

Corporate Parenting Panel

27 January 2023

Supporting Care Experienced Young People into Education, Employment and Training



Report of Helen Radcliffe, Strategic Lead: Progression and Learning, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the support available to Care Experienced young people to enable them to progress into education, employment or training.

Executive summary

- 2 A number of programmes and schemes are in place to support more Care Experienced young people into education, employment or training. These include transition support for Children Looked After aged 15 to 16 through the DurhamWorks Programme for Schools, support for Care Experienced young people aged 16-24 through DurhamWorks Programmes, a Sessional Employment Programme, a Pupil Premium Plus Pilot Scheme, as well as support for Care Experienced young people attending university.
- 3 Outcomes are closely monitored and this report contains the latest performance data in relation to the participation of Care Experienced young people in education, employment or training.

Recommendation

- 4 Members of Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to:
 - (a) Note the information contained in this report.

Background

- 5 A number of measures are being implemented to support Care Experienced young people into education, employment or training, contributing towards Durham County Council fulfilling its responsibilities as Corporate Parent. These include:
- (a) Support for Children Looked After to enable them to make a successful progression from Year 11 into post-16 learning.
 - (b) Continued support for Care Experienced young people through DurhamWorks Programmes.
 - (c) Introduction of DurhamHELP, to support individuals, including Care Experienced young people, who are experiencing mental health barriers to their progression.
 - (d) A programme to provide more employment-based opportunities for Care Experienced young people within Durham County Council.
 - (e) Delivery of a Pupil Premium Plus Pilot scheme, to support the sustained participation of Care Leavers in Further Education.
 - (f) Support for Care Experienced young people who are attending university.
 - (g) Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

Progression Support

- 6 Children Looked After receive support to progress into post-16 learning, through the DurhamWorks Programme for Schools. This programme is led by the Progression and Learning Service of the Council and provides support to young people aged 15-16 who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Children Looked After can access individual careers guidance; participate in group-based activities focused around themes such as transition support, motivation and work related learning; as well as receive one-to-one mentoring support. Attendance at PEP (Personal Education Plan) reviews is also a key feature to ensure there is a partnership approach to transition support.
- 7 Since September 2020, 157 Children Looked After have been supported by the DurhamWorks Programme for Schools. During the 2020-21 academic year, 59 Children Looked After were supported by the programme, of whom 44 (74.6%) progressed into a positive education, employment or training destination. During the 2021-22

academic year, 87 Children Looked After were supported by the programme, of whom 52 (63.2%) progressed into a positive education, employment or training destination. Those Children Looked After who do not make an initial positive progression continue to be supported by DurhamWorks through one of the post-16 re-engagement programmes, as appropriate.

- 8 A new Workplaces Project, delivered by the Progression and Learning Service, will be commencing in 2023, whereby identified young people in Years 10 and 12, including Children Looked After, will have opportunities to gain a valuable insight into the world of work and find out about the skills and aptitudes that employers value, through bespoke visits to employer premises. They will learn about specific employment sectors, different job roles within those sectors, as well as recruitment processes. They will also spend time with employees to find out about their pathways into work, in order to show them that employment is an achievable goal.

DurhamWorks Programmes

- 9 Care Experienced young people aged 16-24 who are NEET (not in employment, education or training), are supported by DurhamWorks post-16 re-engagement programmes to enable them to progress into and remain in education, employment or training. There are three programmes - DurhamWorks, DurhamWorks 3, and DurhamWorks Futures. All three programmes are led by the Progression and Learning Service of the Council and are delivered in conjunction with partner organisations.
- 10 DurhamWorks is supporting young people aged 16-24 who are NEET. Young people who are engaged with the DurhamWorks receive transition support, the opportunity to obtain English and maths qualifications, as well access to a range of provision to support their progression into education, employment or training.
- 11 Since January 2022, 829 young people have been supported by the DurhamWorks re-engagement element, including 20 Care Experienced young people. Of these, 304 young people (37%) have successfully progressed into education, employment or training, including 8 Care Experienced young people (40%).
- 12 DurhamWorks 3 is supporting vulnerable young people, including: young people who have SEND, Care Experienced young people, young people who have previously received a Social Care intervention, young parents, young people who were excluded from education and/or accessed alternative education, young people who are offenders/at risk

of offending, young carers, as well as young people with mental health issues.

- 13 DurhamWorks 3 is focused on securing employment outcomes for young people within a six month period. Therefore, employer engagement activity is a key feature of the programme. A DurhamWorks Grant is available to small and medium businesses to support the employment of young people engaged by the programme.
- 14 Since January 2022, DurhamWorks 3 has engaged 396 young people so far, including 83 Care Experienced young people. Of these, 64 young people (16%) have progressed into employment, including 16 Care Experienced young people (19%).
- 15 DurhamWorks Futures is funded through the Youth Futures Foundation to support young people in identified vulnerable groups, including: those who have previously received a Social Care intervention; those identified as SEN Support in school; those who have previously been excluded from education; as well as those who have previously attended alternative education. As young people in these specific cohorts are more at risk of experiencing significant labour market disadvantage than their peers, there is a focus on providing intensive support in order to develop motivation, confidence and work ready skills within a six month period.
- 16 As the Youth Futures Foundation is a new source of funding for County Durham, there is a strong emphasis on evaluation, in order to test the effectiveness of the support model. To this end, there is an initial target to engage with 150 young people who will form part of the formal evaluation of the programme. Since June 2022, 141 young people have been engaged by DurhamWorks Futures, including 1 Care Experienced young person. Of these, 7 young people have progressed into employment. There are other young people who have started employment and are receiving in-work support.

DurhamHELP

- 17 Durham County Council has recognised the need to support individuals whose poor mental health is acting as a barrier to their progression into employment. As a result, a team of three Mental Health Employment Practitioners, funded through Public Health and working within the DurhamEnable team, support young people who are engaged with DurhamWorks (as well as adults who are engaged with the DurhamEnable and Employability Durham programmes).
- 18 The Mental Health Employment Practitioner assesses the needs of the young person, supports them to overcome their mental health issue,

builds their resilience and signposts them to appropriate services. They also offer advice, support and training to staff and act as a link between employers and individuals to identify any barriers, create reasonable workplace adjustments and promote positive change. Interventions last for approximately 12 weeks and are delivered in person and online. To date, the practitioners have worked with 75 individuals.

Sessional Employment Programme

- 19 A Sessional Employment Programme offers Care Experienced young people the opportunity of paid work experience within Durham County Council. Work placements are identified which meet the talents, interests, and aspirations of each individual Care Experienced young person. A Sessional Employment Co-ordinator (0.5 FTE) is collaborating with Young People's Advisers, Human Resources colleagues and Service Managers to deliver the programme. Since October 2021:
- 10 Care Experienced young people have accessed placements.
 - 4 Care Experienced young people are engaged and awaiting a placement.
 - 16 Care Experienced young people were registered with the Sessional Employment Programme and started the process but have subsequently withdrawn before starting a placement due to changes in personal circumstances, a lack of engagement, or as a result of obtaining other employment.
- 20 Care Experienced young people can be in education, employment, training, or NEET to access Sessional Employment and work placements are paid at the rate of the Durham Living Wage. Examples of placements undertaken include:
- Farming in a protected landscape with North Pennines AONB – this placement coincided with a Care Experienced young person's qualification in agriculture at a local Further Education college.
 - DurhamWorks – upon completion of a placement with DurhamWorks, a Care Experienced young person has subsequently secured a Support Worker role for young people with disabilities.
 - Human Resources – a Care Experienced young person undertook a placement to complement their degree course at university.
 - Mechanics – a Care Experienced young person accessed a work placement to enhance their qualification at a local Further Education college.

- Data – a Care Experienced young person completed a placement with DurhamWorks data team in preparation for starting a new role as an Intelligence Analyst with Durham County Council.
- Brickwork – a Care Experienced young person accessed a placement during the summer after completing a Brickwork qualification at a Further Education college, in order to enhance their employment prospects within the construction industry.
- Investing in Children - a Care Experienced young person has accessed a placement outside of Durham County Council through links with Investing in Children. This has led to the Care Experienced young person being offered employment, supported by a DurhamWorks employer grant.
- Peterlee Leisure Centre - a Care Experienced young person has started a placement as a Leisure Assistant with Peterlee Leisure Centre.

21 Further work experience placements have been agreed in the following employment sectors: Construction, Hospitality and Catering, Childcare, Sport and Leisure, as well as Social Care. This demonstrates a commitment to Corporate Parent responsibilities across Durham County Council service areas.

Durham County Council Apprenticeships

22 Support was provided to 10 Care Experienced young people to apply for Apprenticeship vacancies as part of the annual recruitment activity in 2022, undertaken by Durham County Council. Of these, 4 Care Experienced young people were successful, 3 of whom commenced their Apprenticeships in September 2022. The other successful candidate decided to go to a local Further Education college instead of taking up their offer of an Apprenticeship.

23 Overall, the current number of Care Experienced young people employed by Durham County Council as Apprentices is 5. This number has reduced compared to the previous year (7), as a result of some completing their Apprenticeships. Discussions are taking place with Human Resources colleagues to ascertain the feasibility of linking the Sessional Employment Programme to Durham County Council's Apprenticeship recruitment, thus creating a potential progression route for Care Experienced young people.

Pupil Premium Plus Pilot Scheme

24 Durham County Council is one of 30 Local Authorities that successfully bid to take part in a Pupil Premium Plus Pilot Scheme to support Care Experienced young people in academic years 12 and 13 who were attending a Further Education college. The aim of the pilot was to

support sustained participation in learning by providing Pupil Premium Plus funding in a similar way to how additional funding is provided to school age Children Looked After. The scheme sought to strengthen links between the Virtual School, the Young People's Service, Progression & Learning, as well as Further Education colleges, in order to provide support to Care Experienced young people to prevent them from disengaging from learning.

- 25 Durham County Council utilised the available funding to:
- Appoint a dedicated Adviser (0.5 FTE) whose role is to support a caseload of Care Experienced young people who are enrolled at a Further Education college.
 - Provide a 'Keep In College' weekly cash incentive of £20 per week to Care Experienced young people who have over 80% authorised attendance.
 - Appoint an Administrative Assistant (0.5 FTE) to facilitate the payments of the weekly cash incentive.
- 26 The initial Pupil Premium Pilot scheme ended in May 2022 and supported 52 Care Experienced young people who attended 14 different Further Education colleges.
- 27 An evaluation was completed in June 2022 and its findings showed that the Pupil Premium Pilot Scheme was well received by all Care Experienced young people who participated, as well as their carers. The overall consensus was that the additional £20 per week provided an incentive for Care Experienced young people to remain in Further Education. The Pupil Premium Pilot Scheme also enabled them to experience social activities in a way that they may not have been able to do so without the additional financial support provided through the 'Keep in College' weekly cash incentive.
- 28 Following the initial Pilot Scheme, Durham County Council has received further Pupil Premium Plus funding from November 2022 through to the end of the 2022-23 academic year. The Scheme will be delivered in the same manner as the 2021-22 academic year, with an initial cohort of 76 Care Experienced young people attending 14 different Further Education colleges.

Bus Pass Incentive

- 29 In January 2022, 'anytime travel' top ups to existing bus passes were issued to Durham Care Experienced young people who were attending the four Further Education colleges in County Durham (Bishop Auckland College, Derwentside College, East Durham College, New College Durham). Bus passes were provided by either Arriva or Go

North East travel companies and were valid for evenings, weekends and holiday periods up until the end of the summer term at college.

- 30 A survey undertaken with the Care Experienced young people who received an 'anytime travel' top up, showed that they used their enhanced bus pass to meet friends from their Further Education college during evenings and weekends. It was also used to access part time employment, alongside college study. Some Care Experienced young people reported an increase in confidence in using public transport to travel to different places, in addition to their Further Education college. A similar 'anytime travel' top up incentive will be offered during the current academic year.

Higher Education

- 31 A Young Persons' Adviser supports Care Experienced young people who are studying at a university. This role involves preparing Care Experienced young people for their transition into Higher Education, liaising with universities to ensure Care Experienced young people have access to available support, as well as keeping in touch and visiting Care Experienced young people at their places of learning. There are currently 35 Care Experienced young people attending a university.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- 32 Durham County Council is part of the national transfer scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. When an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child is transferred to the Local Authority, they become a Child Looked After by Durham County Council. Those who are transferred under this scheme are offered Information, Advice, Guidance and support with their future progression pathways. This involves close collaboration with learning providers and care teams to ensure appropriate support is in place. There are currently 31 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children.

Employment Hubs

- 33 Care Experienced young people can continue to access a range of intensive support and provision to enable them to find a job through DurhamWorks Employment Hubs that are operating in Bishop Auckland, Peterlee and Stanley. These were established in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 34 Separate to the DurhamWorks Employment Hubs, Care Experienced young people can also access support to enable them to progress into education, employment or training at the Young People's Service Hub for Care Experienced young people that was recently opened in the Sherburn Hill area of Durham City. Regular drop-in sessions are

delivered by DurhamWorks and Welfare Rights, alongside other support services. Practical sessions around applying for education, employment and training are also delivered to small groups.

Performance Data

- 35 The Local Authority, through the Progression and Learning Service, collects and reports the destinations of all young people aged 16-17 in County Durham to the Department for Education on a monthly basis. It includes Care Experienced young people who reside in County Durham and whose Corporate Parent is Durham County Council, as well as those whose Corporate Parent is a different Local Authority.
- 36 The following table shows the performance data for young people aged 16-17 (including Care Experienced young people) in June 2022, compared to the same period in the previous three years. This month has been chosen because it is a time in the year when the 16-17 cohort is relatively stable.

	2022		2021		2020		2019	
	All 16-17	16-17 CE	All 16-17	16-17 CE	All 16-17	16-17 CE	All 16-17	16-17 CE
Total Cohort	11,137	138	10,691	118	10,204	146	10,012	115
Total EET	94.1%	66.7% (92)	93.6%	76.3% (90)	94.3%	83.6% (122)	93.0%	68.7% (79)
NEET	5.2%	31.9% (44)	5.8%	22.0% (26)	5.0%	16.4% (24)	5.5%	31.3% (36)
Not Known	0.7%	1.4% (2)	0.6%	1.7% (2)	0.7%	0.0% (0)	1.4%	0.0% (0)
Combined NEET / Not Known	5.9%	33.3% (46)	6.4%	23.8% (28)	5.7%	16.4% (24)	7.0%	31.3% (36)

Department for Education: Local Authority CCIS (June 2022).

- 37 The number of Care Experienced young people in education, employment or training in June 2022 was 92, the number of Care Experienced young people who were NEET was 44, and the number of Care Experienced young people whose destination was not known was 2. Of the 44 Care Experienced young people who were NEET, 36 (81.8%) were available to the labour market and 8 (18.2%) were not available to the labour market. In terms of reasons for not being available to the labour market, ill-health was the dominant factor in 75% of cases.
- 38 The Department for Education publishes comparative data annually on the destinations of Care Experienced young people aged 17-18 and 19-21. This data captures the destinations of Care Experienced young people at the time of their birthday.

- 39 The following table shows the destinations of Care Experienced young people aged 17-18 and 19-21 (for whom Durham County Council is the Corporate Parent) in 2022, compared to the previous three years.

	2022		2021		2020		2019	
	CE 17-18	CE 19-21	CE 17-18	CE 19-21	CE 17-18	CE 19-21	CE 17-18	CE 19-21
Total Cohort	84	218	78	197	84	175	79	156
Participating in EET	67% (56)	61% (134)	76% (59)	56% (110)	65% (55)	54% (94)	61% (48)	51% (80)
NEET	26% (22)	29% (64)	22% (17)	38% (74)	27% (23)	35% (62)	34% (27)	38% (60)
Information Not Known	7% (6)	9% (20)	3% (2)	7% (13)	7% (6)	11% (19)	5% (4)	10% (16)

Department for Education: Children Looked After in England (including Adoption), year ending 31st March.

- 40 The following table shows the destinations of Care Experienced young people aged 17-18 and 19-21 for whom Durham County Council is the Corporate Parent in 2022, compared to regional and national averages.

	County Durham		North East		England	
	CE 17-18	CE 19-21	CE 17-18	CE 19-21	CE 17-18	CE 19-21
Total Cohort	84	218	590	1,480	12,350	33,590
Participating in EET	67% (56)	61% (134)	67% (400)	52% (780)	66% (8,210)	55% (18,610)
NEET	26% (22)	29% (64)	27% (160)	41% (600)	28% (3,400)	38% (12,650)
Information Not Known	7% (6)	9% (20)	6% (40)	7% (100)	6% (740)	7% (2,320)

Department for Education: Children Looked After in England (including Adoption), year ending 31st March 2022.

Conclusion

- 41 This report has provided information about the current support that is available to enable more Care Experienced young people to participate in sustained education, employment or training. It is important to note that some of the programmes / schemes that are highlighted in this report have timebound funding that will end in or before December 2023.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

ESF funding for the DurhamWorks Programme for Schools, DurhamWorks (re-engagement) and the DurhamWorks 3 Programme, as highlighted in this report, ends in December 2023. The Youth Futures Foundation funding for DurhamWorks Futures is in place until December 2023 but may be extended.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.