

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	27 January 2022

## CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide the Committee with data around the support given to young people turning 18 and the number of vulnerable young people accessing services.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight in order to provide scrutiny, challenge and support.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No other alternative options to be considered.

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

### 6.0 Background information

6.1 Blackpool's Adolescent Service comprises of four teams and provides support to vulnerable young people:

- The Youth Justice Team provides a multi-agency partnership whose aim is to prevent children from offending and to help them restore the damage caused to their victims. The service works in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent Criminal Justice Acts. The service supervises and supports children aged

between 10 to 18 years who have committed offences and have received a Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or an order from the Court. The team also provides support to victims and Appropriate Adult support, where needed, for children detained at the police station or being interviewed by the police.

- The Family Worker Team provides destination tracking for 3500 young people and targeted support, as part of a statutory duty, to promote the effective participation in Education, Training or Employment. The team also provides holistic support for children aged 16 and 17 who are homeless following a joint assessment of need via Children’s Services and Housing.
- The Family Practitioner Team provides psychosocial, non-clinical support for young people at risk of poor sexual health outcomes and young people misusing substances up to the age of 25 years old. The team facilitates access to clinical support including prescribing, community and residential detox and rehabilitation.
- The Leaving Care Team provides corporate parenting support for our care experienced young people up to 25 years old, providing a statutory duty to enable ‘Our Children and Young People’ to achieve their potential and to prepare for independence.

6.2 At present there are 518 children and young people receiving case holding support from the Adolescent Service. Currently the children and young people open to the service and receiving support range from ages 12 to 25. 69 of the young people are aged 17 years old and the vast majority of these young people (67) will remain open to the service beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday should they wish to. The two young people who will not remain open are currently open to the Youth Justice team and their order and intervention will have concluded prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

6.3 The large majority (51) of 17 year olds currently open to the Adolescent Service are ‘our young people’ and will remain supported by their Leaving Care Personal Adviser until they are at least aged 21 and up to aged 25 if they wish to. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty on local authorities (which came into effect on 1 April 2018) to provide Personal Adviser support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want this support.

The current age break down of Our Care Experience Young People:

Age:	15-17	18-20	21-25
Number of Care Leavers receiving support from an Adolescent Service Personnel Adviser	110	160	102

#### 6.4 Outcomes for Our Care Experienced Young People:

KPIs Dec 2021:	Blackpool	England Avg	Similar LA
Proportion of care leavers with:	95%	90%	93%
a) whom we are in touch			
b) positive outcomes in education, employment and training; and	53%	56%	52%
c) housing.	93%	91%	91%

- Currently Blackpool is performing better than the similar authority average for Leaving Care Key Performance Indicators.
- Each of our young people are supported by a Personal Adviser before they leave care and into their adulthood. The Personal Advisers foster good relationships and maintain regular contact with our young people to support our young people as they grow to prepare for independence. This includes regular emotional wellbeing support to nurture trusting relationships, championing our young people and holding realistic ambitions and above all consistently being there for our young people. It also includes practical support to aid our young people's development such as budgeting, applying for work and setting up a home.
- The vast majority of our young people live in suitable accommodation. The Council works alongside housing partners to facilitate creative approaches to support young people with traditionally limited options to find a home. This includes the Positive Transitions model, which provides young people with good quality housing and additional tenancy support through Blackpool Coastal Housing.
- The proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training has improved over the last 12 months. This remains a priority area for improvement as just less than half of our young people do not currently have a positive outcome in this area and this is compounded by the impact of the pandemic on employment opportunities. Key leads across the authority are developing an Employment and Skills strategy to create further opportunities and address barriers earlier for all of our children.
- Our young people continually have their say on shaping their service, this includes our children and young people leading our corporate parenting agenda and our Justuz and Justuz Extra forums. Our young people have co-produced their Care Leaver Offer and continue to hold the Council to account to ensure the offer remains aspirational.

6.5 In addition to the Adolescent Service, Blackpool's Exploitation Team 'Awaken' has introduced a transitional safeguarding offer to support young people beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to further safeguard our children as they grow. When a young person attains the age of 18, unless they are a Child in Our Care, there is no legal Duty under the Children's Act (1989, 2004) to provide support and therefore they would automatically close to Children's Services.

The Council recognises that many of the young people Awaken support are in their late teens due to the intrinsic nature of Contextual Safeguarding involving those young people with access to extra familial spaces.

The risk does not reduce when they turn 18, in fact the risk of harm often increases dramatically as support services such as those offered by Children's Services pull away. Often young people are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) without the stability of a daily structure and routine and there is a gap in health support as they transition to adult services.

Moreover, a duty to provide support for adults as defined by the Care Act is much less than the duty imposed by the legislation for children, where their needs are considered paramount. Thus Awaken has extended its support offer to remain in place up until the age of 25 where a young person is already open to the service pre-18 and is in agreement to receive ongoing support. In addition, the offer of support will extend to any young person in this age range from within the community where contextual safeguarding concerns exist, should they consent to this support. The Awaken worker will continue to advocate for the young person and work co-operatively alongside all adult services in the same way as with Children's Services previously. This will ensure that the young person is supported to transition into adulthood as safely as possible with continuity of support from a known professional with whom they have developed a trusted relationship. It is within such a relationship that young people have the best chance of effecting positive change and experiencing improved life outcomes.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 None.

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 There are no legal implications to consider.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 Care Leavers priorities within the Improvement Plan are currently on track.

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 None.

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 There are no sustainability, climate change or environmental factors to consider.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 None

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None