to interview facilitated. 	RM / JF-B	31.03.24	
2b	Care Leavers as a protected characteristic	Approval by RBC to consider Care Experience as a protected characteristic to be sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proposal was drawn up in respect of considering Care Experience as a protected characteristic – this proposal was considered by Council on 17/10/2023 and was agreed. 	Hilary L / Roselind M	Achieved	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 17/10 PAs are speaking with Care Leavers on what this means for them. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J /Emma P	31.03.24	

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2c	To formally ask each department and or commissioned/procured services to make an opportunity/offer to CLs (e.g. shadowing, work experience or full time work, etc, or 'softer' things such as the use of direct work vans to move CLs or an offer of repairs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all RBC departments and relevant managers and arrange meetings. Consider process for matching YP to any opportunities offered and how YP can be identified and supported to express interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement is being sought / established with different departments and different 'offers' including the possibility of apprenticeships is being explored. Apprenticeships have currently been offered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bennett Road (Carpentry) Highways Day Care Services (Care Worker) HR (HR Support) DCASC (Business Admin) Kennett Nursery (Nursery Support Worker) <p>(see 2d below)</p>	Roselind M /Kayon M-J	31.03.24	
2d	To develop our apprenticeship scheme for RBC Care Leavers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the apprenticeship 'offer' across different RBC services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An apprenticeship scheme is in place with 5 guaranteed apprenticeships within RBC this year for Care Leavers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carpentry (allocated) Business support (being interviewed for) Parks & Services Data & Performance Housing. Elevate Adviser is supporting appropriate YP to consider applying for apprenticeships. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J /Saj C (Elevate)	Achieved (now BAU)	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors are being allocated to care leavers to support them in applying for apprenticeships, preparing for interviews, and remaining motivated if appointed. • Kayon has met 2x with Alex H – RBC Apprenticeship Officer – helpful in moving this forward. Considering whether mentors can be attracted from across the council. • HR Rep/Kayon/Elevate meet bi-monthly to review how the apprenticeship programme is being rolled out and consider emerging issues/needs. • While more apprenticeships will be sought moving forward (2024/25), at the current time the number available is considered to be adequate given the work required with the YP who pursue them and the work required in the longer-term to support the YP who are successful. Will need to be a phased process. • Once more YP are in apprenticeships across the council or with other local employers, 			

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			consideration will be given to setting up a support group.			
2e	To consider holding a key partnership event where each partner agency makes explicit their offer to care leavers based on what operational staff and care leavers have said is important to them when services are being delivered.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial discussion held 10/11 – Fiona B and Carol F agreed to move this action forward (see also 3b below). 	Roselind M /Fiona B /Carol F	31.03.24	
2f	To review the current Council Tax Offer for YP up to 25 years	<p>To consider the review of the current policy considering a more generous offer</p> <p>Currently scaled at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 year olds – 100% 19 year olds – 75% 20 year olds – 50% 21 year olds – 25% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A proposal for RBC’s sliding scale of council tax exemptions that were in place for CLs aged up to 21 to be extended to CLs aged up to 25 living in the Borough and included in the Council’s MTFS planning was considered at Council on 17/10/2023 and the motion was carried. Subject to 2024/25 MTFS approval 	RBC via Lara P / Maria Y / Lead Member for Children	31.03.24	

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3. Education, Employment & Training To expand the 'whole council approach' by:						
3a	Virtual School Head to undertake an aspirational audit of all CLA & CLs through the PEP process.	Clare H to be asked to undertake review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEP process works well for Reading C&YP looked after. VS already make an aspirational offer. 	Clare H		
3b	To hold a Business Event to match the aspiration audit to local businesses and the community.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Business Event is being planned for Q3 – see 2e above. 	Clare H/ Emma C/ Roselind M/ Fiona B/ Carol F	31.03.24	
3c	To get each department in the 'family business' (RBC/BfFC) to make an offer or an opportunity/ work shadowing/ apprenticeship to a CLA or CL.	See 2c above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 2c above. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J /Otilia B	31.03.24	
3d	To review BfFC's / RBC's HR Workforce Strategy to include CLs and to develop	See 2a – include Elevate and apprenticeship co-ordinator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work being progressed. Interviews already guaranteed for apprenticeship roles within the council. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J /Jamie F-B	31.03.24	

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	an offer of guaranteed interviews with a contextual offer for entry points.				
3e	The LA to agree ringfenced apprenticeships for CLs linked to vacancies so they can move from an apprenticeship to a permanent post when appropriate.	<p>Guarantees of ringfenced apprenticeships linked to vacancies will need Director / councillor support – Lara P and/or Councillor GH.</p> <p>To identify who in RBC has the authority to ring fence specific posts for care leavers and how these posts should be identified.</p> <p>(Approximately 10-15 per year, dependent on the aspirations of young people).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 2d above. 	Lara P / Maria Y / Roselind M / Kayon M-J	31.03.24
3f	For care leavers who are in the ringfenced jobs to be given time out of work to meet as a group to support each other / be involved in the care leaver forum.	To be negotiated once potential posts are identified / agreed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be progressed following 3e (above) being achieved. 	Hilary L / Roselind M	T.b.c. (dependent on 3e above)

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3g	To consider an incentive scheme for care leavers who are seeking work.	To be included in review of local offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being considered as part of the ongoing review of Care Leavers' Offer and the associated financial package: funding for bus pass, and if successful an electronic device (e.g., tablet or laptop) if the role requires it. Interview clothes are provided by the 'Smart Works' charity – accessed via PAs and the Career Adviser (Elevate). Most YP already have a laptop as provided to support their secondary education. Post-16 bursaries for vulnerable students (£1,200) are accessed via Virtual School. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J	Achieved	
4. Housing To consider strengthening the existing offer in the following ways:						
4a	To develop a housing offer to CLs aged 21 - 25yrs and CLs entering and leaving custody	Consider developing a 'half-way house' – possibly joint commissioned by different services, including probation, housing, adult services, and social care to prepare YP to manage tenancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in housing offer for CLs from 12-15 x 1 bed + 2 x 2 bed accommodation per year (with an additional 7 units for 23/24) – also agreed that further increases will be considered moving forward. <p>Note: the majority of BFFC's CLs are currently UASC and will not qualify for</p>	Lead person for housing subgroup (Zelda Wolfe /Sarah H – RBC QA and	To be confirmed with lead	

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		<p>housing as they have not been in the UK for 3 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roselind and Kayon to calculate the expected number of BFFC CLs who will be eligible for accommodation in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to inform future planning. 	Strat Op Mgr)	28.02.24		
4b	Housing Partners develop a standard offer to CLs when they move into their housing i.e., carpets, a cooker, fridge freezer and a microwave – the use of VOID monies?	To be explored through housing subgroup – will need financial sign off – could potentially be met through additional financial offer for YP moving into allocated housing with money ringfenced for specific items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being considered as part of the ongoing review of Care Leavers' Offer. Cllr Terry has introduced us to a local charity that can provide white goods for CLs moving into social housing. 	Lead person for housing subgroup	To be confirmed with lead	
4c	To consider option of BFFC / RBC covering rent for an agreed period when CLs move into their housing option (as often there are delays with HB and UC which put CLs into debt before they even move in),	Consider including this in RBC's local offer – maximum 2 months' rent – joint funded by CSC and housing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being considered as part of the ongoing review of Care Leavers' Offer and the associated financial package. Roselind has met with DEGNS colleagues to discuss how they might support BFFC CLs around rent and storage of CLs goods. A further meeting is planned for 29/11. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J /Housing	31.03.24	

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5. Health – To work with Health Partners to support them in developing a health offer for care leavers To potentially include:						
5a	An offer from health around emotional wellbeing and support.	Development of health subgroup to take 5a – 5d forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised / upgraded mental health support 'offer' for 18+ via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Reframe' 'TellMi' (App) Reframe (service specific for CLs) works well with no waiting list for YP aged 16+. YP access directly – initial feed-back positive. CIC CAMHS now offer consultations within one month – offer network/placement support mtgs. Will work directly with YP if placed in west Berkshire but not out of area. Consideration ongoing as to whether service can also offer direct therapy for CLA to avoid need for referrals to external providers. 	Lead person for health subgroup	To be confirmed with lead	
5b	Free prescriptions to care leavers up to 25yrs.	Development of health subgroup to take 5a – 5d forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting held with Designated Nurse for Safeguarding & CLA (Jane B) – to discuss feasibility. Exploring provision of annual pre-payment certificates, free dental care and ophthalmology for Care Leavers, 18- 25 not entitled to free prescriptions, however it has not 	Lead person for health subgroup	To be confirmed with lead	

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			<p>yet proved possible to move this forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As this is a health need it cannot be included in the LA 'offer' but needs to be provided by Health. To be discussed on the agenda at January corporate Parenting Panel 			
5c	Free dental care and eye care for care leavers.	Development of health subgroup to take 5a – 5d forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting held with Designated Nurse for Safeguarding & CLA (Jane B) – to discuss feasibility. Will explore provision of annual pre-payment certificates, free dental care and ophthalmology for Care Leavers, 18- 25 not entitled to free prescriptions. As this is a health need it cannot be included in the LA 'offer' but needs to be provided by Health. To be discussed on the agenda at January corporate Parenting Panel 	Lead person for health subgroup	To be confirmed with lead	
5d	Planned transitions / hand overs at 18 (or older) from the LAC nurse to complex needs / psychological services etc.	Development of health subgroup to take 5a – 5d forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting held with Designated Nurse for Safeguarding & CLA (Jane B) If YP have an identified emotional or mental health need CAMHS will support transition to adult social 	Lead person for health subgroup	Achieved	

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			<p>care and adult mental health services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly meetings in place between relevant services to plan transitions to adult services (where YP eligible for ongoing psychological support or continuing health care as adults). • Mosaic pathways now streamlined to support transitions. 			
<p>6. Adult Transitions To develop a clear pathway to Adult Social Care</p>						
6a	<p>To routinely start discussions around complexity when YP are in care planning and are approaching 14yrs with Care Act Assessments being actioned for complex care leavers at 17yrs.</p>	<p>Roselind M and Kayon M-J to move forward current discussions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings in place with Adult Services which focus on planning transitions (see 5d above) • BfC Leaving Care Service brings YP to the attention of Adult Services from the age of 16. • Current staff numbers do not enable PAs to start assessments when YP are aged 14. Assessments currently completed when YP are approaching 18. • Similarly, while YP could be brought to the attention of Adult Services at age 14, Adult Services currently lack the capacity to be able to respond. 	<p>Roselind M /Kayon M-J / Otilia B /Sumbal W</p>	<p>31.03.24</p>	

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLA reviews routinely identify and plan for transfer. • IT processes updated to support smooth timely transitions. 			
6b	To consider having an expert based in the leaving care team.	Roselind M and Kayon M-J to work with health colleagues to make a business case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframe (service specific for CLs) and CIC CAMHS working well (see 5a above). • A number of CLA access talking therapies through health services. • Reframe and CIC CAMHS do not work with severely traumatised YP aged 18+. Currently accepted at this is a gap in services. Roselind will ascertain whether any other Berkshire LAs have such support in place for their CLs and if so, who the provider is. 	Roselind M /Cathy Burgess/ Kayon M-J	To be pursued for 01.04.25	
7. DWP						
7a	The LA and DWP to develop or review their JWP to include having a SPOC in the LC team, to address verification of ID issues and the advance payments	Kayon M-J to explore if a JWP already in place and to draft a review as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named worker for CLs in Reading within DWP helps with verification documents, setting up appointments and early applications for UC (Jointly located with Elevate and considered to work well). 	Kayon M-J	Achieved	

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	system (as they don't always favour care leavers).					
7b	The JWP to then be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel for sign off.	To be actioned once 7a completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint working protocol (Reading / Wokingham / DWP) has been updated and signed off and will be presented to CP Panel for oversight in January 2024. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J	31/01/24	
8. The Operational Model and Local Offer						
8a	To work to developing a model of practice in which the PA is allocated at the point of the first pathway plan (around the YP's 16 th birthday).	<p>Policy in place – a capacity issue.</p> <p>To review policy and make recommendations to DCSC re maintaining the status-quo or creating an additional specialist PA post.</p> <p>To review allocation of PA in line with capacity of the service, consider allocation at age 17 depending on the needs of the YP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA job description says responsible for 25-26 YP. 28th April – 234 YP in LC service Capacity issue - unable to allocate YP in short breaks or shared care. arrangements (currently 12) PAs look to close down YP aged 21 who are well functioning and do not require on-going support, so as to be able to increase allocation of 16 – 18 year olds. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J /Sumbal W	To be pursued for 01.04.25	

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8b	To develop a multi-agency team approach with different specialisms working alongside PA's	Recommendation: Not considered necessary – Reading a small geographical area and relationships between key agencies already in place – need to instead focus on improved communication between different agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not required 			
8c	<p>To develop a more ambitious Local Offer which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific offers to CLs over 21 years, with a focus on UASC, CLs entering and leaving custody and CLs as parents an explicit offer to CLs going into university which goes beyond the statutory bursary offer. consideration of providing leisure passes with a Plus 1. 	Local offer to be reviewed and presented to CPB for consideration / approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focussed Group held with Care Experienced YP on 19.07.23. New proposed 'offer' has been drafted and costed (August 2023) for management consideration. Given the LA's current financial situation any increase in costs will need to be met by BFFC. Financial offer and Care Leavers offer to be fully costed and built into MTFS 2024/25 approval process. Still a need to specifically consider whether extra provision is required for CLs entering and leaving custody (other groups all considered in the proposed revised local offer). 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J	31.03.24	

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	BFFC / RBC should pull together a set of guarantees and make them explicit as part of the local offer.					
8d	To set up a HUB for CLs, possibly co-located with other services in a one stop type approach.	Initial exploration/scoping of options with report to CPB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible venues for a future 'Hub' are being explored. Likely that an existing RBC venue will need to be identified / repurposed due to cost implications of securing external accommodation. Consideration of seeking sponsorship from external companies to supply/support costs of furniture/ furnishings/ electronic and/or sports equipment etc. 	Emma C/ Otilia B/ Zelda Wolfe	31.03.24	
8e	To review our setting up home grant and the current restrictions placed on it.	To be reviewed as part of local offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been costed and is currently being considered as part of the 2024/25 MTFS approval process. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J	01.04.24	
8f	To review our CLs financial policy to promote more incentives when CLs are seeking EET, etc.	To review financial offer and current incentives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See section 8c above. 	Roselind M /Kayon M-J	31.03.24	

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8g	To consider our CLs' feedback.	To consult with CLs regarding local offer. Once received, feedback to then be considered and to inform proposed offer to be put forward to CPB for consideration / approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group held 19.07.23 to explore YP's views. Participation Officer and PAs regularly receive YP's informal feedback. Reviewed as part of work on proposed 'offer' – has been costed (August 2023) for management consideration. 	Emma C /Otilia B/ Roselind M or Kayon M-J	Ongoing	

Hilary Loades

Updated 12.12.2023