

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2010

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WORK PLACEMENTS AND TRAINEESHIP ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER OR WERE FORMERLY LOOKED AFTER.

1. Purpose of Report.

To provide a progress update on the Council's work placement and traineeship schemes.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

2.1 Looked After Children are a key responsibility for the Council as corporate parents and connect with the theme 'Children Today Adults Tomorrow.'

2.2 Corporate Parenting supports the following corporate priorities:

- Children today, adults tomorrow,
- Supporting out disadvantaged communities,
- Creating learning communities;

and is connected to the following community strategy themes:

- Young Voices,
- Healthy Living,
- New Opportunities.

3. Background.

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee provides support for the performance of the Children's Directorate in relation to the well-being and progress of Looked After Children and Young People. It has sought to receive information specifically relating to Looked After Children and the Authority's Corporate Parenting role and approve schemes in relation to work experience, training and apprenticeships for Looked After Children and former Looked After Children.

3.2 The chances of young people in public care making successful transition from dependency to self reliance, are reduced by exceptional demands and expectations placed on them before they are ready. Recent research has shown that the unemployment rate amongst care leavers is significantly higher than their peers in the general population of 16 – 24 yr olds. For some young people, this compounds their lack of confidence and self-esteem and reduces further the expectations they have of themselves. In the context of current and future trends in the labour market for higher qualifications and skill levels, these young people are likely to become the long term unemployed. There is a need, therefore, to ensure that young people

leaving care, have access to appropriate development and employment opportunities.

- 3.3 The Authority has recognized the importance of the philosophy of doing what any good parent would do by giving young people in our care an experience of work from within our own workplace. As the Borough's largest employer, we have many interesting and diverse areas of business which could provide useful opportunities and experience for our Looked After Young People. This would help enable them to learn about the workplace and assist in developing skills that could help them on their way to finding employment. The Council is committed to ensuring that 'Looked After Young People have the same experiences and opportunities as other young people, yet it is known that they have experienced disadvantage and difficulties and would welcome mentoring, support and an opportunity to develop their skills, demonstrate their abilities and learn what the world of work is really like.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 In relation to the work placements, a flyer was circulated to give information to managers across Bridgend Council about the work placement scheme and its aim to give young people who are, or who have been in our care, an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and learn new skills.
- 4.2 In partnership with the Aftercare Team each young person receives support, mentoring and advice to assist them to learn about what skills, knowledge and attitudes are needed within the workplace. At the end of the placement they are provided with a 'Certificate of Attendance' detailing the skills and experiences they have gained within the workplace which they could use to demonstrate their abilities to future prospective employers.
- 4.3 Some of these young people have had very limited experience of the workplace environment, but are eager for the chance and just need a helping hand to make their way in the world as they are making the transition into independence and adulthood.
- 4.4 There was a very positive response from managers who have come forward to offer placement opportunities in a wide range of areas. These include libraries, Just Ask, Housing Options, Financial Services and Sony Active Young People Partnership to name just a few. Managers have been very supportive of the idea that in future these young people may become our employees.
- 4.5 There are now 10 possible placements to which we can match young people. One young person successfully completed a work placement in Bryngarw house and is now being supported to find similar employment on a paid basis. Two young people are volunteering with the Just Ask project. Negotiations are progressing to consider a young person for the apprenticeship position with building services and a work placement with Sony. The manager commits to provide a 2 week placement, but if all is going well this could be extended by mutual agreement for longer. It enables the manager and their team to give a young person who could really benefit from having an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and be part of an innovative scheme to support young people who have been in Bridgend's care. For the young people, they have an

opportunity to try something new, perhaps that they have not even considered before, which will help to give them an insight into the world of work.

- 4.6 The aim is that we will be able to provide a varied number of work placements in any aspect of BCBC business which could be matched to the interests and abilities of the young person.
- 4.7 The Aftercare Team facilitates the placement and remains in contact with the young person throughout the duration of the placement. They conduct a mid-term review, and will handle the continuation or end of placement arrangements. They will also liaise with the manager periodically to ensure all is going well and both parties are getting the best out of the scheme.
- 4.8 Another exciting initiative born out of this drive to create work opportunities for young people who are, or who have in our care, is the creation of a traineeship, developed via a partnership between the Youth Service and Youth Offending Service. Final arrangements regarding the design and implementation of the position are nearing completion, with a view to the position being advertised before the end of the summer. It is envisaged that this traineeship will give one young person an exciting opportunity to learn and develop skills which would give him/her a great advantage in the future in terms of gaining employment in the fields of youth work, youth justice or social care. The young person will be committed to a minimum of a 12 month placement within the Youth Service and Youth Offending Service. The funding for this scheme is provided from Cymorth and Safer Communities funding which is reviewed annually and, if renewed, may allow the traineeship to be extended and/or an additional traineeship being offered. The person will have the opportunity to earn an academic qualification in youth work or youth justice depending on his/her area of interest. He/she will assist with the anti-bullying strategy and help to strengthen the peer mentoring programme which is underway within schools in the Bridgend area. The successful candidate will be responsible for his/her own learning with assistance and guidance from the Restorative Justice in Schools Co-ordinator and a Youth Service mentor/supervisor. He/she will also receive line management, supervision and mentoring from the Youth Offending Service.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

None

6. Legal Implications.

None

7. Financial Implications.

Young people completing a 2 week work placement receive £50 per week paid from the Aftercare budget.

The traineeship position is funded partly through the Cymorth budget and partly through Safer Communities funding. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

8. Recommendation.

It is recommended that the Committee notes this report and the progress that has been made with regard to creating work placement opportunities within the Local Authority for young people who are, or who have been in the care of this authority.

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Background documents
None