

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD  
15 FEBRUARY 2007**

**ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING - UPDATE**

**COUNCILLOR JAN BRUNTON  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**COUNCILLOR PAUL THOMPSON  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

**TERRY REDMAYNE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING**

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To update the Corporate Parenting Board on developments that have affected the economic well-being of Children Looked After.
2. To update the Corporate Parenting Board with regard to the support that the Connexions Service has continued to give to Children Looked After.

**BACKGROUND & EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

3. Members will be aware that within the Every Child Matters outcome of Achieve Economic Well-Being there are five aims. This report will outline developments within each of the five aims over the past year. The aims are that children and young people will:-
  - Engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school
  - Be ready for employment
  - Live in decent homes and sustainable communities
  - Have access to transport and material goods
  - Live in households free from low income

## **Engage in Further Education, Employment or Training on Leaving School**

4. The percentage of young people who were in care at the age of 17 and who were in education, training or employment at age 19 has risen from 40% in 2004-2005 to 50% in 2005-2006.
5. The number of young people aged 16-17 engaging in employment, education and training has been maintained since last year. In September 2006, of 15 young people aged 16-17, nine were in full-time education, employment and training with a further three in part-time education, training or employment.
6. As previously reported to Members (23/11/06), Middlesbrough's participation in the 'What Makes the Difference' project attracted £30,000 for tuition fees. This has enabled additional packages of support to be given to individual young people to enable each to succeed in their own right. A range of other measures have been taken to improve educational outcomes for children looked after, such as improving the percentage who have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan, closer monitoring of school attendance and monitoring pupil improvement, coupled with immediate follow-up on areas of concern.

## **Be Ready for Employment**

7. Good educational outcomes improve the future economic well-being of children and young people. In 2005-2006, 66.7% of children looked after achieved at least one GCSE A-G or GNVQ, representing an increase of 16.7% since 2004-2005.
8. The Connexions Service has continued to dedicate two specialist Personal Advisors (PAs) to the needs of Care Leavers and has recently agreed to extend this support up to the age of 21 in line with proposals in the Care Matters Green Paper. Members will know that the Connexions Service is to disaggregate to Middlesbrough Council from April 2007. There is a clear commitment to continue to have this specialist provision within the new Middlesbrough based service.
9. For those young people in care that are pre-16, another dedicated PA ensures that the Connexions Service is aware of all looked after children in education. This officer has taken on the Connexions Personal Advisor role for most looked after young people educated in Middlesbrough, the exceptions being where a relationship with an existing Personal Advisor has already been established and out of area looked after children educated in Middlesbrough.
10. Joint training and development activities for the Pathways Team and the Connexions PAs has taken place and will be ongoing. There are two Connexions PAs who have worked closely with the Pathways Team in relation to the Employability Project. This support has been invaluable, as will be seen in the presentation to be made by young people to this meeting.
11. The preparation for independence programmes that are offered to all care leavers have now been accredited by the Open College Network. This enables the learning process to be recognised and included in personal portfolios.

## **Living in Decent Homes and Sustainable Communities**

12. The percentage of children looked after living with foster carers or placed for adoption has risen from 78% (185) in March 2005 to 82% (198) at March 2006. These placements are closely monitored to ensure that children are living in decent homes.
13. A separate report on the Housing Needs of Care Leavers is to be presented to this meeting.

## **Have Access to Transport and Material Goods**

14. Most foster carers have their own transport and are entitled to claim a mileage allowance for journeys involving the child in their care. This applies to 78% of Children Looked After in Middlesbrough. Transport for all young people continues to be an issue with the LSP Transport Theme Group. It is hoped that a holistic view will be taken in the very near future to address the transport needs of all young people, including Children Looked After. Development of this will be reported to Corporate Parenting Board in due course.

## **Live in Households Free from Low Income**

15. Middlesbrough Council is currently reviewing foster care allowances. This issue will be reported on separately at a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting. The ability of foster carers to provide adequately for children and young people who are in their care is always taken into consideration.

## **OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT**

16. All Children Looked After have entitlements. In Middlesbrough, these include meeting the aims outlined above. The added commitment of Specialist Connexions PAs, as reported, continues to be an option that is considered locally as an entitlement. The additional £30,000 of individual educational support available from the 'What Makes the Difference' project was a one-off payment. There is currently no capacity to provide that level of support in future years.

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

17. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Services for Children Looked After apply to all wards.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

18. That the Corporate Parenting Board recommends that the Executive notes the information relating to enabling children looked after to achieve economic well-being.

## **REASONS**

19. To enable elected Members to be aware of the issues that affect Children Looked After with regard to Achieving Economic Well-Being.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Report to Corporate Parenting Board – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006
- Presentation to Corporate Parenting Board – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2006
- Report to Corporate Parenting Board – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005
- Report to Corporate Parenting Board – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2002

**AUTHORS:**     **Andy White, Head of Community Education, Tel. 728400**  
                  **Sue Little, Children’s Participation Officer, Tel. 728706**

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*Address: PO Box 69, Vancouver House, Gurney Street, Middlesbrough, TS1 1EL*  
*Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>*