

<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Member of Children's Services Interim Director of Children's Care
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive
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<b>Date:</b>	20 June 2023
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<b>Title:</b>	Final report of the Children and Young People's Social Care & Services Scrutiny Panel: Supporting Young People to Prepare for Adulthood and Independence – Service Response
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<b>Report for:</b>	Decision
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<b>Status:</b>	Public
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<b>Strategic priority:</b>	Children and young people
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<b>Key decision:</b>	No
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<b>Why:</b>	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
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<b>Urgent:</b>	No
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<b>Why:</b>	Actions identified over a 9-month period
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## Executive summary

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the support provided to Middlesbrough's vulnerable young people in preparing for adulthood and independence. The work has a particular focus on Care Leavers, to identify any gaps in provision and improvements that could be made.

The full scrutiny panel report and associated action plan are attached as appendices to this report. This report is for information only.

The attached document outlines the 23 recommendations from panel, to ensure that young people 16+ are informed of their options and appropriately supported through transition to independence. This includes Care Leavers, Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Children with Disabilities.

The action plan now requires approval from Executive.

## Purpose

The topic, identified by scrutiny panel, was to examine the support provided to Middlesbrough's vulnerable young people in preparing for adulthood and independence, with a particular focus on care leavers, and to identify any gaps in provision and improvements that could be made.

## Background and relevant information

- In line with the Terms of Reference, the Scrutiny Panel gathered evidence in relation to a range of support provided by the Council and its partners to help vulnerable young people to prepare for adulthood and independence.
- In broad terms, there are several key areas within Children's Services where support is offered to young people in preparation for adulthood and independence, including: Children with disabilities; Care Leavers and young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET); young people with Special Educational Needs (SEND).
- Many of the services within the Children's Services directorate, work collaboratively with other directorates across the Council as well as external partners to provide holistic support for young people in Middlesbrough.
- The Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy refers to the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, positive experiences for children in care, and care leavers, as defined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote co-operation between 'relevant partners', including the Police, NHS and education providers, whilst in turn those partners have a duty to co-operate with the local authority. Guidance on the Act highlights that corporate parenting is "... a task that must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies".
- A range of Council services and partner organisations are key to ensuring young people are fully supported to become independent adults, including:-
  - Stronger Families Service
  - SEND and Inclusion Service
  - Children with Disabilities Service
  - Children Looked After and Pathways (Leaving Care) Service
  - Virtual School; Education and Schools
  - Youth Offending Service
  - NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit
  - Housing providers
  - Adult Social Care

## What decision(s) are being recommended?

That the Executive;

- Note the content of the report for information
- Approve the Action Plan

## Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- The Panel recognises that preparing young people for adulthood and independence is a corporate parenting responsibility and that the whole Council and its partners must work together to ensure this task is shared equally.
- The Panel heard a range of examples of how services across Council directorates work together and in partnership with external agencies to support young people to become independent.

## **Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended**

Not applicable.

## **Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)**

### ***Legal***

Supported Accommodation; as from April 2023 must be regulated with Ofsted which means that this type of support must meet a certain standard of care.

### ***Strategic priorities and risks***

People – Children and Young People: “We will show Middlesbrough’s children that they matter and work to make our town safe and welcoming and to improve outcomes for all children and young people.”

People – Vulnerability: “We will work to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable.”

### ***Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection***

The findings and recommendation promote the Equality and human rights of young people.

### ***Financial***

Not applicable.

## **Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)**

See attached action plan within appendices.

## **Appendices**

### **Final Report Overview & Scrutiny Board – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Children and Young Peoples Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel Action Plan**

## **Background papers**

Reports to, and minutes of, the Children & Young People's Social Care & Services Scrutiny Panel meetings: 26 July, 27 September, 25 October, 14 November, 20 December 2022, 17 January & 14 February 2023.

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