



Report for:

INFORMATION

Item Number:

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| Contains Confidential or Exempt Information | NO |
| Title | Looked after Children and Care Leavers Feedback Survey 2014 - Follow Up Action Plans |
| Responsible Officer(s) | Judith Finlay |
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| Portfolio(s) | Children and Families |
| For Consideration By | Corporate Parent Committee |
| Date to be Considered | July 17th 2014 |
| Implementation Date if Not Called In | |
| Affected Wards | All |
| Keywords/Index | Looked After Children, Care Leavers, Feedback, Views, Voice |

Purpose of Report:

This Report provides action plans to follow up on the findings to the last Committee of the views of 130 looked after children and care leavers aged 5 – 19 plus, who responded to two recent confidential surveys, giving their feedback on a wide range of issues relating to their care experience. Officers have now developed Action Plans in response to these findings, identifying ways of improving children and young people’s care experiences and outcomes and these action plans are presented to this Committee.

1. Recommendations:

1.1 That Members note the Action Plans (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3) developed in response to the views expressed by children and young people to the recent wide ranging and comprehensive surveys of their care experiences.

2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

2.1 In line with best practice it is very important that the views of children and young people are regularly sought in a variety of ways to ensure that their care experience is a positive one.

2.2 In line with its responsibilities as Corporate Parent to Ealing's looked after children and care leavers, it is important that Members and the Committee are aware of children and young people's views on the services provided.

2.3 It is important to have key action plans in place in order to ensure that children and young people's feedback is actively used to improve the quality of services and in order that progress can be monitored.

3. Key Implications

3.1 Two surveys were undertaken – one through the Junior Council with children aged 7 – 11 and a second survey with older children and young people aged 11 – mid 20s. Both were reported to the last Corporate Parent meeting in March 2014. (See Appendix 1 re details of full findings, previously presented to last Committee)

3.2 The older children and young people's survey was available online for all young people to fill in confidentially from October 2013 until end of January 2014.

3.3 The survey sought to gain young people's insight into a wide range of aspects of the services and support they receive with the aim of identifying areas and actions to improve their care journey and experiences.

3.4 There was a wide ranging number of approx. 85 questions ranging from health issues, safeguarding issues, education, training and employment, making a positive contribution and preparing for an independent and successful future. The survey was designed in partnership with the HSCC.

3.5 In order to encourage a wide response rate there was a prize draw for all those completed surveys with 3 voucher prizes - £100, £50 and £30 in vouchers. In addition Foster Carers, Social Workers, Teachers, Outreach and Horizons Centre workers all were notified and asked to support their young people to complete the survey. All young people were written to individually and their carers and a reminder was also sent a month later.

3.6 In total 110 young people replied, which is a significant statistical group. The age range was 11 to mid-20's with 52% being under 18 and 48% over 19. The nature of this type of survey method is likely to lead to a higher response rate amongst older young people. Further consideration needs to be given as to how best to engage the views of younger children.

3.7 Key themes and areas for action emerging included:

- I. Strong awareness of the importance of healthy diet and lifestyle
- II. Increased support needed to reduce levels of smoking
- III. Relatively low numbers of young people drinking regularly
- IV. Almost a third of respondents admitted trying drugs at some point – 10 within the last month, predominantly cannabis
- V. Increased support needed re bullying and what to do about it, including cyber bullying
- VI. Most young people feel safe going about in the daytime and less so in the evening
- VII. A significant number - 20% have been victims of threat of violence at some point
- VIII. 98% of the group stated they don't carry a weapon e.g. a knife but 25% said they know someone who does
- IX. 11% said they were frightened of gangs where they live and 7% felt they had been pressurised to join one, although only 1 respondent admitted currently being in a gang
- X. There is a need for increased information on sexual health and contraceptive services advice – 31% say they don't know where to get this information from
- XI. There is further work needed on supporting LAC young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation
- XII. There is a need to ensure young people have a quiet place to study where they live – 37%
- XIII. Most young people are enjoying their school./college/university – 85%
- XIV. There is a need to increase the frequency and range of physical activity available and a wide range of suggestions were made including Netball, Zumba, Tramlining and Rock Climbing.
- XV. A significant group – 20% are worried about living independently when they leave care and would like to see extra help provided, especially with budgeting, housing and emotional support
- XVI. There is significant action to take in terms of developing statutory reviews with 57% saying they find them helpful and 43% saying they don't. A wide range of positive and negative comments were given about the Review process and how it can be improved.
- XVII. There is a need to improve awareness about the Complaints and Representation process with only 50% saying they are aware of this and many would like further information through leaflets, website info and info from their social worker
- XVIII. Young people seemed to welcome this form of consultation with 60% saying there should be more surveys like this.

3.8 In addition a smaller survey of the views of over 20 younger children aged 7 – 11 was undertaken, by the Junior Council, focusing on similar themes.

21 completed responses were obtained.

Very clear themes and areas where children would like to see improvements were identified which included the following:

- i) Social workers to spend more time getting to know them by playing games and going on trips and to become better at listening to children and understanding their views
- ii) A clear need for better understanding of the reasons they are in care and why they are not living with their families emerged for a number of the children
- iii) A better understanding of why some younger children are not permitted to have a Mobile phone is needed
- iv) Changes in practice required to make it easier to have a sleepover at friends' houses.
- v) Increased contact with birth families including siblings or better understanding where this may not be possible requested.

3.9 Appendix 2 sets out the Action Plan re taking forward the issues raised by the younger children who completed the Junior Council survey.

3.10 Appendix 3 sets out the Action Plan re taking forward the issues raised by older children and young people who completed the LAC and Care Leavers survey.

3.10 Overall the 2 surveys have provided rich and wide ranging feedback source on areas that are working well and areas that young people would like to see improved

Progress on implementing the action plans will be regularly reviewed at the HSCC and Junior Council and subject to annual review at the Corporate Parent meetings.

4. Financial

a) Financial impact on the budget (mandatory)

There are no financial implications to this report.

5. Legal

The authority is required to consult with children and young people and respond to their views as part of the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

6. Value For Money

All services are provided to ensure they provide best value and extensive feedback helps to improve quality and outcomes.

7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

N/A

8. Risk Management

It is important to respond to the issues raised particularly concerning safeguarding and safety and to minimise the risks children and young people in care are exposed to.

9. Community Safety

The responses relating to questions re gangs, violence and personal safety will have an impact on the authority's Community Safety strategies.

10. Links to Strategic Objectives

The Survey links to the authority's commitment to making Ealing a great place to grow up for every child and young person and making it a safe place where all are able to prosper.

11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

Further analysis will be undertaken of the findings to address any equalities themes emerging.

12. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:

None.

13. Property and Assets

None.

14. Any other implications:

Other implications will be addressed in the Action Plan which will follow.

16. Timetable for Implementation

An Action Plan will be brought back to the June 2014 Corporate Parent Committee.

17. Appendices

Appendix 1 – LAC and Care Leavers Survey 2014 - Findings Summary
Appendix 2 - Action Plan re issues arising from the Junior Council Survey
Appendix 3 – Action Plan re issues arising from the LAC and Care Leaver older children and young people's survey.

18. Background Information

N/A

Consultation (Mandatory)

| Name of consultee | Post held and Department | Date sent to consultee | Date received from consultee | Comments appear in report paragraph: |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Internal | | | | |
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| External | | | | |
| | A N Other voluntary organisation | | | |
| | Police etc | | | |

Report History

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| Decision type: | Urgency item? |
| For information | No |

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