

## Corporate Parenting Panel

28 September 2018

### Care Leavers Annual Report 2017-2018



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## Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

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### Purpose of the Report

- 1 This is the Annual Report of 2017-18. This is the second annual report from the Young People's Service (YPS) and will focus on the activities undertaken by the service to support young people open to the service.
- 2 Whilst the service works with a range of young people, the focus of this report will be around the work undertaken with young people who have now left care (Relevant and Former Relevant young people) and are defined as Care Leavers.
- 3 The report will reflect on the support provided to young people around:
  - (a) Education, Employment and Training
  - (b) Accommodation Provision and Placement Stability
  - (c) Youth Custody
  - (d) Health
  - (e) Young Parents
- 4 The report will also reflect on the progress being made and identify areas that require further service improvement.

### Overview of the Young People's Service

- 5 The Young People's Service is part of Children and Young People's Service and within the Looked After and Care Leavers Service and provides services and support to those young people age 15+ and includes those that are:
  - (a) Looked After Young People (Eligible Young People)
  - (b) Children in Need (16+)
  - (c) Care Leavers (Relevant and Former Relevant Young People)
- 6 The main responsibility of the service is to safeguard young people, offer appropriate support, improve life chances and support transitions to adulthood and promote independence.
- 7 The Service is countywide and is split between a North and South Team, each with a Team Manager, Senior Practitioner, Social Workers, Young Person's Advisers, Social Work Assistants and a Team Co-ordinator working between both teams.

- 8 The service also has three Project Co-ordinators who have specialist roles in relation to:
- (a) Education, Employment and Training
  - (b) Supported Lodgings
  - (c) Accommodation and Support Provision
- 9 In May 2018, a specialist Welfare Rights Officer was appointed to the service. This person will provide advice and guidance to staff and young people in relation to their claim for benefits. This is a welcome addition to the service and it is hoped that this will improve outcomes for young people and impact on a reduction in financial costs to the service.

### **Care Leavers Strategy**

- 10 The Care Leavers Strategy is overarching and reflects the desire of Durham County Council to ensure that all Care Leavers have every opportunity to be happy, healthy, and safe and to achieve their full potential in life as young people and as future parents.
- 11 The purpose of the Care Leavers Strategy is to have a strategic plan across all partner agencies to support care leavers within the Young People's Service and provide a framework for the Council, Elected Members, and partners to fulfil our legal duties and responsibilities as Corporate Parents of Care Leavers within County Durham.
- 12 The Care Leavers Strategic Steering Group meets quarterly to share information with partners, review the action plan and monitor the progress being made. The Chair of the group is the Strategic Manager for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

### **Performance Data**

- 13 Within the service there are a number of key performance indicators (KPI's) that are monitored both locally and nationally by the Department for Education (DfE).
- 14 The KPI's in relation to young people leaving care are NI147 and NI148 which focus on care leavers in suitable accommodation and care leavers accessing education, employment and training.
- 15 The data contained in this report is drawn from our monthly and quarterly performance reports. The data (Quarterly %) in relation to care leavers accessing suitable accommodation and those in education is extracted from the Data Set used to report on the key performance indicators (KPI's NI147 and NI148) for the Department for Education.
- 16 As a result there will be a slight difference in the cohort numbers as the data used for the KPI's is different due to government requirements, than the monthly performance data used locally which only takes into account care leavers up to the age of 21 years.

17 At the time of writing this report, the Young People's Service have 19 young people who are Care Leavers over the age of 21 years.

### Department for Education Key Performance Indicators – NI147 and NI148

18 Based on the quarterly figures pulled together by the performance and data team, at the end of the financial year, the total number of care leavers were 281 (264 young people aged 17-21 Years). This figure includes closed cases and those that have returned home to the care of their parents.

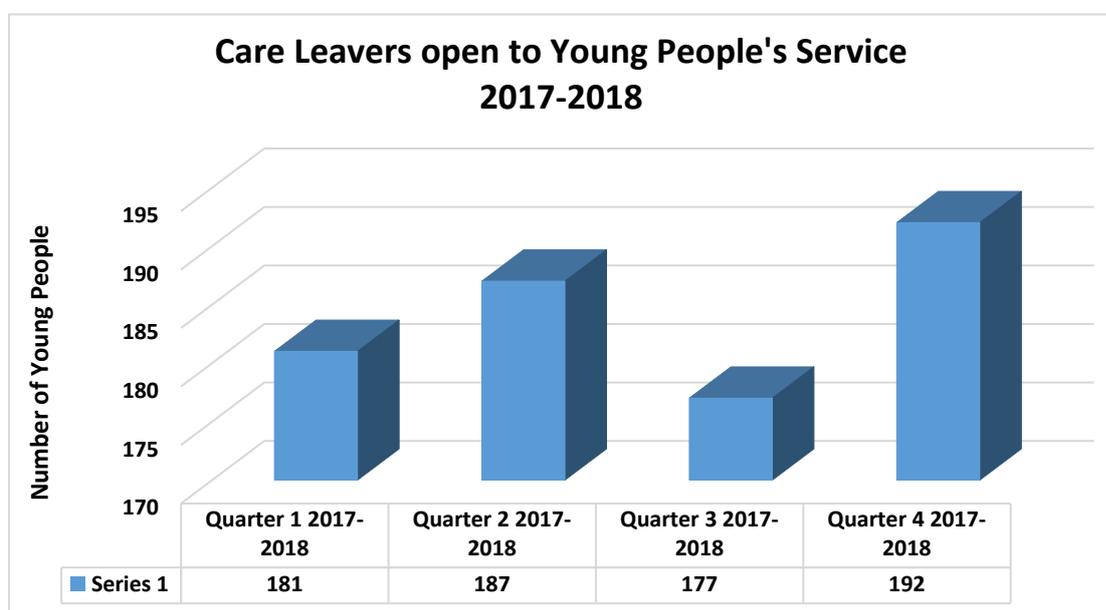
19 The performance figures around education and accommodation for care leavers at the end of the financial year were:

- (a) Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation – 89%
- (b) Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training – 61.4%

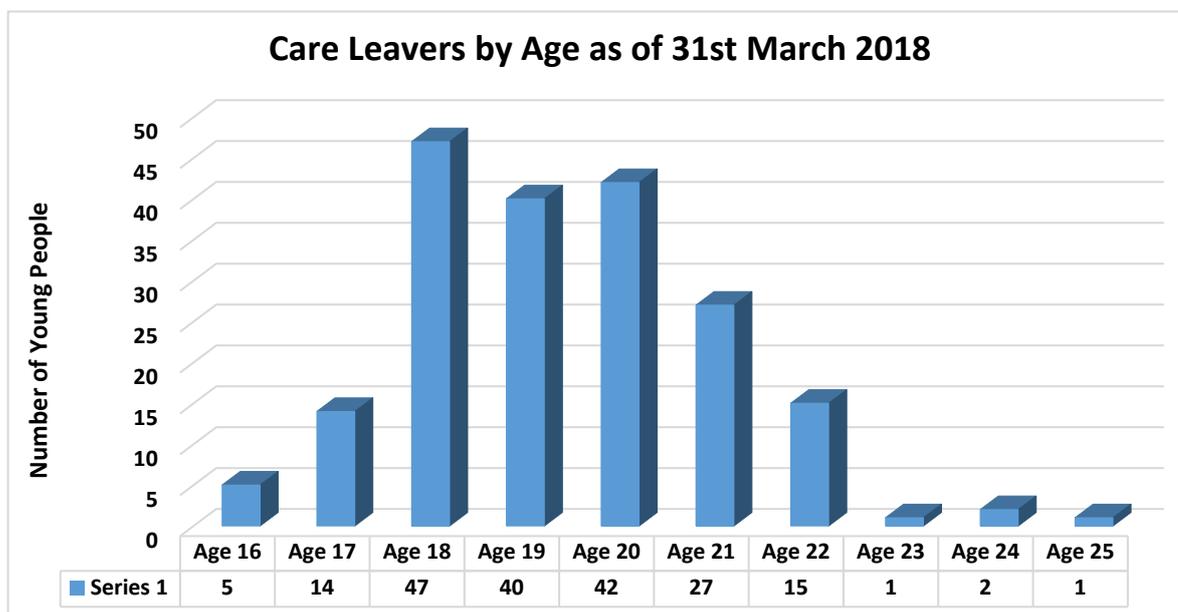
### Current Cohort of Young People

20 At the end of 2017-2018, the service was actively supporting 192 care leavers between the ages of 16- 25 years; this is a slight increase in numbers from 2016-2017 (189 young people).

21 It is anticipated that this number will increase in the forthcoming year as a direct result of “Keep on Caring” and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which offers all care leavers between the ages of 21-25 years the opportunity to remain involved with the service.



- 22 As can be seen from the graph below, the majority of care leavers open to the service were aged between 18 – 20 years at the end of the financial year. However, this trend has remained relatively static over the previous years.



### Partnership Working

- 23 In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for care leavers, the service works in partnership with a number of other agencies to support young people in all areas of their lives, including Health, Mental Health, Education and Housing.
- 24 In addition to this, the service has close links with the Children in Care Council and the National Care Leavers Benchmarking Forum, where young people are actively supported to share their views of the services they receive and their experiences as young people who have been in care.

### Ofsted Inspection 2016 and Service Developments

- 25 In 2016, the service was inspected by Ofsted as part of a wider inspection of Children and Young People's Services. Within the inspection report, the experiences and outcomes for care leavers was judged to be good and Care Leavers were Judged to be *"well supported to achieve independence"*.
- 26 The report also identified that 94% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation at the time of the inspection and that Care Leavers spoke positively about the support they receive and that *"the majority of care leavers develop trusting and long-standing relationships with their personal advisers or their social workers"*.
- 27 Overall, it was the view of the Ofsted Inspectors that *"workers know the young people very well"* and that Care Leavers were seen as a priority for Children and Young People's Services with clear emphasis on improving outcome and opportunities for young people.

- 28 The inspection did identify some areas for improvement:
- (a) Improvements to Pathway Plans with SMART targets being recorded within the plans
  - (b) Improvements to the health histories of young people by the implementation of Health Passports.
- 29 Since the Inspection, specific work has been undertaken to improve the Pathways Plans for young people and staff have since received further training on these improvements to Pathway Plans with young people. An audit is planned for 2018/19.
- 30 All young people are now able to access a health passport via The Looked After Health Service, which outlines their personal health history.

### **Education, Employment and Training (EET)**

- 31 Within Durham County Council and YPS there is an ethos of supporting young people to aim high, developing aspirations for their future and helping each young person to reach their full potential through education, employment and training (EET).

### **An Opportunity for Every Care Leaver**

- 32 The Local Authority has developed an initiative for care leavers '**An Opportunity for Every Care Leaver**', which is resulting in significant activity within the Council to identify and promote opportunities for young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers, in order for the Council to fulfil its responsibilities as Corporate Parent.
- 33 The Initiative aims to:
- (a) Develop a central brokerage function to match young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers with identified opportunities of a wide variety to meet need.
  - (b) Adopt rigorous targets to increase the number of Apprenticeships and Traineeships provided to young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers by 2020. At present this target has been set at 10 apprenticeships for young people open to YPS by 2020.
  - (c) Identifying funding to provide additional financial support to young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers for a defined period of time once they commence an Apprenticeship. This is to mitigate against some young people being financially disadvantaged when they cease to be eligible for welfare benefits.
- 34 As a result of the initiative, there has been an increase in the number of work experience placements offered by the Council areas to young people who are Looked After and Care Leavers through the 'Teenagers 2 Work' programme.

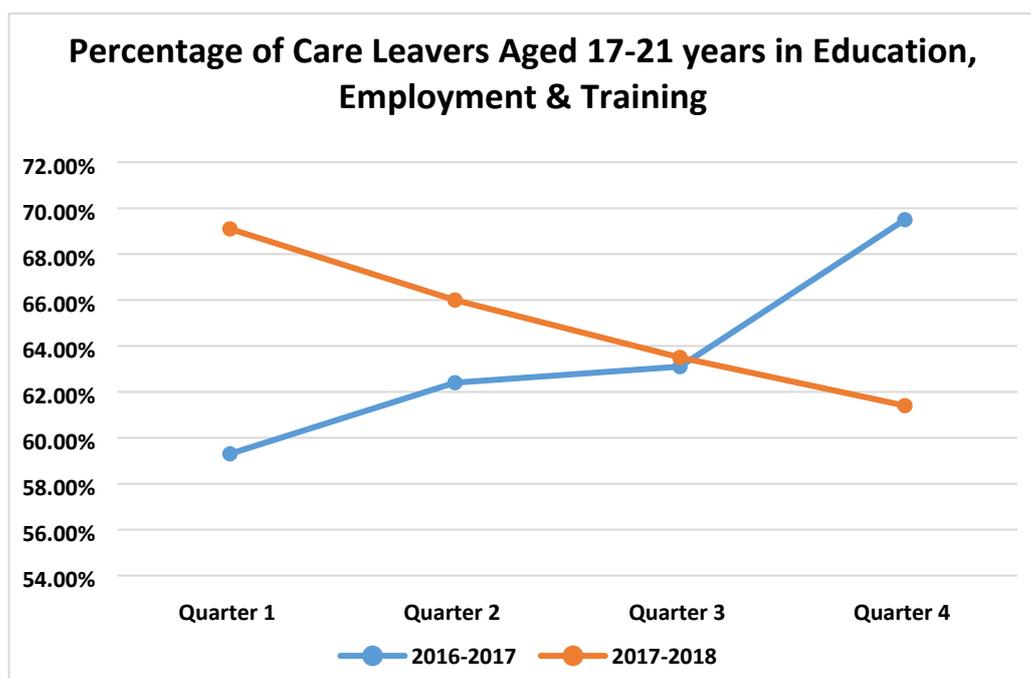
- 35 During 2017-2018, a total of 11 young people accessed work experience opportunities specifically based within the County Council. This is an increase from 6 young people in 2016-2017.

### Durham Works

- 36 As a result of funding for the Durham Works Programme during 2017-2018, targeted work with care leavers has continued and has produced excellent results and outcomes for the young people involved.

### Participation in Education, Employment and Training (EET)

- 37 Since the implementation of Project Co-ordinator role in August 2016, there has been improvement in outcomes for young people in EET. Based on the NI147 and NI148 returns, the service has seen the number of young people engaged in EET increase overall.
- 38 Over recent months, the number of young people in EET has been decreasing. When this was explored further it was determined that the NI147 and NI148 cohort of young people has increased significantly over the last year, increasing from 230 young people in quarter 1 to 264 in quarter 4.
- 39 Within the cohort, at the end of the financial year there were 21 young people listed as no longer requiring a service; therefore we were unable to record any information about their education, which has impacted on our performance despite the fact they may well have been in some form of EET.
- 40 It has been agreed that for those young people no longer requiring a service and wishing to have their case closed, the service will place these cases into monitoring and will “touch base” with the young people on a 6 monthly basis (with their agreement) to check on their progress.



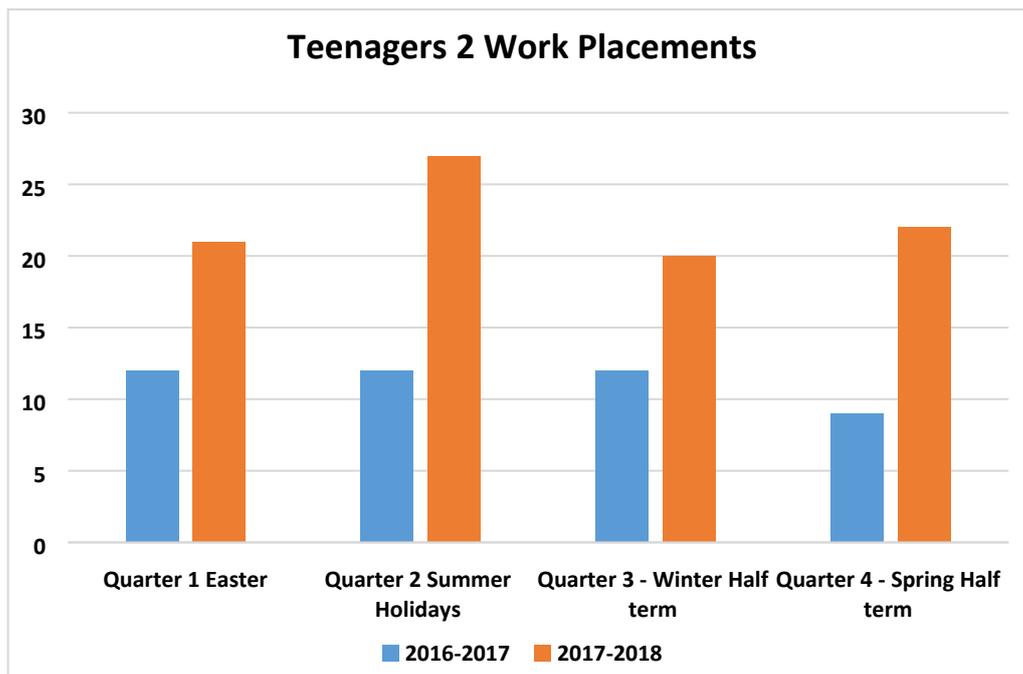
- 41 The opportunities for young people are varied and can include:
- Attending College/University
  - Apprenticeships
  - Skilled Employment
  - Training provision

### Work with the Virtual School

- 42 To ensure a seamless transition for young people from pre to post 16 education, the YPS works closely with the virtual school to focus on transitions for young people.
- 43 In order to determine potential destinations of young people, Durham Works, The Virtual School and the YPS meet on a regular basis to RAG rate Year 11 pupils to ensure that they get the support they need in their transition to post 16 education.

### Teenagers 2 Work

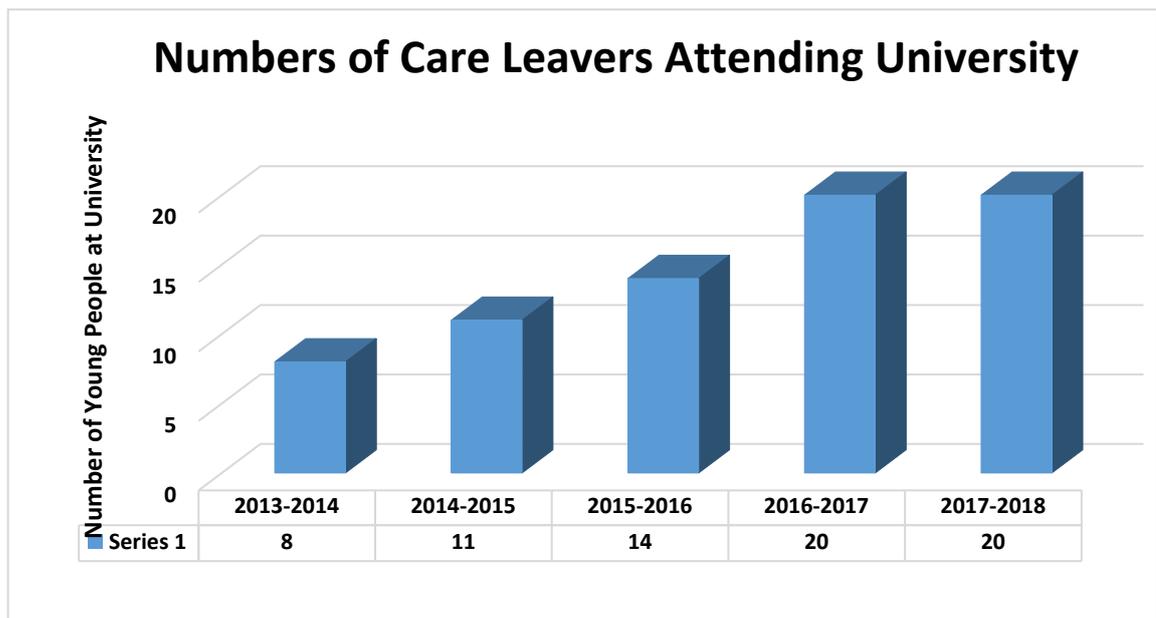
- 44 Since 2006, YPS has routinely provided young people who are looked after or care leavers the opportunity to participate in work experience placements during the school holidays, which offer an insight into the world of work.
- 45 Work placements are identified both within the council and within the private sector and cover a range of employment areas, linked to areas of interest identified by the young people. As part of the project, young people are given financial support to cover their expenses in attending these placements.
- 46 The graph below demonstrates that significantly more young people have been engaged in placement activities via Teenagers 2 Work during 2017-2018, with numbers peaking at 27 young people in placement during the summer holidays.



- 47 Over the last year, YPS has seen a significant increase in the number of placements being made available by the Council in line with the 'An Opportunity for Every Care Leaver' initiative.
- 48 Placements within the Council have included:
- Service Direct - bricklaying, motor vehicle maintenance, IT
  - REAL Service
  - Libraries Service
  - Business Administration
  - Catering Services
  - Parks and Recreational Services
- 49 It is hoped that some of these work experience placements will provide the opportunity to be converted into apprenticeships in the longer term and hopefully lead to permanent employment.

### Young People Attending University

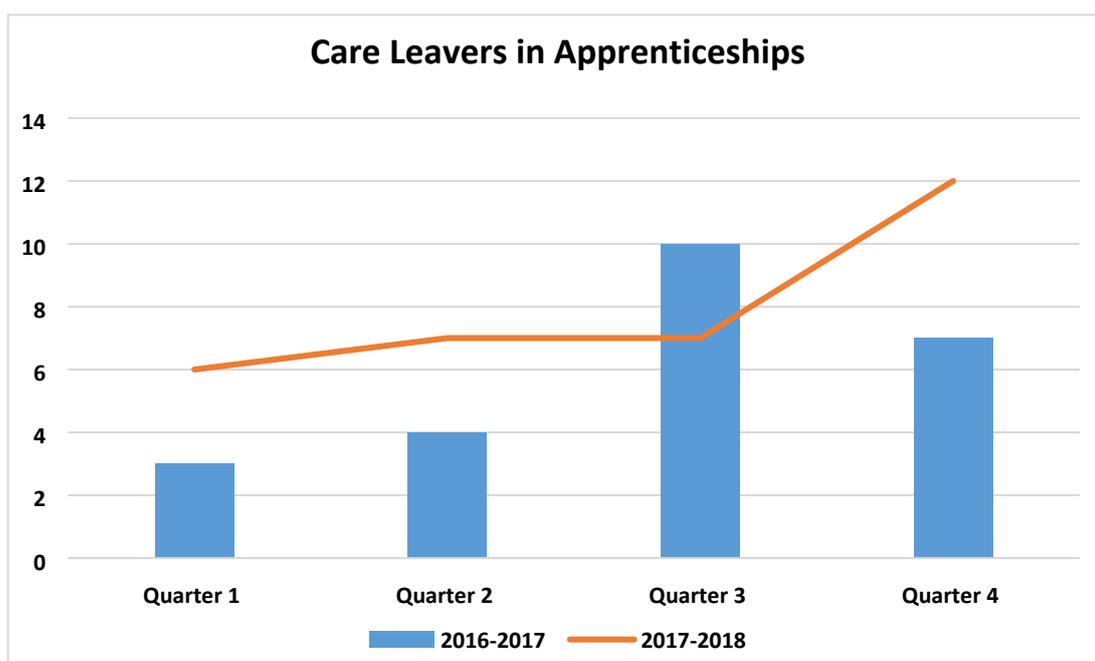
- 50 At the time of writing this report, 20 young people are currently attending University in various locations across the country, with a dedicated worker providing support to these young people during their time at University, helping with accommodation and financial support, as well as providing practical and emotional support.
- 51 This number has remained relatively static since the last annual report; in September 2017, the service had 21 young people at university.
- 52 Within these numbers, we have two young people currently undertaking their Masters Degree following on from their undergraduate courses. Both are making good progress and are on track to graduate in Criminology and Animation & Design.



- 53 Whilst significant progress has been made since 2013-2014, national data would suggest Durham is not performing as well as other Local Authorities and in an effort to improve our performance in this area work has been undertaken with foster carers and staff in residential services to promote the aspirations of young people in care. At present there is no current benchmarking data for 2017-2018 and the last data available from 2015-2016 listed the average for England at 6.0%. At the end of 2017-2018 – Durham had 6.4% of care leavers attending university.
- 54 The Choices programme has been actively promoted and foster carers and young people are encouraged to attend events ran by Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

### Apprenticeships

- 55 The number of young people in apprenticeships has continued to rise throughout 2017-2018. At the end of 2016-2017, there were 7 young people in an apprenticeship, this has increased to 12 young people at the end of 2017-2018 which represents an increase of 71% between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018.



- 56 There remains a need to increase the number of apprenticeships within the Council.

### National Open College Network (NOCN)

- 57 To try and improve opportunities for young people and address some of the barriers to education ,employment and training, the service are in the process of rolling out NOCN qualifications for our “hard to reach” young people who are unable to sustain mainstream education and training provision.

58 It is hoped that the qualifications available will provide those young people with an opportunity to gain much needed skills in independent living and other identified units for which they will receive an accreditation.

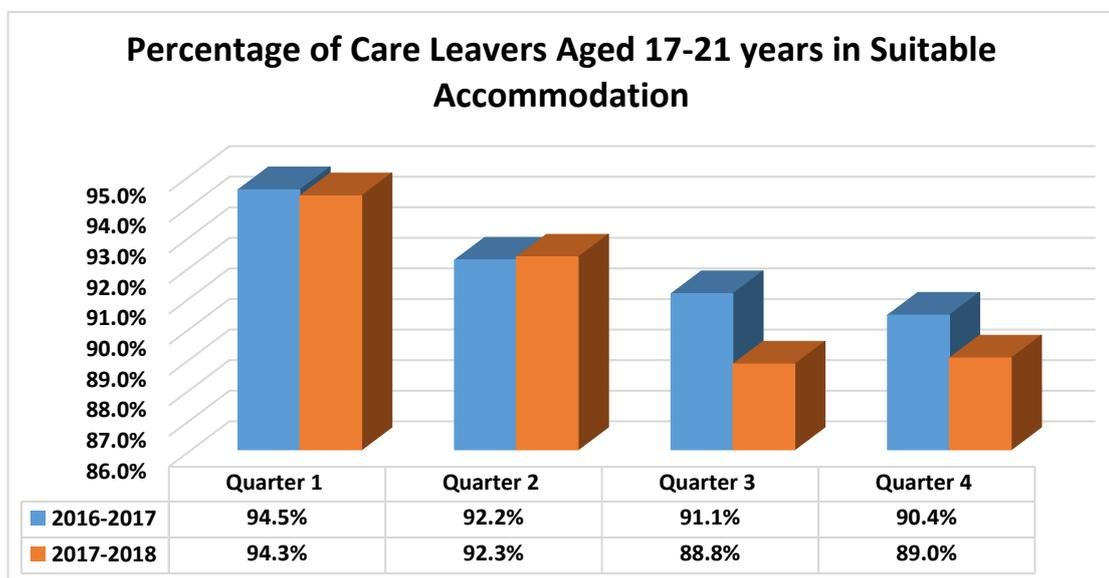
59 During 2017-2018 a total of 10 young people were engaged with the NOCN project, working towards a recognised qualification in Independent Living Skills.

### Accommodation

60 The service works in partnership with the Housing Solutions Service to ensure young people making the transition to independence have access to appropriate accommodation advice and support. This includes joint ownership of the Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Protocol (CLASP); with all accommodation outcomes for care leavers are routinely monitored and recorded through NI147 and NI148 key performance indicators.

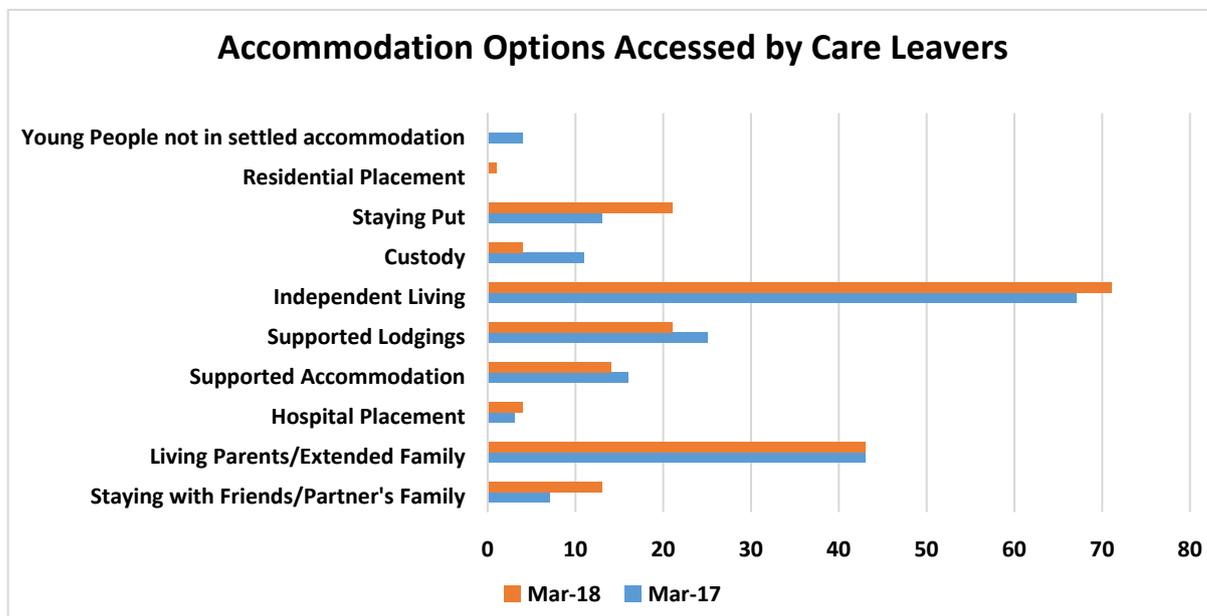
61 During 2017-2018 there has been a slight decline in performance with 89% of young people listed as being in suitable accommodation at the end of March 2018.

62 At the end of 2016-2017, 90.4% of young people were in suitable accommodation. This figure has decreased to 89% at the end of 2017-2018. The drop in performance can be linked to the increased number of young people in the cohort and lack of information around the accommodation options accessed for 21 young people no longer requiring a service; which accounts for 8% of the overall cohort number.



## Accommodation Options

- 63 As can be seen from the graph below, the majority of young people were living in their own tenancy at the end of 2017-2018. The second largest grouping referred to young people returning to live with their parents/extended family.

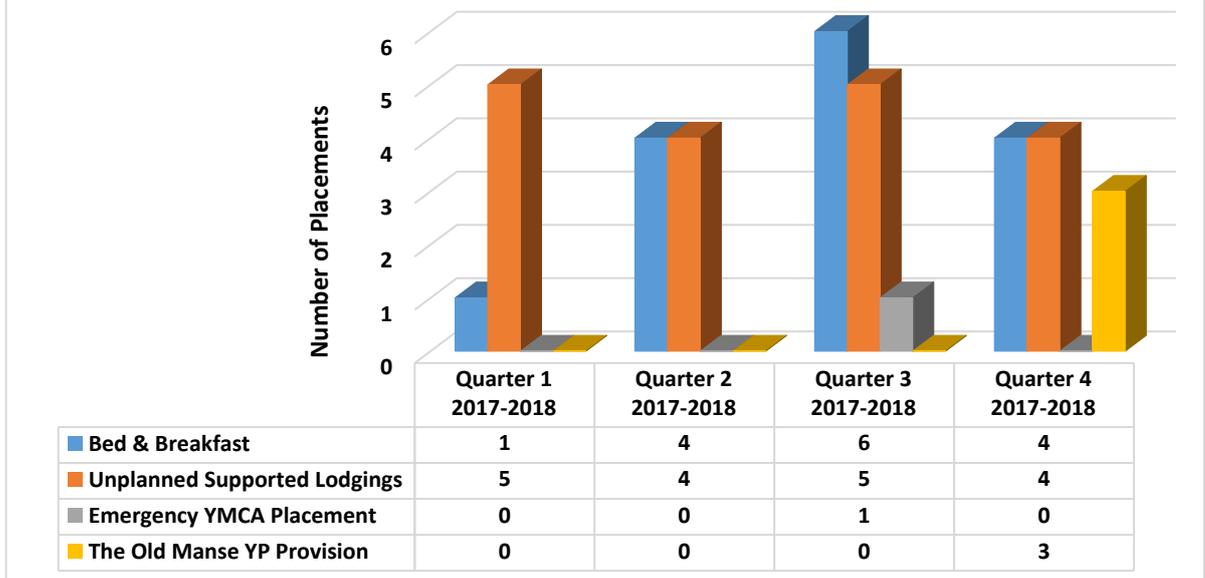


- 64 The accommodation options that young people access have remained relatively static since the last annual report in terms of the number of young people accessing their own tenancy or opting to return to parents/extended family.
- 65 However, there have been significant changes in relation to the number of young people in custody and those accessing 'Staying Put' arrangements. The service has 26 young people who are 'Staying Put'.

## Emergency Accommodation

- 66 As a service, we as far as possible adopt a zero tolerance approach to the use of bed and breakfast placements for care leavers. However, during 2017-2018, it was necessary for 8 young people to be placed into bed and breakfast, utilising 70 bed nights in total. This represents an increase of 100% on the number of placements made and a 94% increase in the number of bed nights utilised compared to 2016-2017.
- 67 The placements were mainly due to the complexity and challenging needs of the young people involved and lack of alternative accommodation placements. Five young people had exhausted all previous accommodation options or were considered too high risk by services and therefore referrals declined on this basis.

### Placements for Care Leavers into Emergency Accommodation 2017-2018



#### Durham Key Options (DKO)

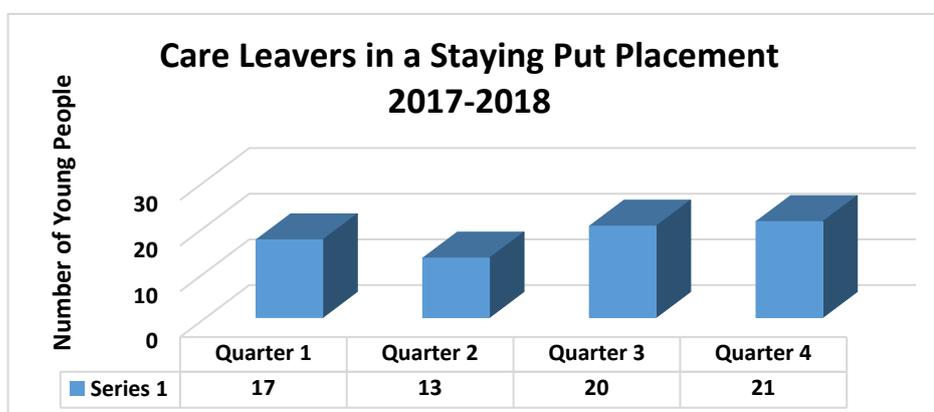
- 68 Durham Key Options remains the main source of social tenancies for young people making the transition to independence. In the summer of 2016, the DKO board announced that they would be undertaking a policy review, including a review of the current allocations policy.
- 69 In April 2017, the new letting and allocation policy was ratified, resulting in young people leaving care and those leaving supported accommodation being given priority banding within DKO. The priority banding ensures that young people are able to access priority 1 banding, the highest banding possible within the letting and allocations policy.

#### Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Protocol (CLASP)

- 70 As part of the multi-agency partnerships undertaken with colleagues in housing, supported accommodation and Durham Key Options, young people leaving care are supported to make a planned transition to independence through the use of the Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Protocol (CLASP).
- 71 CLASP is a protocol agreement that is designed to ensure YPS, Housing Solutions Service and housing providers within County Durham work together to ensure that the accommodation and support needs of care leavers are met.
- 72 Following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, the current protocol will need to be reviewed in partnership with colleagues in Housing to ensure that the protocol reflects the new legislations and continues to ensure the effective discharge of corporate and statutory duties towards care leavers.

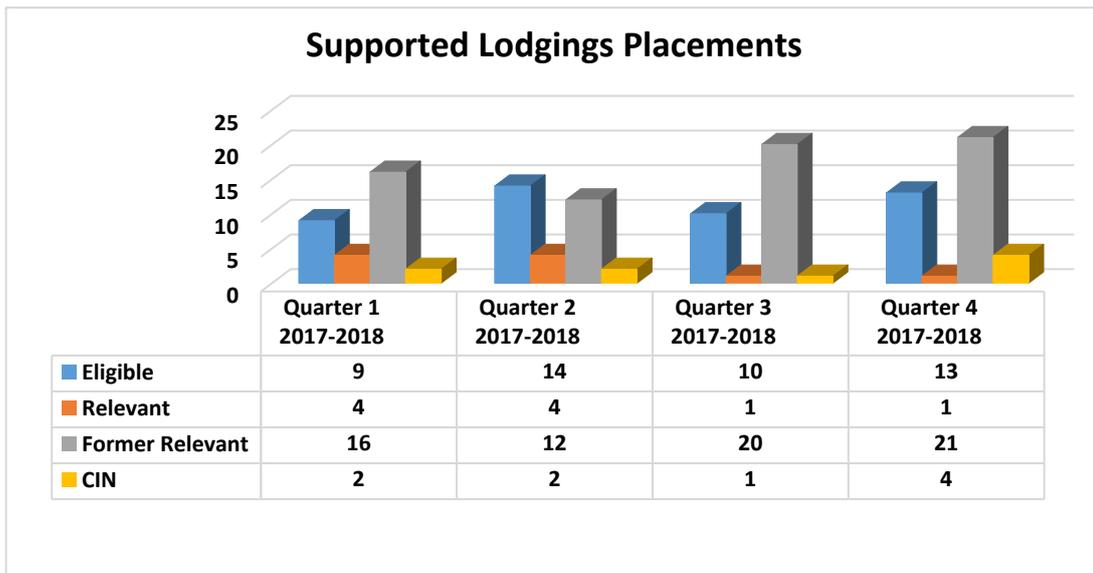
## Staying Put

- 73 Since the implementation of Staying Put guidance, young people in both internal and external foster care provision have been given the opportunity to remain in placement, where both the foster carer and the young person have agreed to this.
- 74 At the end of quarter 4, there were 21 young people in a staying put provision, which is an increase of 62% on 2016-2017 figures. At present this number is 26.
- 75 Whilst 21 young people were in a Staying Put placement at the end of the quarter, a total of 28 young people accessed staying put arrangements during 2017-2018. This is an increase from 20 young people in 2016-2017, representing an increase of 40%.



## Support Lodgings

- 76 The Supported Lodgings Service was launched in April 2003 and has a dedicated Project Co-ordinator.
- 77 The service was originally set up to support care leavers 18+ and young people aged 16/17 years old, assessed as children in need but expanded to include placements for looked after young people and care leavers aged 16/17 years.
- 78 Supported Lodgings aims to improve outcomes for young people by ensuring that young people experience a gradual transition from care. Historically, the service has provided young people with an option to remain with their former foster carers, now referred to as Staying Put and has provided other young people who have been defined as in need with a supported home base.
- 79 Supported Lodgings Providers offer young people the opportunity to live in a lodgings arrangement within their home whilst providing support to help them develop their independent living skills.
- 80 During 2017-2018, a total of 63 young people have accessed planned placements within Support Lodgings resulting in an increase of 34% on 2016-2017 figures. As can be seen from the graph overleaf the largest proportion of placements are for those young people leaving care age 18+.



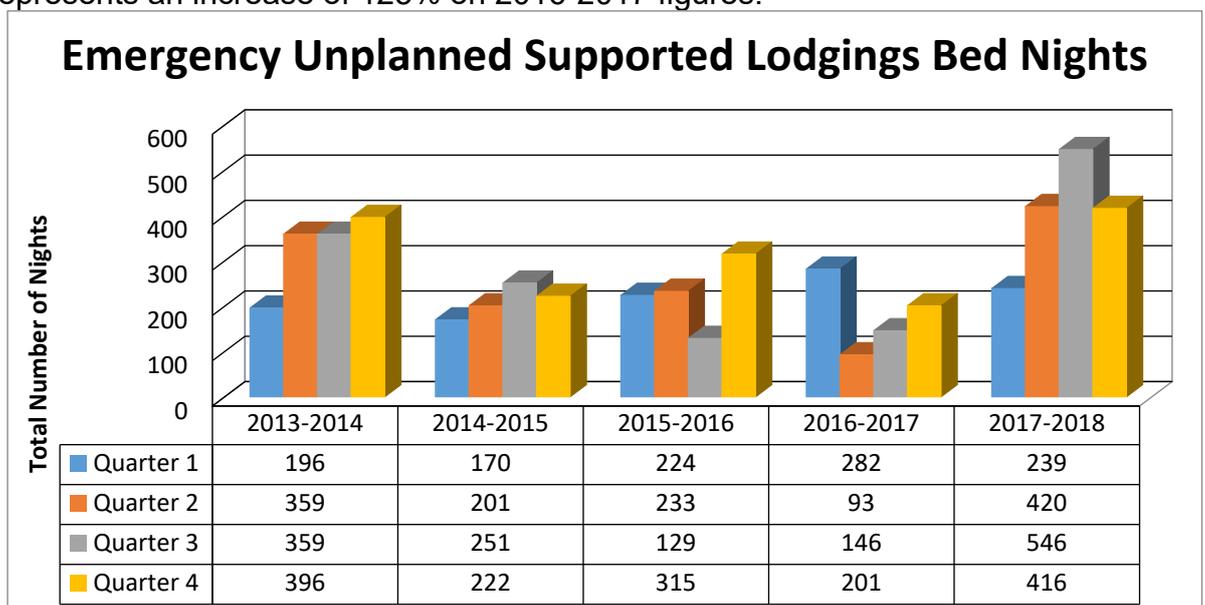
81 The placement of former relevant young people have remained relatively static since 2016-2017, however there have been increases in placements for Eligible and Relevant young people during this year in comparison to 2016-2017.

82 Over the past 12 months, the service has recruited six new supported lodgings providers, who have been approved through panel and a further 3 assessments are on-going at present.

### Emergency Unplanned Supported Lodgings

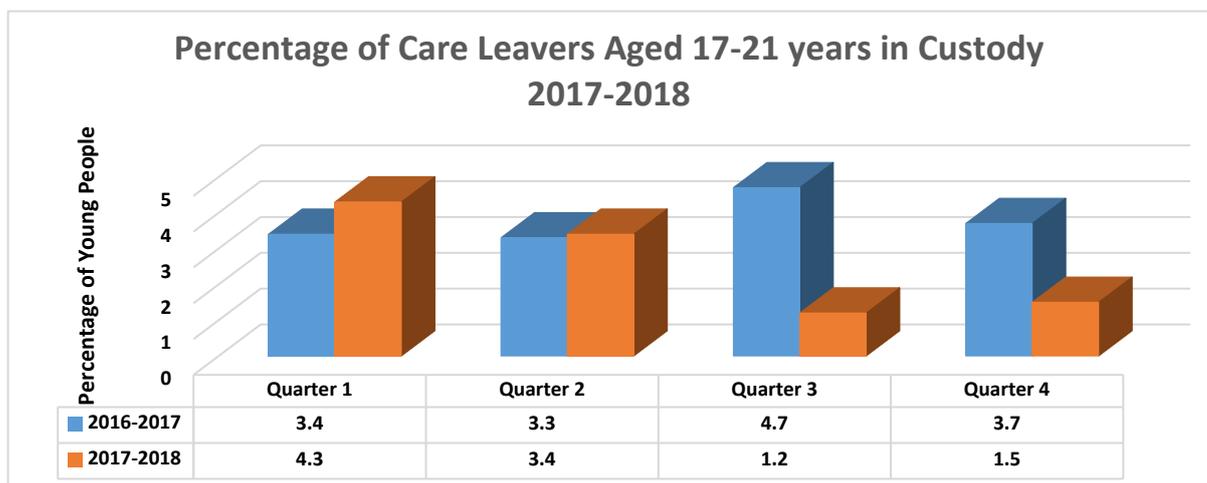
83 Unplanned placements are provided on a night by night basis to cover emergencies for a period of up to three weeks whilst alternative longer term plans are put in place.

84 In terms of bed nights, 2017-2018 has been the busiest period for emergency placements since the inception of the emergency unplanned placements within supported lodgings; providing a total of 1621 bed nights during the period. This represents an increase of 125% on 2016-2017 figures.



## Youth Custody

- 85 At the end of 2017-2018, the number of young people in custody had dropped from 11 in 2016-2017 to 4 young people, which is extremely positive and reflects the work undertaken by the service with partner agencies to try and divert young people away from offending behaviours. Those that are currently in custody are in some instances, serving lengthy sentences.



- 86 For those young people in custody, support continues to be provided by their Social Workers and Young Person's Advisers with regular visits undertaken whilst the young person is in custody.
- 87 As part of the Offender Management Service, there is a protocol in place which requires all young people who are Care Leavers to be red flagged within the prison system, to ensure that their needs and vulnerabilities are taken into account.
- 88 Whilst a young person is in custody, work will continue around their plans for discharge and regular multi-agency resettlement meetings are held with the Youth Offending Service (YOS), Probation and Housing Solutions Service to ensure that there is an appropriate accommodation provision in place ready for their discharge.
- 89 In order to achieve the necessary outcomes for those young people in custody, a CLASP meeting may be held prior to discharge and support provided from the Housing Solutions Service to identify appropriate accommodation.

## Health

- 90 Children and young people entering the care system often have "poorer" levels of physical and mental health than their peers, which impacts on their longer term health outcomes. To this end, a Strategic Health Needs Assessment has been completed with colleagues from Public Health.

91 As part of the on-going strategic work to improve health outcomes for young people, the Care Leavers' Group are currently reviewing the local action plan with a view to developing actions relating to health and wellbeing. It is anticipated that the main focus of the plan will be:

- (a) Strategic alignment
- (b) Speech, language and communication
- (c) Mental health and emotional well-being
- (d) Sex and relationship education

92 During 2017-2018, a total of 133 young people were eligible for a Health Passport and as a result 58 referrals for a health passport were made and 17 young people had received their health passport at the end of the financial year. As of 10 September 2018, a total of 57 young people have now received their health passport.

### Teenage Pregnancy

93 Care leavers on a national and local level are identified as a group of young people more likely to be at risk of teenage pregnancy than their peers of a similar age. At the end of 2017-2018, there was a slight reduction in the number of care leavers who were either pregnant or a mother.

94 Following research undertaken by CYPS and Health around teenage pregnancy, it has been identified that Durham figures are consistent with the national average.

95 When further analysis was undertaken in relation to the number of young people who were parents or pregnant, it was determined that of the 40 young people were listed as being pregnant or mothers, 9 of these cases were closed to YPS.

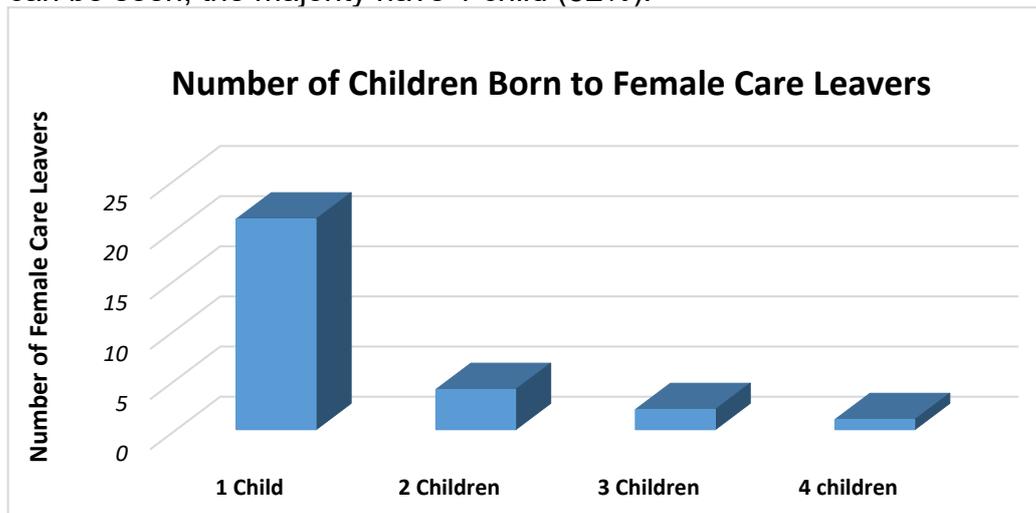
96 It was also determined that of the 31 open cases, 27 young people were NEET; with only 4 young people actively engaged in Education, Employment or Training.

97 Thirteen young people currently have involvement from Families First teams or Child Protection teams, either within Durham or neighbouring authorities in relation to their children.

	Number of Young People
<b>Child Adopted</b>	2
<b>Child with Grandparents on an SGO</b>	2
<b>Child with Grandparents on a voluntary basis</b>	2
<b>Child in Foster Care Placement</b>	2
<b>Child with ex-partner</b>	1
<b>Child involved in CP Plan</b>	4

98 Eleven young people are in stable relationships and 20 are currently not in any settled long term relationship.

99 The chart below shows the number of children born to female care leavers. As can be seen, the majority have 1 child (52%).



100 Targeted work needs to be undertaken in this area, with a view to reducing the number of care leavers becoming pregnant in the future.

### Impact of Universal Credit

101 Universal Credit (UC) has recently rolled out across the whole County. There had been significant preparation for this with the DWPs Champion, Paul Robson and the Local Authority, publishing a Young Care Leavers Joint Protocol, and whilst Job Centres had been sent this as part of the initial training as the roll out to full service for UC was implemented, the service have had to re-enforced the importance of this protocol for our young people.

102 Unfortunately the UC system does not make allowances for any claimant who may have transient lives and the claimant commitment is an issue for many. There have also been numerous issues arise in relation to new claims being made for young people and the varying knowledge base of work coaches within individual job centres.

103 Some of the issues relate to:

- Supported Lodgings rent payments have in some instances been refused and claims declined due to confusion with Job centre staff and their understanding of supported lodgings arrangements
- On-going issues with backdated claims for the housing element within UC and inconsistent decision making.
- The awarding of Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA), where care leavers can be paid weekly or fortnightly and have their rent paid directly to landlords, is not always being granted despite care leavers being entitled to these arrangements under UC.

- 104 Despite the issues raised above, work is on-going with the DWP and local job centres to improve the outcomes for young people and resolve issues as they arise through partnership working.

## **Future Developments**

### **Local Offer for Care Leavers**

- 105 In February 2018, the government issued guidance around the Local Offer for Care Leavers. Following the publishing of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, local authorities were tasked with providing information to its care leavers in relation to the support and services they are entitled to.
- 106 In Durham, a Local Offer Event was held in May 2018 to seek the views of young people in care and those that have left care, with a view to developing a meaningful offer for young people. The event pulled together a variety of services, including CYPS, Housing Solutions, Health, Education, Durham Works, Youth Offending Service, Fostering, Full Circle, Investing in Children and the Independent reviewing Officer (IRO) service to help support the formulation of the offer.
- 107 Following on from this event, work is on-going to develop a website for young people, enabling easy access to information about the Council's Local Offer as well as sign-posting to relevant agencies and services.

### **Care Leavers Pathway**

- 108 As a service and a County Council, we are committed to providing employment opportunities for all young people. Investing in young people has many potential benefits and as a result services are developing a Care Leavers Pathway with the intention to support small groups of young people; through work experience. These include year 11 school leavers, young people who are NEET (18+) and young people 16-18 who are in education but would benefit from work experience during school holidays.
- 109 In addition to the pathway, the government has announced its commitment to provide every care leaver undertaking an apprentice, a £1,000 bursary to assist in their transition into the work place. There is also additional funding available to both the employer and training provider for 16-18 year olds and 19-24 year olds who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

### **Staying Close**

- 110 Work is on-going to develop a staying close pilot within Durham with partner agencies who provide accommodation. As part of the process, young people and staff within residential services will be consulted to gain their views around what they would like staying close to look like.

## **Homelessness Reduction Bill**

- 111 The Homelessness Reduction Bill has been implemented from 1st April 2018. The new Act builds upon existing homelessness legislation and requires local housing authorities to help all eligible applicants rather than just those with a 'priority need'.
- 112 The Act also provides more in-depth clarification around the rights to care leavers and their local connection. This will ensure that homeless care leavers have a local connection to the area of the local authority that looked after them or, if it is different, the area where they normally live and have lived for at least 2 years including some time before they reached 16.
- 113 In essence, this will make it easier for young people to get housing assistance in whichever of these areas they feel most at home.

## **Accommodation Options**

- 114 The service continues to face significant accommodation pressures at present, despite the commissioning of The Old Manse Young People's Provision via Changing Lives.
- 115 The provision will move to the new premises in Headley Court in Stanley in the Autumn of 2018 and it will address some of the pressures being faced by the service due to the increased bed spaces being available.

## **Recommendations**

- 116 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to:
- (a) Note the content of this report

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – None

**Staffing** – None

**Risk** – The Local Authority has a statutory duty to care leavers to ensure they are safe and have their needs met

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – As Corporate Parent for Care Leavers, the Local Authority continues to champion the needs and rights of Looked After Children and Care Leavers

**Accommodation** – None

**Crime and Disorder** – None

**Human Rights** – None

**Consultation** – None

**Procurement** – None

**Disability Issues** – None

**Legal Implications** – Requirement to ensure that the Local Authority is compliant with all statutory duties and guidance in relation to this vulnerable group

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## Appendix 2: Good News Stories

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### Case Study 1

The young person spent a period of time in foster care and as an adolescent returned to the care of his mother, however this was short lived resulting in a breakdown in the relationship and the need for him to move into independent living aged 17.

The young person did attend school during his time in care and left with some academic qualifications but these were insufficient to enable him to gain an apprenticeship.

Due to A's work ethic he was able to secure a variety of different jobs, however, all jobs were minimum wage and all temporary often on zero hours contracts. To help improve A's options, YPS provide financial support to the A and supported him to undertake his CSCS card and his fork lift truck driving licence.

Unfortunately, in between contracts, A often got in with the wrong crowd and as a result, spent some time in prison and was heavily into substance misuse. On release from custody, A was able to find work quickly on release due to the courses he had undertaken.

He has since secured a place on a roping course with the financial help of a family member, which has led to higher paid and more secure work. He is now in a settled relationship with a young women who is having a positive influence on him.

There has been no further offending or substance misuse issues for over a year and he has started work in London, helping to build the new Tottenham football ground, earning an average of £800 to £1000 per week.

### Case Study 2

This young person struggled in school due to his appearance and alternative look as a "goth" but always had academic potential. He had a very good foster care placement, which was secure, however at the age of 17, the young person made the decision to leave foster care and accessed supported accommodation at Stonham.

The move to semi-independent accommodation was detrimental; resulting in the young person leaving college and becoming withdrawn. However, during his time in placement with Stonham, his previous foster carer kept in touch with him and visited him on a regular basis.

He agreed to move from Stonham to Supported Lodgings with his previous foster carers sons who had recently become providers. He was supported to enrol at Gateshead college and completed an IT course; in which he excelled. Following this course, he was supported to access a place at University; undertaking a degree in cyber security as well as becoming a volunteer with the police undertaking cyber security work.

Following the completion of his degree, the young person moved on to undertake a Master's degree and has been supported by YPS to purchase the relevant equipment he needed for this course. He also works part time for a cyber-security company and has a flat on the quayside at Newcastle.

His previous carers continue to support him and he visits them on a regular basis.

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**Appendix 3: Alteration to Quarter 4 Figures**

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Following discussions with the Systems and Data Team on 11 July 2018, it has come to light that the quarterly performance data for quarter 4 has been incorrectly reported in relation to NI147 and NI148. The revised data for education and accommodation has been reported as follows:

	<b>Original Quarter 4 Figures</b>	<b>Revised Quarter 4 Figures</b>
<b>EET Figures</b>	61.4%	70.5%
<b>Accommodation Figures</b>	89%	90.3%

As can be seen from the figures above, statistics for both education and accommodation have increased quite significantly in relation to education. Given that the figures for Quarter 4 were incorrectly calculated, it is reasonable to assume that previous quarters for 2017-2018 are also incorrect. Assurances have been sought from the Systems and Data Team to ensure that going forward, figures for future quarters are correctly calculated.

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## Appendix 4: Case Studies re. Care Leavers Who are Mothers or Pregnant

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### Case Study 1

J has had a long history of involvement with services due to the parenting capacity of her parents and their on-going mental health issues. She became estranged from them shortly after her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and moved to supported accommodation.

Her risk taking behaviour escalated very quickly; resulting in a high level of CSE being recorded due to her inappropriate relationships with a range of men; where there were issues of controlling behaviour and domestic violence.

J also had diabetes and her health was continually at risk due to her chaotic lifestyle. Her mental health also was issue and there were incidents of self-harm and a number of suicide attempts.

Through this time there were various emergency placements sought which included supported lodgings and other supported accommodation, however J would often leave placement without notice; following the forming of new relationships. However, these were often short lived and resulted in J becoming homeless again.

Her relationship with parents continued to be strained and long periods passed when they refused to speak to J due to her behaviour.

When J reached 18 she disengaged with the service and went missing but kept in contact with her father; who would keep in touch with the service to advise of J's whereabouts.

After a significant period of no contact, J made contact with the duty worker from the YPS advising that there had been a domestic violence incident and that she was homeless and pregnant.

Arrangements were made for her to move in to a mother and baby unit and referral made to first contact due to capacity issues. There was no pre-birth assessment and no pre-birth work undertaken with J.

An initial child protection conference (ICPC) was undertaken just prior to the birth of J's child and a twin tracked plan was put in place. J's parents were assessed as potential carers but found unsuitable to care for the baby.

During the pregnancy J's behaviour did not improve and this included continued drug misuse and missed appointments with all professionals; however through this process J's father remained supportive of J.

J did agree for the baby to be accommodated and baby's father was assessed but found not suitable due to the threats he had made towards J. As a result he was not party to proceedings.

Attempts to support J continue in her own right and on a positive note; she does attend contact but has been known to make some inappropriate comments.

It appears her childhood experiences and trauma have had a negative effect on her own mental health and therefore she is unable to put the needs of her baby before her own needs at this time.

## Case Study 2

R has two children, one of which has just recently been born. The baby remains in R's care with the oldest child in a shared care arrangement between R and her ex-partner. This arrangement is monitored through the family group conference.

R has a learning disability and throughout her pregnancy was living in supported lodgings. A referral was made to first contact at 20 weeks for the unborn child and a parenting assessment was undertaken resulting in an ICPC and the unborn baby made subject to a plan due to the R's ability to care for the unborn, concerns around potential neglect and CSE concerns. An advocate helped the YP through the CP process.

The case was to be twin tracked and a mother and baby foster placement sought. R wrote a letter to panel with the support of her advocate to ask for this placement and panel agreed. Due to resources, the placement was not found until the baby had been born and therefore no pre-birth work had been undertaken.

In addition to the above, R was assessed by CAMHS and it was established that any reports, plans, court reports and agreements should be very visual to enable R to understand. This did not happen and R felt let down and found it hard to understand what was expected of her, both in meetings and as part of the plan. She often felt her opinion had no importance and therefore said little or nothing during meetings.

When a mother and baby placement was found, R was not given the opportunity to meet the carer before they move in. The foster placement was in a small flat whereby R was supervised by the foster carer. R has stated that she felt "smothered" in the placement and was not clear what the carer expected of her and felt there was no move on plan.

R felt that she was not given free time and became impatient in placement. R started to go out through the day and into the evening, often not coming back to placement to late evening; resulting in the baby being looked after by the foster carer. There was also an incident; whereby R was out with the baby and seen in the company of two friends; who were deemed inappropriate.

R left the foster placement and moved in with her mother, whilst the baby remained in foster care. However, R maintained contact with the baby, attending the arranged contact sessions.

Following these events, the plan for the baby changed and the baby was placed with it's father and grandparents, who had also maintained contact throughout the process.

Following the placement of the baby with the birth father, a police investigation was undertaken into the baby's father, whereby allegations were made in relation to him having an inappropriate relationship with a younger girl.

This led workers to want to change the plan for the child to move back to mother but this plan was not approved on the basis that R was pregnant with her 2<sup>nd</sup> child.

R is now in a new relationship which is deemed to be positive and her boyfriend's parents were also said to be very supportive. During the investigation into the baby's father, the baby was again placed in foster care.

When the allegations were not substantiated, the baby moved back with dad and his parents. The shared care arrangement remains in place and the baby spends 2 night per week with R. To date the plan remains in place.