

---

# Care Leaver Annual Report 2023-24

---

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	12 December 2024
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Heather Codling
<b>Report Author:</b>	Karl Davis
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX4643

---

## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This is the annual report on our work with Care Leavers.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the work of the service more broadly, raising awareness about the support provided to Care Leavers and fulfilling our corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 1.3 This report is intended to give all corporate parents insight into the council's commitments to children in care and Care Leavers, ensuring corporate parenting duties are fully met.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that this annual report is noted, supporting greater awareness of our work with Care Leavers.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no HR arising from this report.
<b>Legal:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Care Leaver Annual Report 2023-2024

<b>Risk Management:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no risk implications arising from this report.			
<b>Property:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no property implications arising from this report.			
<b>Policy:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Policy implications arising from this report.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on inequality.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with care leavers, who often face inequalities and reviewing the service, and the work annual enables us to continue to address and challenge any inequalities.</p>

Care Leaver Annual Report 2023-2024

<p><b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with care leavers. As a Council Care Leaver/Care Experienced is seen as a protected characteristic and this annual report review annual activity in ensuring young people with protected characteristics is fully supported.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no environmental impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>Health Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Health impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>ICT Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no ICT impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>Digital Services Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Digital impact associated with this annual report.</p>

<p><b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b></p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This annual report reflects Council Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Services we are proud of</li> <li>2) Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all</li> </ul> <p>The annual report sets out the work provided to care leavers its duties to children in care and care leavers, building a service we are proud off and ensuring children in care and care leavers and support to thrive and have the right opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Core Business:</b></p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, which outlines core business of the services delivered to care leavers.</p>
<p><b>Data Impact:</b></p>		<p>X</p>		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no data impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>Consultation and Engagement:</b></p>	<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, this will include information, feedback from partners, children, young people, families, and carers.</p> <p>This report has been presented to Corporate Parenting Panel</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report provides an update for West Berkshire Council on the performance of the Leaving Care Service for 2023-2024.
- 4.2 As of March 31, 2024, there were 182 young people classified as Care Leavers, with 127 aged 18-21 and 55 aged 22-25.
- 4.3 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 mandates that local authorities plan to ensure appropriate support for Children in Care as they transition to independence.
- 4.4 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to fund Care Leavers for home setup allowances, increased to £3,000 in 2023 following the independent review of children's social care.

- 4.5 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty for local authorities to provide Personal Adviser (PA) support to all Care Leavers up to age 25.
- 4.6 Transitions guidance emphasizes principles for supporting Care Leavers, including:
- Is this good enough for my child?
  - Providing a second chance if needed.
  - Tailoring support to individual needs.
  - Ensuring no young person leaves care prematurely.
- 4.7 The Children and Families Act 2014 mandates local authorities to support Staying Put arrangements, allowing young people to stay with foster carers beyond 18.
- 4.8 This is West Berkshire's first Care Leaver Annual Report.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 This annual report outlines the West Berkshire Care Leaver Service's work for 2023-2024, aiming to raise awareness and address the council's duties to Care Leavers.
- 5.2 Corporate Parenting is a collective responsibility. While positive actions are ongoing, continuous improvement is necessary to ensure all children receive optimal support.

### Background

#### Legal Definition of a Care Leaver.

- 5.3 Definitions of eligible, relevant, former relevant, and qualifying children are provided in this report.
- 5.4 The local authority has specific duties to support Care Leavers according to their classification.
- 5.5 In West Berkshire, Care Leavers receive support through the 16+ and Care Learning Service.
- 5.6 The number of Care Leavers in this team is increasing, supported by additional staffing funded through grants for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
- 5.7 Local authorities and their partners share responsibility for the well-being of care-experienced children. Corporate parenting extends beyond social workers to include agencies such as health services, housing departments, the police, and schools.
- 5.8 These definitions are further detailed in the annual report.
- 5.9 The local authority has particular duties it is expected to undertake in its support of care leavers, and these vary according to the 'category' of a care leaver.

- 5.10 In West Berkshire, care leavers are supported within the 16+ and Care Learning Service.
- 5.11 The number of care leavers in the team continue to grow and this we have secured more staffing using grant funding secured by supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).
- 5.12 Local authorities and their partners are responsible for ensuring that care-experienced children and young people are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility is called 'corporate parenting' and applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families.
- 5.13 Corporate parenting duty rests not only with social workers and their managers, but also any other agency that provides services and support to children in care such as health services, housing departments, the police, and schools. Corporate parents have specific duties for young people leaving care and making the journey to independence.

### **Legal background**

- 5.14 The collective responsibility for local authorities was first laid out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
- 5.15 Key documents reinforcing corporate parenting roles include "Care Matters: Time for Change" (2007), "Care Matters: Time to Deliver" (2008), and the Children and Young Persons Act (2008).
- 5.16 Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties, include:
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
  - Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 Children and Adoption Act 2006
  - Children and Families Act 2014
  - Children and Social Work Act 2017
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (as amended by the Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
  - The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
  - The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
  - Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
  - The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
  - Borders, Citizenship, and Immigration Act 2000

## Principles of corporate parenting

5.17 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines seven principles of corporate parenting that guide local authority responsibilities to care for children and young people, promoting their well-being, safety, and readiness for adulthood.

5.18 In West Berkshire, we aim to support our children, young people, and families and strive to ensure that corporate parenting is well-understood and effectively implemented across the council.

## Proposals

5.19 It is recommended that this Care Leaver Panel Annual Report be noted to inform and increase awareness of our work and duties toward Care Leavers.

5.20 As this is an annual report, no additional implications are identified.

## 6 Other options considered.

6.1 No other option considered, Annual Reports provider overview of service delivery.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 This first Care Leavers Annual Report for West Berkshire offers council colleagues an overview of legislative and corporate parenting responsibilities, facilitating better oversight of our young people.

7.2 West Berkshire is committed to supporting children in care and Care Leavers and values ongoing learning and development to continue providing high-quality services.

7.3 The report identifies priorities for 2024-2025

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Care Leaver Panel Annual Report 2023-2024

---

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval.

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council.

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position.

---

## Care Leaver Annual Report 2023-2024

---

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees,  
Task Groups within preceding six months.

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

### Officer details:

Name: Karl Davis  
Job Title: Service Manager for Children in Care  
Tel No: +441635519755  
E-mail: karl.davis@westberks.gov.uk

---