

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee/Panel:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	28 January 2021
<b>Title:</b>	HCC Annual Report Care Leavers
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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### Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Hampshire County Council's Corporate Parenting Board with an annual report on the activity of the Care Leavers Service from January 2020 to December 2020 inclusive. This is the first report that has been commissioned and will ensure that the Board has an overview of the achievements, progress, and challenges in meeting the needs of Hampshire's Care Leavers in 2020.

### Recommendations

- i) That the Board notes the good outcomes that are being achieved by Hampshire's Care Leavers and the plans to continue to improve those outcomes further in 2021.
- ii) That the Board endorses the ambition to have more Care Leavers accessing University, as a result of the enhanced Higher Education (HE) offer.
- iii) That the number of young people in Education, Employment and Training (EET) increases as a result of joint working between children's social care services, with the virtual college, Hampshire Futures and the Department of Work and Pensions.
- iv) That the Board notes the aim of retaining specialist housing knowledge within the Care Leavers service after the funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisor roles finishes in March 2021.
- v) That the Board endorses the aim of the Care Leavers service to achieve the 'journey to independence' workstream the end of 2021 aiding further the successful transition to adulthood for our care leavers.

## **Executive Summary**

Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child and/or young person, for whatever reason, cannot safely stay at home or with relatives or friends, it is for the local authority to step in and give them the care, support, and stability that they deserve. Being a corporate parent means doing everything that can be done for every care experienced child and young person to give them the opportunities that other children and young people get. Currently, children who are care experienced achieve poorer outcomes compared to their peers. For example, Care Leavers are less likely to be in employment, education, or training post 18, four times more likely to be involved in the youth justice system and four times more likely to have a mental health condition.

Like any parent, the responsibilities towards our 'looked after' children and young people do not stop when they reach 18 years old and legally become adults. Societal changes overall have resulted in delayed transitions to independence for many young adults – with young people requiring ongoing accommodation with their family past 18 years of age with the family home remaining a base for many young people as they complete further education and training. But what does this mean for those young people whose journey within care must eventually cease?

This report will seek to outline the work that Hampshire's Care Leaver service does, to ensure that all HCC Care Leavers feel truly cared for by us as a council.

### **Who are our 'Care Leavers'?**

Care Leavers are young people aged 18 years to 25 years of age who have been in care as a child. There are four different categories, and each category has an associated entitlement status:

- Eligible child - 16 or 17 years old in care and have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, will meet the criteria as an 'eligible child'
- Relevant child - 16 or 17 years old, have left care, but were in care on or after their 16th birthday and have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14. This applies if they have been part of the youth justice system or hospitalised on or after their 16th birthday
- Former relevant child - 18 to 21 years old and if they were previously either an eligible or relevant child
- Qualifying child - 16 to 21 years old and have been in care or, if disabled, have been privately fostered after reaching 16, but do not qualify as eligible, relevant, or former relevant (have spent less than 13 weeks in care). May also qualify if subject to a special guardianship order (SGO) and

were looked after immediately before the SGO was made, or, if previously an eligible child, but returned to live with someone with parental responsibility (PR) for more than six months before your 18th birthday

- From April 2018 The Children & Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities, to provide Personal Advisor (PA) support to all Care Leavers up to age 25, if they want this support. Under previous legislation, local authorities were required to only provide Care Leavers with support from a PA until they reach age 21, with that support continuing up to age 25 only if a Care Leaver was engaged in education or training.

## **Hampshire Demographic**

There are currently **758** Care Leavers (18+) open to Hampshire Children's Services.

### Age and Gender

477 Males (63%)

279 Females (37%)

2 Other

### Ethnic background

White 67%

Mixed 3%

Asian or Asian British 3%

Black or Black British 15%

Other Ethnic group 11%

### Eligibility Category

Relevant (YP aged 16-17 no longer looked after and eligible for leaving care services):14

Former relevant (YP aged 18-25 eligible for leaving care services): 720

Qualifying (YP aged 18-25 in receipt of support but not eligible for full leaving care services): 24

## **Corporate Parenting and Statutory Responsibilities to Care Leavers**

Hampshire County Council (HCC) believes that it is everyone's responsibility to help those who have been in care to overcome the difficulties that they experienced in their childhoods so that they can lead successful adult lives.

However, as a council we have statutory responsibilities set out in the Children Act 1989, the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to Care Leavers that we are legally required to meet.

Hampshire County Council have developed a 'Pledge to Care Leavers'. The Pledge is our promise to all our young people leaving care based on what we

recognise are the additional challenges faced by care experienced people. Our pledge can be accessed at Appendix A.

As a local authority we have also consulted with Care Leavers and stakeholders to develop a 'local offer' which provides detailed information about all the services and support that are available to Care Leavers, including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support we provide, for example our Higher Education financial support package (discussed below).

The HCC local offer is centred on the below principles (and attached at Appendix B):

- My Pathway Plan to independence and a successful future
- My health and wellbeing
- My relationships
- My education and training
- My employment, including my money
- My accommodation (experiencing stability and feeling safe and secure)
- My participation in society, including getting my voice heard

### **Means of Delivery**

The activity of the HCC leaving care service is critical to enabling Care Leavers to make the transition from care to independence successfully. HCC have four leaving care teams:

- North West (Test Valley, Basingstoke and Deane)
- North East (Hart, Rushmoor and East Hants)
- South East (Havant, Fareham and Gosport)
- South West (Eastleigh, Winchester, Totton and New Forest)

Hampshire Care Leavers benefit from a stable, committed, and creative staff team who have offered consistency over time. Each team consists of an experienced Team Manager, Senior Practitioner, Personal Advisors (PA) and Admin staff. Care Leavers are supported by the team closest to where they lived upon entering care. They are allocated a PA whose role is to work alongside the young person and the allocated 'children in care' social worker until the young person reaches the age of 18. Strong communication loops exist across the Care Leaver Teams and Children in Care Teams resulting in, on the whole, well planned transitions across these services. The early input of the Care Leaver Service encourages a greater focus on the adults the young people will become. The role of senior practitioners has been particularly effective for more complex cases whereby the young people are receiving extremely high levels of support within residential accommodation prior to 18.

## Role of Care Leaver teams and PAs:

- Pathway planning is timely, co-produced with young people and reviewed every 6 months or more frequently depending on need. HCC has adopted a strength-based methodology (the Hampshire Approach) and as part of this has reviewed and rewritten the pathway plan which is now called 'My Life My Future plan'. This aspect of service development means that children and young people have one plan that will see them through their journey in and through into adulthood.
- Keep in touch with our care leaving young people. 85% of care leavers 19-21 were deemed to be 'in touch' in quarter 2 2020-21.
- Support our Care Leavers to access other services e.g., Health Services.
- Assist Care Leavers in preparing for adulthood and independent living.
- Support Care Leavers to access suitable housing.
- Support Care Leavers in accessing Education, Employment or Training including finances where appropriate.
- HCC promotes its offer of extended support for Care Leavers up to the age of 25 by writing to all young people who are closed to make them aware that they can request further support, advice, and guidance until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

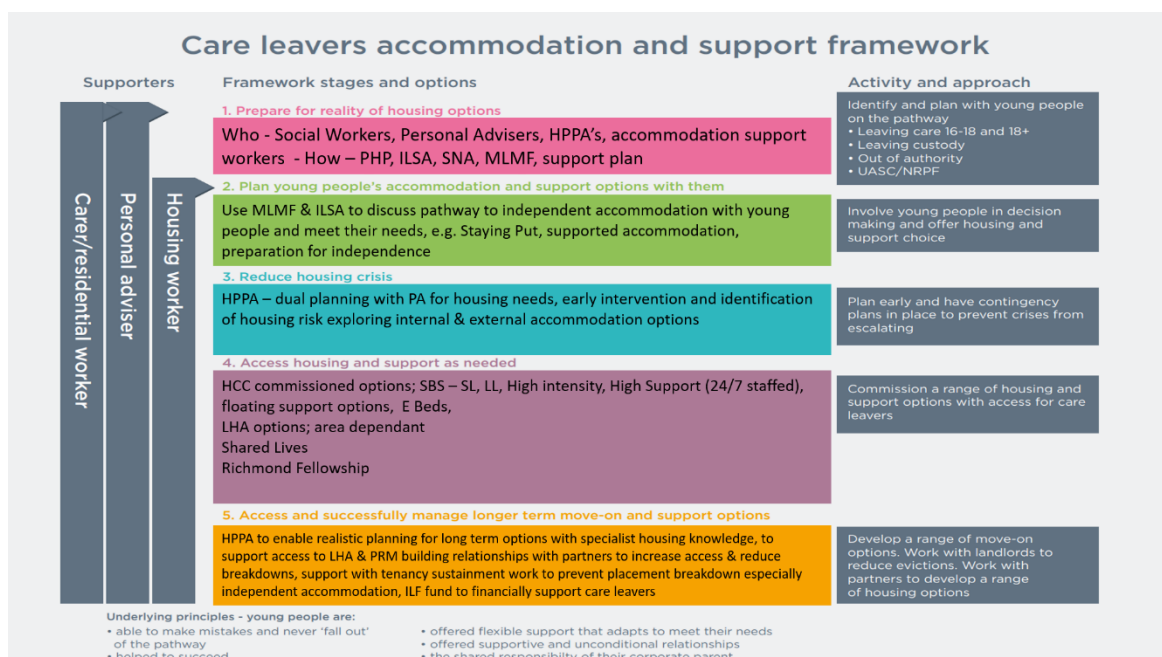
Care Leavers continue to provide very positive feedback regarding the support provided by PA's.

### **Accommodation stability / suitability**

Young people leaving care need somewhere safe, stable, and suitable to live to help them make a positive transition into adulthood. Research tells us that suitable accommodation, support around emotional well-being and life skills underpins success in other areas of life ([https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Finalframework2a\\_CareLeavers\\_A4.pdf](https://stbasils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Finalframework2a_CareLeavers_A4.pdf)).

HCC have developed a joint housing protocol in line with Government guidance which sets out our commitment as corporate parents, and how these will be delivered in practice. Our Hampshire Joint Working Protocol is attached at Appendix C.

## Post 16 framework



## Staying Put

Staying Put arrangements are where a Former Relevant child, after ceasing to be Looked After, remains living in the former foster home where they were placed immediately before they ceased to be Looked After. The intention of Staying Put arrangements is to ensure that young people can remain with their former foster carers until they are prepared for adulthood and can experience a transition akin to their peers. Staying put is heavily promoted by the Care Leaver Teams however this is not a straightforward option for young people and their foster carers for multiple reasons. HCC staying put arrangements are being reviewed as part of the Modernising Placement Agenda at the beginning of 2021 and we are excited about the potential learning and opportunities for development this might bring.

## Staying Put Data

	Total staying put arrangements
December 2017	66
November 2018	84
December 2019	62
Q1 20/21	72
Q2 20/21	71

## Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisor

As a direct result of a government initiative and funding (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government), HCC have created four specialist posts focused on promoting accommodation stability for young people – Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisors (HPPA). These posts will run from September 2019 to March 2021 inclusive. The HPPAs since being in post have worked to develop processes and procedures for joint working with partners especially accommodation providers, as well as processes to enable early intervention in terms of risk of homelessness. We have also recognised the importance of utilising the Private Rental Market (PRM) to its full potential for those Care Leavers who are ready for a move to the PRM, this will enable a better through flow for our internal accommodation options and enable us to target the young people who we feel will most benefit from LHA housing and avoid accommodation bottlenecks.

## HCC Suitable Accommodation Data

Age	Suitable accommodation			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
18	70%	61%	63%	63%
19	74%	79%	72%	77%
20	78%	66%	73%	77%
21	64%	71%	57%	72%

## **Journey to independence**

HCC are seeking to develop a robust learning package to support Care Leavers independence skills. HCC have developed and piloted a group work programme for Care Leavers (Project I) focused on developing resilience and it is anticipated that this will become part of the offer to Care Leavers aged 16 to 18 years who are facing the least secure transition to independence (identified as more at risk of EET / housing). Sadly, the project stream has been impacted by COVID-19 however consideration is being given to how elements of the programme may be able to progress virtually recognising also that part of the power of groupwork is in the interaction of the young people themselves.

An adult learning programme is also being piloted, focused on the journey to independence for 19-to-21-year olds in January 2021. The programme will consist of courses themed on personal development, staying safe, citizenship and aspirations and skills for the future.

The HPPAs have also developed a tool to assess young peoples' independence skills to inform appropriate and successful move-ons and enhance placement stability overall. HPPAs have also undertaken targeted tenancy sustainment work however it is recognised this responsibility extends beyond the Carer Leaver

teams themselves especially as the funding of these roles is only until March 2021 from the DFE.

It was been recognised that there is a lack of knowledge around the specific needs of care experienced young people with partners and the service has sought to address this to enable better outcomes for young people- see partnership working below.

### **Education, Employment and Training**

HCC is committed to helping Care Leavers realise their potential. Central to this is Care Leavers ability to engage and succeed within education, employment, and training. Sadly, despite continued focus within government policy for over 20 years Care Leavers continue to experience poorer outcomes in these areas compared to their non-care experienced peers. This can be for a number of reasons, including poorer academic success within school due to disrupted education prior to becoming looked after, self-esteem and mental health needs, a lack of skills or experience to find and maintain employment.

### HCC Virtual College and Hampshire Futures

The Care Leaver teams work closely with HCC Virtual College and Hampshire Futures (careers service) with there being an allocated carers advisor being allocated to each District CL team. There is an active workstream within the virtual college regarding post 16 Personal Education Plans and the college bursary CLs receive.

### Department of Work and Pension (DWP) joint working

The Care Leaver service is also working closely with the DWP who recognise that Care Leavers have additional support needs when transitioning into adulthood. Our joint aim is to promote more integrated support for young people who leave care, by developing collaborative local relationships between HCC and the DWP and the result is looking positive in terms of the projects that will be taken forward next year (2021):

- DWP Intensive Support for young people
- Kickstart – this programme launches on 2.11.20 and will provide 16 – 24-year olds with a 25 hour per week work placement for six months at the minimum wage. Employers are currently signing up for the scheme.
- Sector Based Work Academy Programme - this programme has three elements, pre-employment training, work experience, in whatever form Covid-19 arrangements will allow, and the opportunity to apply for work with the associated employer. An example of what is on offer is the work DWP has done to join up with the Construction Skills Fund to secure opportunities for individuals to move into the construction sector. We are working to offer a care sector course for your young people.
- Work and Health Programme – is DWP contracted support that provides individuals with a personal assistant who can work with them to develop a



plan to help them overcome their health difficulties and move closer to the labour market and ultimately into work.

- Barrier Removal Fund – work coaches have a small budget that can provide financial support for example, provision of interview clothes, help with fare to work for the first month, help to get on-line to search for work. Whatever the barrier is that is inhibiting progress we would encourage a conversation.
- Low Value Procurement – LVP this typically helps individuals secure specialist training that would enable them to move into employment. The applicant needs to identify the job and obtain estimates for the training.

The table below shows care leavers NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) during their birthday window by age band as at December 2019, 2018 and 2017 and to October 2020.

Age	NEET			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
18	32%	29%	21%	28%
19	44%	28%	31%	29%
20	33%	37%	26%	34%

### HCC High Education (university) offer

As of December 2020, 57 Care Leavers were attending university. This is an increase of 15 from last year.

At the end of 2019 HCC completed a review of its financial support to Care Leavers accessing university as result of one Care Leaver sharing with the Assistant Director of Children’s Services, some of the challenges of accessing higher education as a Care Leaver. In response to this and following a review of our previous support, further financial investment has been awarded to Care Leavers in the aim that this will increase the numbers of those attending university and provide the best environment for success during study. The ethos behind the policy is to reduce the levels of student debt acquired during study with Care Leavers no longer being dependent on a maintenance loan to meet weekly living costs. Care Leavers will continue to be required to pay for their tuition fees via the student loans system.

- Payment of weekly living costs. Payments will be based on the recommendations of the university that the Care Leaver is attending while living in student accommodation (this includes halls of residence or private shared accommodation) during term time and studying. If the Care Leaver student remains living in their student accommodation during the holiday period, the payments will continue during the holiday period (52 weeks)
- Personal Allowance. In addition to the university recommended weekly living costs Care Leaver students will receive an additional £57.90 each week as a top up for additional expenses that might be incurred while they are studying in higher education. This will be paid to every student for 52

weeks per year for the duration of their course regardless of whether they are returning home or remain in student accommodation during the holiday periods

- Hampshire Children's services will offer up to a maximum of £1500 towards writing off any credit card debt prior to a Care Leaver attending university so that the Care Leaver student can start their university course free of debt. Any remaining money from the £1500.00 will be held over and provided to the Care Leaver student when required or for emergencies. This is not a guaranteed payment. It is discretionary based on the assessment of the Personal Advisor with agreement of the Care Leaver Team Manager
- All these financial measures were backdated to September 2019

### **Council Tax**

Hampshire County Council Children's Services have continually encouraged District Councils in light of their new corporate parenting responsibilities, to consider using their discretionary powers as the billing authority to apply Council Tax exemptions for all Care Leavers living within Hampshire, as part of the local offer. Several District Councils have implemented Council Tax exemption/discounted rates specific to Care Leavers these include:

- Basingstoke
- East Hampshire
- Havant
- Test Valley
- Winchester
- Fareham
- Eastleigh
- New Forest

Rushmoor, Hart and Gosport have a discount for all YP who may be in financial difficulty and this needs to be assessed on an individual basis – it is not specific to Care Leavers.

### **Care Leavers at risk of exploitation:**

The Care Leavers Service Plan supports that for all Care Leavers for whom there are concerns about any form of exploitation a CERAF (Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Form) is considered and completed. Consideration for the need for a CERAF is required at each Care Leaver Contact/Visit and this is reinforced by the CL Contact/Visit template. These assessments are shared with Adult Services Safeguarding and for all High-Risk Cases a High-Risk Strategy Meeting is chaired by District Manager. Care Leavers also have access to support via the Willow Team.

## **Health Passport:**

Young people have told us that they have varying understanding of their family's health history and what that may mean for them and would like the information they need in a simple way. Hampshire in collaboration with young people in care, Care Leavers, carers, our Health partners and workers from our Children in Care and Care Leavers team have worked to create a consistent format for sharing health histories with Care Leavers to enable them to understand their health history and manage their own health in future.

This feedback, alongside our research into best practice in other local authorities has led us to develop our own proposed solution that:

- Makes health information meaningful and accessible to young people
- Avoids duplication – for young people, carers, Social Workers and PAs
- Sits alongside direct work, life story work and their health assessments that play a vital role in enabling them to manage their health in the future
- Is supplemented by their GP record and other online information, that remains 'live', that we encourage care leavers to access
- Will continue to evolve as we learn from experience, improve our joint processes with health and rollout our new case management system.

The first version of this Health Passport is expected to be in use with children in care and care leavers at the beginning of 2021.

## **Engagement with partners**

The Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisors (HPPAs) facilitated an engagement event with partners in November 2020 regarding the Care Leaver journey into independence. Following on from this, we have engaged stakeholders to join focus groups on key areas of independence for Care Leavers such as housing/health and wellbeing/independence/financial stability and EET, with the view that services will be able to strengthen their offers of support and learning to Care Leavers.

The journey of Care Leavers Moving into Independence Engagement event identified the following desired outcomes:

- Raise awareness of Care Leavers and the challenges they face
- Raise awareness of Corporate Parenting and responsibilities
- Start to share professional knowledge through discussion and learning
- Start to build an understanding of the support currently available
- Introduce the concept of the series of themed workshops with key partners
- Agree next steps for further engagement with partners through the themed workshops

The engagement event was well received by partners and we have moved on the next stage of focused workshops.

## **Participation and Direct Work with Care Leavers**

Participation across the council has three main features:

- Participation in the everyday interaction of social care staff with young people to understand the lived experience of the child is reflected in their care plans, assessments, and records.
- Countywide participation with all care leaving teams having a responsibility to introduce its own participation events. These events build trust and deepen understanding allowing the worker to respond more easily to the needs of the Care Leaver. Examples: One of the four Care Leaver teams facilitated weekly challenges online – including toilet roll ‘keepy uppies’ and Tik Tok videos (14yp) with the winning entry receiving a £10.00 gift card
- Care Ambassadors Projects: 17 meetings for 7 projects with 57 young people attending (one of these was an 8-week project involving 6 – 12 young people). Achievements of the care ambassadors include their contribution to a podcast focused on young people’s experience of lockdown (13 yp), Voices audio library – audio clips from young people to be used in training for social care staff and foster carers – (13 yp) and We’ve Got Talent – County wide arts project (120yp contributed and 7 yp judged)

HCC continues to consult and collaborate with Care Leavers in all aspects of service development. We regularly seek feedback from our Care Leavers and all Care Leavers are encouraged to complete a survey upon their involvement with the service ending.

## **COVID-19**

Covid-19 is recognised as having a significant impact on Care Leavers considering their resilience and support networks having been impacted by early trauma and the disruptions of key relationships. In recognition of this the Care Leavers Teams have been working hard throughout 2020 to stay connected with young people. The feedback in relation to the use of technology has been in the main positive – it appears that young people see social media and video communication as part of their daily lives and appear to have enjoyed their PAs becoming more engaged with this. PAs and managers are using their judgement to assess the level of type and level of contact required in consultation with each young person – face to face visits are still taking place however are risk assessed with social distancing measures adhered to. In addition to the DFE providing laptops/tablets to care leavers HCC have purchased mobiles, internet data and 40 laptops for Care Leavers to enhance communication.

The Care Leaver Teams were sensitive and responsive to the challenges for staying put hosts as well as other supportive living accommodation providers. Contacts with young people were increased for those placements that became pressurised. HCC are taking into the account COVID-19 in all decision making in relation to Care Leavers and have ensured as per Government recommendations that no young person should have to 'leave care' during the pandemic without suitable accommodation and the relevant support required. HCC have gone one step still considering the timing off all moves at this time resulting in 34 Care Leavers within HCC having their HCC funded placements extended (this includes YPs living in a range of accommodation as funded by HCC including foster care, supported accommodation etc). The data relates to Care Leavers aged between 18 and 21 with extensions lasting on average 12 weeks but up to 6 months in some cases. HCC continue to be committed to ensuring appropriate move on plans directed by need. The HPPA's have been heavily involved in preventing accommodation breakdown and supporting positive moves for young people.

HCC have also increased the personal allowance rate to match the rate for universal credit post 18 while claims are being processed and for those young people who are no Recourse to Public funds while awaiting an outcome of their claim for asylum.

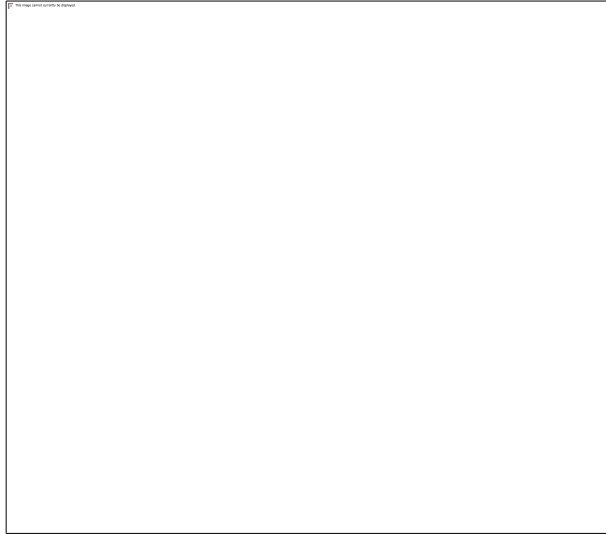
HCC's share of the COVID Winter Grant will enable us to provide a broad range of support across all Children's Services Departments however will include £20 food or fuel voucher for Care Leavers to be provided to them in January.

We continue to stress to our young people the importance of everyone following the latest NHS guidelines on Covid-19. This has understandably been quite a challenge for our young people at points whose contact with friends is a primary support and driver for them. Another element of this support concentrates on planning and preparation should a young person develop symptoms and be required to self-isolate for example ensuring that access to food and utilities is maintained.

### **Christmas**

Hampshire Children's Services provide all Care Leavers with a Christmas gift in the form of a gift voucher to the value of £30.00 every year. Additionally, through the generous donations of Hampshire colleagues and local charities and businesses, Care Leavers receive a wrapped and personally chosen gift based on their interests and likes as well as a selection of tasty food treats. Care Leavers who are living semi independently and likely to be in most need, will also receive a personal contact over the Christmas period and in person visiting.

Karen Pressey and John Egan (SWCL Team) just two of our HCC Xmas elves!



### **Conclusions**

As a Care Leaver service, a significant amount of progress has been made in 2020 despite the unprecedented times of Covid-19, however this is exactly what our corporate parenting requires of us – if anything, the drive to equalise the playing field is even more important in terms of the possibility that Covid-19 in the long term will have the most negative financial impact on those who are already marginalised in society.

Our desire to continue to develop our Care Leaver service to a level whereby all of our Care Leavers feel truly cared for by us as a multi-agency partnership remains, and we will continue to seek and listen to the young people who are at the centre of our work.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

1. *Where a consultation has been undertaken insert an analysis of the consultation responses and refer to further details of the consultation which should be included in a separate appendix.*
2. *If equality impacts have been identified in the Equality Statement in integral Appendix B highlight any particular issues, explain any proposed mitigation and consider any other relevant factors that have been taken into consideration in formulating the recommendation. See the Report Writing Guide for more information.*

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy, and independent lives:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	Yes
<b>OR</b>	
<b>This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:</b> <i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Strategic Plan tick boxes above. Whichever section is not applicable, please delete.</i>	

*NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.*

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

<b>Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents</b>	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	



## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

### 1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### 2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-assessments.htm>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions