

People Scrutiny Commission

Supplementary Information



Date: Monday, 8 March 2021

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting - Zoom Committee Meeting
with Public Access via YouTube

10. Children In Care

(Pages 2 - 18)

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Date: Monday, 01 March 2021



People Scrutiny Commission

8th March 2021



Report of: Ann James, Director, Children, Families and Safer Communities

Title: Children in Care and Care Leavers

Ward: ALL

Officers Presenting Report: Ann James, Director, Children, Families and Safer Communities and Maria Finlayson, Service Manager, Through Care Teams

Authors of Report: Ann James, Director, Children, Families and Safer Communities and James Beardall, Head of Service, Permanency and Specialist Services

Recommendation

For the People Scrutiny Commission to note the report.

Summary

This report sets out the routes and support available for young people leaving the care of the local authority and progressing to independence. Specific information is provided about the past year and the response to our young people throughout the pandemic.

The report covers:

- Our Vision, Commitment and Governance
- Staying in touch: ongoing support from the local authority, having a voice, and response during COVID
- Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Growing up and moving on: accommodation and support
- Achieving your aspirations: support for education, employment, and training

Decision Pathway – Report Template



PURPOSE: For reference

MEETING: People Scrutiny Commission, 8th March 2021

DATE: 01 March 2021

TITLE	Scrutiny Report - Children in Care and Care Leavers		
Ward(s)	See https://www.bristol.gov.uk/voting-elections/ward-boundary-changes		
Author: James Beardall	Job title: Head of Service, PASS		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Helen Godwin	Executive Director lead: Jacqui Jensen		
Proposal origin: <i>Scrutiny Member</i>			
Decision maker: Choose an item. Decision forum: Choose an item.			
Timescales: For consideration at Scrutiny on the 8 th March 2021			
Purpose of Report: This report sets out the routes and support available for young people leaving the care of the local authority and progressing to independence. Specific information is provided about the past year and the response to our young people throughout the pandemic. The report covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our Vision, Commitment and Governance• Staying in touch: ongoing support from the local authority, having a voice, and response during COVID• Health and Emotional Wellbeing• Growing up and moving on: accommodation and support• Achieving your aspirations: support for education, employment, and training			
Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations: 1 Introduction 1.1 Bristol is the Corporate Parent to 638 children in care and 382 care leavers. 1.2 The law defines a care leaver as a young person aged 16-25 years old who has been 'looked after' for 13 weeks since they were 14 years old and were in care on or after their 16th birthday. Care leavers are as diverse as the general population, currently 59% are recorded as being White British, 15% are recorded as Black or Black British, 13% are recorded as other ethnic group, 10% are recorded as mixed and 3% are recorded as Asian or Asian British. 16% are recorded as having Special Education needs or a disability and 18% are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. 1.3 Elected Members, senior officers, frontline leaders, partners, and practitioners are ambitious for children in care and care leavers. These aspirations, together with the actions required to achieve them are set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers and Local Offer to Care Leavers ¹ . Additionally, Bristol is a signatory of the National Care Leaver Charter ² . We recognise that there is more to do and that it takes us all, acting together, to ensure that all care leavers make an effective transition to adulthood.			

- 1.4 Bristol's Through Care Service delivers support to children in and leaving care. It comprises eight teams that combine, social work, leaving care personal advisers and support work was developed in 2016 bringing together a child in care service and a care leaver service. Teams are designed to build long lasting relationships with young people and to operate with carers in a systemic model akin to an extended family. This means that following the allocation of a leaving care personal adviser at 16, children in care continue to hold a relationship with their social worker who will only step away when the young person is ready to move to greater independence.
- 1.5 The service is committed to supporting our children to have happy and secure childhoods and to become happy and secure adults. Our work is strengths based, recognising the importance of relationships, of children's networks and building lifelong links; being a part of these long term if needed.
- 1.6 Since 2018 ILACS Full Inspection, Bristol has continued its journey of improvement for and with care leavers in the city. Our progress was tested by Mark Riddell, National Leaving Care Adviser when he visited in January 2020 when he stated he was "really impressed by the leadership and management approach that was ambitious and aspirational...having made significant improvements to their offer since the last inspection". He also highlighted the areas for further development as being to enhance governance through the development of the corporate parenting panel; to secure greater involvement from city partners; to improve joint working between social workers and personal advisers; to review the housing offer to young people; to consider how best to deliver an accessible building/dedicated space for care leavers. A plan to deliver against these themes was developed and is being implemented

2. Vision and commitment to young people leaving care

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out how we will achieve our One City vision³ and Corporate Strategy⁴ ambition to be 'great corporate parents'. For all Bristol children it includes commitments related to education, developing life skills, work experience, mental health and Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) awareness. For children in care and care leavers there are specific commitments related to health assessments and support for education.

Corporate Parenting Strategy Vision

Bristol is committed to being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent and we will show this through our love, our language, and our actions. We will do everything we can to make sure that our care-experienced children are set up for life.

We are loving parents and we care about our children and young people, not just for them. We will ensure the same standard of care as any good parent which means we will have high aspirations for our children and will be strong advocates for them. We will do everything we can to equip the children and young people with the skills needed to live a fulfilling, successful, and rewarding life that is full of love.

We want Bristol to be a 'Care Aware' city that champions our children in care and our care leavers. We will take bold and innovative steps to ensure that the people who are privileged to parent our children have the right training, support, knowledge and skills that our children need and deserve.

- 2.2 The Local Offer for care leavers was designed with care leavers, agreed by the Corporate Parenting Panel, and launched in September 2018. The promises and the principles included in The Pledge and the Care Leavers Charter guided the development of our Local Offer.

The Local Offer for Bristol Care Leavers

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Informs Young People about the services and support available as a care leaver in Bristol. Moving from care to living independently is a big change. We want to help Young People prepare for independence at a pace that is right for them and make sure that they feel safe and supported and know where to go for advice and help.

- 2.3 The **Corporate Parenting Panel** operates as a panel of Full Council to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as a corporate parent of children in care and care leavers. It meets five times each year and is an effective cross-party working group of elected members, senior officers, partner agencies, children in care, care leavers and foster carer representatives.
- 2.4 The Panel undertakes its work by championing children in care and care leavers across the council and evaluating how well the corporate parenting responsibility is delivered. It holds all parts of the City Council to account for the delivery of improved outcomes in every area of a child or young person's life for example by leading on the introduction of the Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy which came into effect in April 2018. This grants up to 100% discretionary relief from council tax to support our care leavers from the age of 18 until their 25th birthday.
- 2.5 The Corporate Parenting Panel works closely with other strategic partnerships including the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership to deliver good outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
3. **Staying in touch: ongoing support from the local authority, having a voice, knowing your entitlements**
- 3.1 **Our Care Leavers and the Through Care Service**
- 3.2 As of 28th February 2021, there are 382 young people receiving a leaving care service in Bristol, of which 65 are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and 129 are aged 21 to 25.
- 3.3 Personal Advisers deliver a dedicated service to care leavers as part of the integrated Through Car Teams. The commitment of additional resource enables each full-time worker to work with 24 young people, with plans for this to reduce to 22 as full staffing is achieved.
- 3.4 All young people aged 16-21 years have a Pathway Plan that sets out their route to independence, their goals, and the support they need to achieve these. Plans are reviewed at least six monthly. From age 21 years, the offer to care leavers is differentiated, with any young person able to return for one-off or ongoing support. Plans are developed with young people that are proportionate to need.
- 3.5 As with any good parent, we stay in touch with our young people. This is also a legal requirement and is a performance indicator that is reported both nationally and locally. Bristol performs in the top quartile when compared with other local authorities and, through the pandemic has taken additional steps to ensure that we reach out to young and that they have the means to contact their Personal Adviser whenever they want to. In-touch rates for 19-21-year olds is currently 99% (28.02.21) continuing to outperform national and statistical neighbour averages and remaining in the top quartile.

Table 1: Published data 2019-20.

Measure	Unit	Bristol 2018-19	Bristol 2019-20	LA Quartile	Stat Nbr 2018-19	England 2018-19
19 -21 year olds - % care leavers local authority in touch with	%	98	97	A	89	90

³ [The One City Approach - Bristol One City](#)

⁴ [Corporate Strategy - bristol.gov.uk](#)

4. Participation and co-production

4.1 Listening, responding, and developing our services together is central to our Pledge and Corporate Parenting Strategy. Children and young people influence all aspects of their care and pathway plans. We take action to ensure that young people are supported to play a full and positive role in their community, the city and nationally. We are proud of the relationships we have with our care leavers and the direct role they play in developing services and support, as well as in challenging professionals to ensure continuous improvement in practice.

4.2 Some things our young people have told us about their experiences (Brightspots 2019 survey):

On their leaving care personal adviser (PA):

She's brilliant! Both leaving care workers I've had were brilliant. Can't fault them.

I like him. He's very good at letting me get on with things but stepping in when I need more help.

On leaving care:

I feel personally like I am well set up in life.

The process I went through leaving care was smooth and easy. Any advice I needed was given to me and I was helped through it by my personal adviser as well as family and friends.

The leaving grant allowed me to buy furniture and helped me a lot to rent as well as put me in the right position. Now preparing to buy.

Be more open about the different resources that are available for us as most care leavers have no idea about what they are entitled to.

On housing:

I feel I can trust the people I live with and I get on well with them.

It's good, but I think I am almost ready for independence.

It's right for me but I'm going to move as I don't feel safe sometimes.

5. Ways of staying in touch:

5.1 **Care Leavers United Bristol (CLUB)** is a participation group for care leavers, run by Barnardo's. It is a campaign and social group. The group aims to ensure that the voices of care leavers are heard by decision and policy makers to create positive changes in care leavers' lives. The group have run several fun activities, offering different opportunities to different groups of young people. Barnardo's employs two care leavers within their service. CLUB also has a role in making sure care leavers know their rights and entitlements. Barnardo's works closely with the Through Care Service so that together care leavers can be fully aware of the support, opportunities, and activities available and are supported to access these.

5.2 The Through Care Service and CLUB deliver an annual programme of activities and events, ranging from 'Our Kids Got Talent', to Christmas parties and a National Care Leavers Week Programme. Many activities have moved on-line over the course of the past year including the STARS5 awards for care leavers – a star studded evening sponsored by local businesses, sports, and educational institutions.

5.3 STARS Awards went on-line in 2021:



- 5.4 Together with Barnardo's we have developed our work in response to the CLUB Campaign, highlighting the impact of social isolation and loneliness for care leavers. This followed their Hear Us Out campaign which challenged stereotypes of care experienced young people. In response a monthly Supper Club was established and an annual holiday for young people who have just left care, as well as one in 2019 for care experienced parents and their children. Over the past year, when social distancing rules allowed, we arranged "Dinner with the Managers", taking out several groups of young people to try different restaurants and types of food.
- 5.5 Numbers joining the supper club have grown from an initial 8 young people to 40 young people on occasion. Christmas dinner for care leavers has become a regular feature of the year, providing opportunities to stay in touch at what can be a difficult time of year. This year both the Christmas Party and Meal moved online with a variety of party games, quizzes, and a takeaway voucher for every participant to enable a 'together but apart' meal.
- 5.6 Personal Advisers and other members of staff created a cookbook of their favourite recipes. Devised with young people and delivered with partners The Prince's Trust, the 'Chef's Table' started in January 2020 in person and ended in March due to COVID restrictions. Cooking challenges moved on-line with various competitions where young people shared their creations on our Facebook page. The cooking theme continued over the course of the year as young people were sent hampers coordinated by VCSE and local businesses that developed to include recipes and on-line cookery films (see below).

6. Befrienders and Welcome Wednesdays

- 6.1 In partnership with Barnardo's, mentors are trained and matched with our young people who are particularly isolated and need additional support. Within this scheme there is a strong focus on supporting **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People (UASC)** and recruitment is targeted so there is a range of befrienders who speak the first languages of our young people who have made Bristol their home.
- 6.2 Welcome Wednesdays is a weekly support and activity group run by CYN for young refugees and UASC young people that provide music lessons in a recording studio, cooking, legal advice, sports, opportunities to practice English, CV writing and even haircuts (the Barber who is a young refugee, volunteers).

7. Health and Emotional Wellbeing support

7.1 To take our work further and develop greater understanding about the health and wellbeing needs of care leavers, we are involved in a research project led by Professor Geraldine McDonald, University of Bristol, and funded by the National Institute for Health Research. It aims to consider: Can we enhance the health and wellbeing of Care Leavers by training their Personal Advisers with relevant public health knowledge and skills? The training is currently in development and will be rolled out later in in 2021.

8. Personal Health Budgets

8.1 Now in its 4th year, providing Personal Health Budgets to support young people's mental health and wellbeing is an established part of the core offer to care leavers. Based on a "different conversations model" in which young people identify how best their emotional and mental health is supported, Bristol works in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Barnardo's to deliver the programme.

8.2 Our young people have used their personal budgets for a range of well-being activities from cycling to sewing and allotment keeping. There are around 50 'live budgets' at any one time which has seen a really positive impact, such as:

- Cessation of the use of medication for depression and anxiety
- Managing mental health needs after being a long-term refuser of services
- Reduction in self-harming behaviour
- Improvement of agoraphobic behaviour and reduction of isolation
- Over 80% of young people have told us they feel empowered through greater choice and control, this increases confidence, self-esteem and helps elevate young people's mood, supporting better mental health
- Reduction in substance abuse and raised aspirations as a result of improved mental health
- Improved sleep and reduction in anxiety
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are able to gain support for very complex mental health issues

9. Mental Health Navigator Post

9.1 We are in the second year of having a new post that helps young people and personal advisers navigate the mental health offer in Bristol. The post is based with Off The Record (Young People's mental health charity). The post holder helps young people navigate services and has the capacity to work directly with young people.

10. NHS England Care Leaver Health Developments

10.1 Bristol, South Glos and North Somerset are one of only two areas in the UK that have been chosen to co-produce a new health offer for care leavers up to the age of 25. The project will develop a blueprint for the rest of the country with the aim of reducing the variation in health service delivery for care experienced young people and creating an offer to support healthy and safe transition to adulthood.

11. Response during COVID-19

11.1 When the first lockdown down arrived, it was clear quickly that we needed to implement new systems to ensure we supported our care leavers. Benefitting from already having high levels of contact with our care leavers we implemented a plan for each care leaver. Some care leavers lived with family, some in staying put arrangements, with partners, with friends so did not need the additional support. Others living alone or with anxiety; feeling alone or scared we arranged weekly calls or video calls. When needed personal advisers would visit their young people, go for a walk, take them a gift or some food. We ordered colouring books, pens, bought seeds and flooded the Facebook page with activities

working closely with Barnardo's and Off the Record yoga, drop-ins, quizzes, competitions, we even managed to have a Christmas party online).

11.2 We sourced laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi dongles to ensure care leavers were able to maintain contacts with their networks, continue to study (learning became quite a popular hobby during this time) and of course entertainment.

12. The Hamper Story

12.1 When 'lockdown' began Bristol funded over 300 hampers to all care leavers and continued to send hampers throughout lockdown to those experiencing the greatest levels of hardship. Each hamper included a letter from the service about ways to stay in touch, holding each young person in mind and providing tips on coping during lockdown.



12.2 Hampers developed throughout Lockdown and were arranged and coordinated by BOX-E (a restaurant in one of the containers at Wapping Wharf). Box-E added to the hampers a gift or treat when it was a young person's Birthday; additional provisions, such as donated salt and pepper pots from Barts Ingredients Company; Easter eggs and gifts for children of care leavers. Ingredients for a specific meal and a recipe card became standard and Tessa (Box-E) or her husband then began posting cookery demonstrations on the care leavers' Facebook page to enable young people to easily follow the recipes.



12.3 These were very popular and were met with young people posting pictures of their achievements. On occasion demonstrations centred around cooking for children. These were done specifically around meals for children. Of course, it's about so much more than the hamper and recipes, it's about the relationships and being cared for. This included the relationships with the hamper delivery drivers who were all volunteers from Can Do Bristol, some having been furloughed from their usual employment and many feeding back how much they too got from volunteering. The hampers have been one of the most talked about topics of lockdown and very much appreciated.

12.4 Building on this success, we are now working with our new colleagues to create an employment

project for our young people in the food industry and have utilised Winter Hardship Grant funding to fund hampers throughout the winter, adding help with fuel bills for those who need it.

What our care leavers said about their hampers:

'My care leavers have all been getting in touch to let me know they've received their hamper and how grateful they are. Most are commenting on how great it is to get fresh stuff like bread and milk and they really like it that they include treats!!'

'One of my young people said it has been really appreciated and they liked that there was fresh and useful items a few mentioned the pot noddle's as the best thing'

'my young people said they were pleased with the variety of fresh and cupboard items and have used it all up'

'The hamper was such good quality and has notably lifted spirits'

"Hi Luci, I've just received the food and once again thank you all so much!!!"

'Many care leavers have said that they are very thankful and grateful, many where touched by the sentiment (simply being reminded that people care) just as much as the food within the hamper, which they all very much enjoyed! I understand that the shortbread was very popular and one young person even admitted to snaffling the whole lot in one go!'

'I think it is a strong message that we care, and are doing what we can to help'

'All my young people are really appreciating the hamper, especially fresh fruit, veg, milk and butter. One told me she is scared going out for food and receiving the delivery means that she does not have to go into shops as frequently. One said who lives in a high rise "it feels good knowing people of thinking of me"'

'The Pot Noodles were very popular, and Mandy said that "Bombay Badboy" was her favourite flavour, so she was over the moon with those'

"Regarding the food hampers it was such a kind gesture. It was full of different food types and you could just see the hard work they've put in it and the effort. I genuinely appreciate it. I'm sure all the young people are very grateful for this. Once again thank you to everyone involved"

13. Plant growing competitions

13.1 This was another lockdown initiative to help young people cope with the lockdown and help bring them together with a joint activity and maintain relationships and connections. All participants tended their plants, looked forward to the future and posted pictures of their progress on Facebook.



14. The Care Leaver COVID survey

14.1 We were curious to understand the impact of COVID on our care leavers and our response to them. We asked 'what things have helped, what have you learned about yourselves, what could be different, and whether they would like to keep any of the changes their personal advisers have made.'

'My PA had been fantastic throughout all of this; she's ensured I'm feeling ok and healthy and continued to show the excellent grade of care that she always has'

'Getting the food boxes with recipes and plants to keep myself occupied, being able to WhatsApp my PA. I've learned that sometimes I can't cope by myself, but I try to keep occupied'

'Family support, facetimeing friends and sticking to a routine. I've learnt that I rely heavily on future plans to keep me motivated and sane.'

'Social media helped me. I've learnt I enjoy being alone'

'That I don't like sitting and watching television'

'it's not bad to put my mental health first, I've been learning about how to deal with it when I'm alone instead of surrounded by other people'

'Thankful for freedom'

'food parcels, worker contact'

'Activities and things from PAs'

'Not a lot really, I've been trying to find ways to cope with my mental health but haven't managed to find anything yet'

'Being able to go to a shop with less people in there so I don't feel as anxious'

'Use WhatsApp as a main way to message my PA as it's easiest'

'Keep some of the calls and understand even after lockdown I'll still be locked in'

'It hasn't been much different to the treatment I'd receive anyway; my PA always does a fab job'

'I live out of county, therefore not much has changed for me, I am able to ring my PA if I need someone to talk to etc and my PA rings to check up on me. So really, nothing has changed and that's fine with me'

'I do want to keep the regular calls, and my PA has contacted me constantly just to make how I'm doing which is very nice of her'

'I like the checking up on texts'

14.2 We learnt we were very proud of how our care leavers were managing. The benefit of increased contact with personal advisers was overwhelming will be continued for those who want it.

15. Growing up and moving on: accommodation and support

15.1 There is a comprehensive offer available to ensure young people have accommodation, which is stable, safe, and appropriate for their needs. This starts with opportunities to stay put with carers beyond age 18 until prepared and ready to leave, to staying close, moving to university halls or into young people's supported accommodation or lodgings (see Figure 1 below). For young people with high level needs, a framework of specialist accommodation and support provision exists.

15.2 We are acutely aware however, of the accommodation challenges in the city and young people's feedback about the choice and availability of some of the accommodation options available to them. A housing group has been established under the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership arrangements with priority being given to developing a joint housing protocol and linked commissioning plan to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable options for young people.

15.3 A high proportion of care leavers live in accommodation types that the Government defines as suitable when compared with other local authorities.

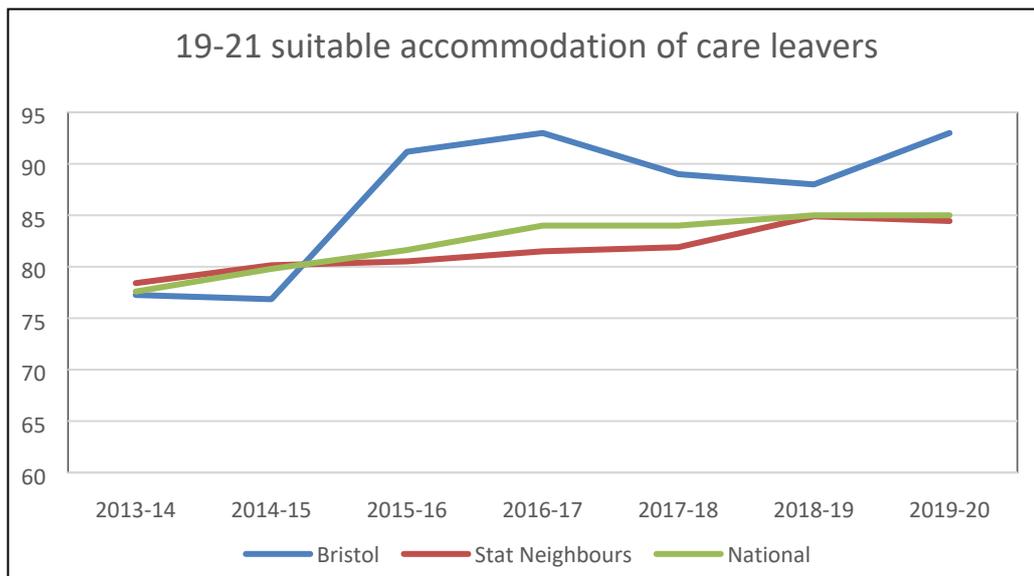


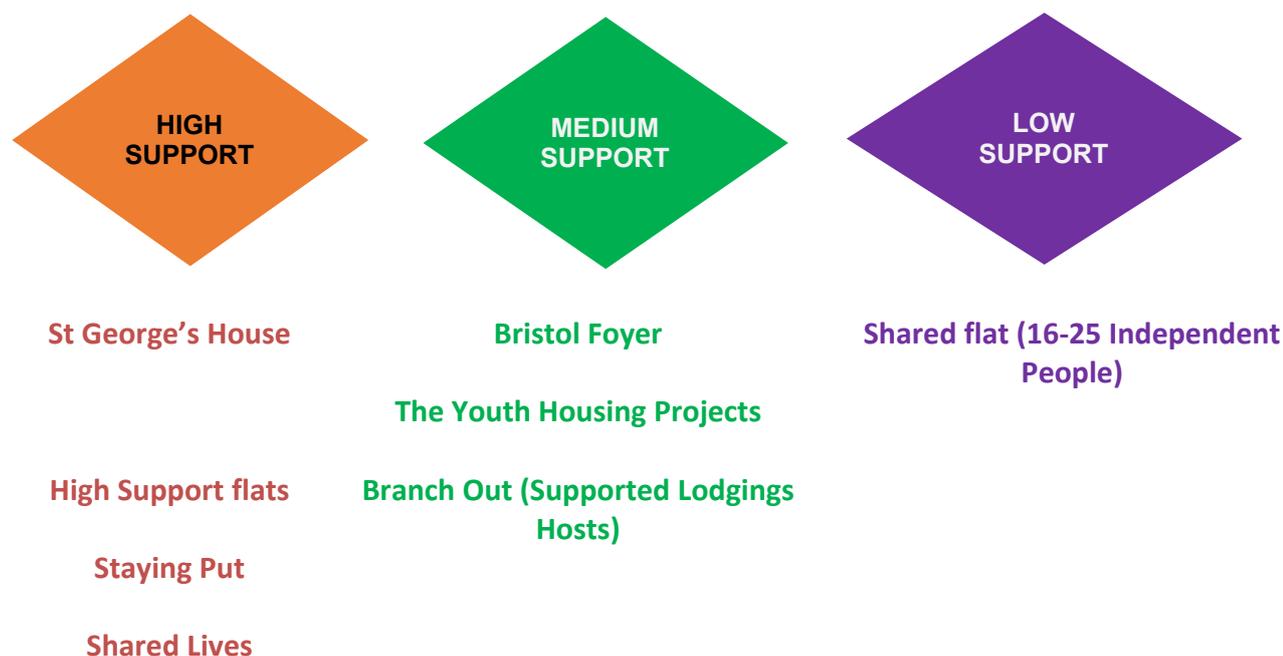
Table 2: Published data 2019-20.

Measure	Unit	Bristol	Bristol	LA	Stat Nbr	England
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		2018-19	2019-20	Quartile	2018-19	2018-19
19 -21 year olds - %						
Accommodation considered suitable	%	88%	93%	A	84	85

*the current figure is also 93% as of 28/2/21

Figure 1: Type of accommodation available to young people on the youth housing pathway



15.4 Care leavers will often move on from the Youth Housing pathway into their own accommodation either through Home Choice or private rental.

16. Staying Close

16.1 Bristol delivers opportunities for young people leaving residential care to stay close to their children's homes team through DfE innovations funding, having successfully bid to pilot the approach on 2017. In its third year, the programme has:

- Supported 22 young people with up to ten hours a week from the same staff members who worked with them when they lived in the children's home
- Installed a 'pod' home in the grounds of one of our children's homes, allowing a young person to 'stay close' physically as well as through relationships, receiving support from the residential team whilst getting a sense of living more independently
- Reached agreement with a Bristol Housing association for a direct offer of a tenancy when our young people are ready and with staying close support staying in place.
- ASDAN independence skills awards support this process by evidencing young people's preparation for independence.
- Delivered two inter-agency learning events, which involved stakeholders and local authorities from across the South West.

- Worked with six local authorities to explore an inter-authority agreement in the southwest for young people regardless of their responsible local authority and area of residence.

17. Youth Housing Projects and Branchout Supported Lodgings

- 17.1 Bristol's Youth Housing projects and Branch Out Supported Lodgings are both local authority delivered services, and are integral to the delivery of suitable accommodation options for our young people
- 17.2 18 young people currently benefit from Branch Out and live with a host family, generally in more independent arrangements than foster care, with support from the host family to develop independent life skills. Hosts are recruited, assessed, trained and supported in a similar way to foster carers.
- 17.3 20 young people benefit from life in the youth housing projects. Arranged over three houses in central and north Bristol, each shared house has dedicated support staff and offers young people the opportunity to live more independently but with the support of a team to guide them in life skills development and education, employment and training.
- 17.4 When young people move home, practical support is available from our dedicated community skills workers.

18. Reducing homelessness

- 18.1 Bristol has taken a multi-agency approach to preventing and reducing youth homelessness and preventing the need for emergency accommodation. The young people's MAPS (Mediation Assessment Prevention Support) service established in November 2017 to work with all young people including care leavers at risk of homelessness and in need of emergency accommodation.
- 18.2 Protocols have been agreed to prevent eviction and to improve the accommodation pathway for young people leaving custody. To support this, Bristol has used grant funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government provided as part of the Rough Sleeping Initiative (and in recognition of the added vulnerabilities of care leavers) to recruit a senior personal adviser specialising in housing.

19. Financial support and competency

- 19.1 Critical to leaving home is the ability to manage your money. Our young people are more vulnerable than most. To assist, we have:

20. Universal Credit Care Leavers Protocol

- 20.1 A joint protocol and commitment from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and Bristol City Council (BCC) to work together to provide an enhanced service to support young people leaving care into education, employment, and training. It is designed to ensure an integrated multi-agency approach, implementing key elements of the Care Leavers Charter with examples of specific support available to care leavers through Universal Credit. These arrangements jointly support our young people who require additional support to navigate the claims process and manage their finances.

21. Working agreement between BCC Through Care Service and the Rent and Financial Inclusion Service

- 21.1 This joint protocol aims to support our young people who move into Bristol Local Authority Home Choice Homes to reduce the risk of eviction or unstable tenancies. This is a proactive approach to join

up the services so the young person understands the expectations of the tenancy from the outset and to agree a trigger plan with identified support to allow an immediate response should the young person get into arrears.

22. Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy

22.1 The last Corporate Parenting Strategy included a commitment to bring forward proposals to alleviate the burden of council tax for care leavers. Following approval by Cabinet a Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy was put in place by Bristol City Council, with effect from 1st April 2018.

22.2 The policy grants up to 100% discretionary relief from council tax to support our care leavers from the age of 18 until their 25th birthday, thereby providing practical corporate parenting help to care leavers whilst they develop their independent adult life.

23. Achieving your aspirations – education, employment, and training

23.1 As the graph below shows, performance in this area has gone from strength to strength over the last few years with a relentless focus on supporting young people to achieve and sustain education, employment, and training opportunities.

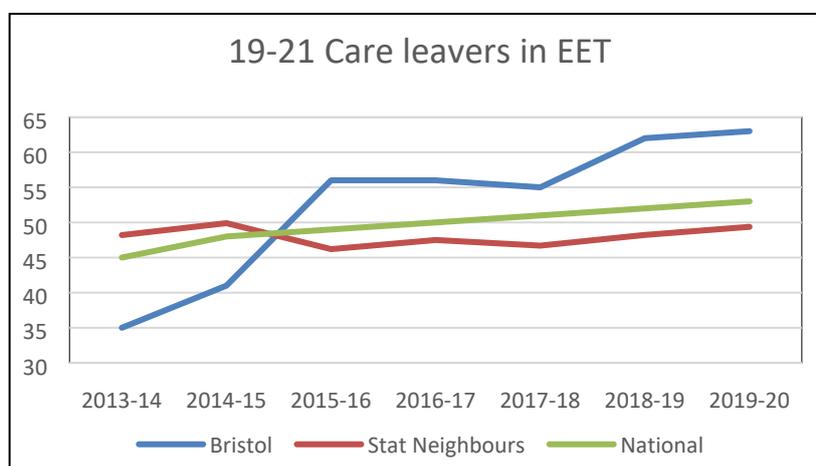


Table 2: Published data 2019-20.

Measure	Unit	Bristol 2018-19	Bristol 2019-20	LA Quartile	Stat Nbr 2019-20	England 2019-20
17 / 18 year olds - % in education, employment or training (EET)	%	66	74	A	63	64
19-21 year olds - % Total number in education, employment or training (EET)	%	62	63	A	49	53

23.2 Bristol is in the top quartile when compared to other local authorities and performs significantly better than our statistical neighbours and the all England averages. The current performance for 17/18 year olds is an improved 76% and for 19-21 year olds is also higher at 66% (28/2/21)

23.3 There is a fairly even split between Education / Higher education (total 31%) and Training / Employment (total 34%).

23.4 Whilst this is good performance compared to others local authorities, it remains lower than that for all young people of this age. We continue to be ambitious for all our young people and to that end have a Department for Education (DfE) funded innovation project using a Social Impact Bond to improve the participation further called Reboot West.

24. Reboot West

24.1 Reboot West is a partnership between 1625 Independent People, Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bath & North East Somerset Council and North Somerset Council, to support young people leaving care to reach their potential. This four-year innovation programme, launched in January 2019, provides bespoke support to care leavers by individual Coaches to develop their confidence, communications and skills needed to enter sustained education, employment and training.

24.2 The programme was developed within a coherent theoretical and philosophical framework, **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)** which is an evidence informed approach that delivers value-based psychological interventions using acceptance and mindfulness strategies, together with commitment and behaviour change strategies to help young people overcome adversity and pursue their goals.

24.3 To date, the evidence of impact is compelling (see below) and has underpinned an approach to WECA and other funders to secure a second cohort, with funding for continuation of the programme agreed at Cabinet on 25th February 2021.

24.4 Young people involved in the project say:

“Communication is really good, if I have a concern, I can send a text to my coach and she replies when she can and we figure something out. She seems very available to me. [She’s good at] finding us opportunities! I could go on websites all day and find 15 opportunities but not be accepted, but my coach can call me with two that she’s found I can definitely do”

“I couldn’t ask for anything more, everything she does is spot on. I see her once a week or every two weeks. We meet in a café or at my place...[My coach] is there for the next three years. That is good to know.

25. Education, Training and Employment pattern through COVID pandemic

	Mar-20		Apr-20		May-20		Jun-20		Jul-20		Aug-20		Sep-20		Oct-20		Nov-20		Dec-20	
FT work	22	100%	24	109%	25	114%	26	118%	26	118%	27	123%	32	145%	33	150%	32	145%	30	136%
PT work	17	100%	16	94%	14	82%	14	82%	12	71%	13	76%	17	100%	16	94%	14	82%	12	71%
Training/apprenticeship	7	100%	7	100%	7	100%	8	114%	8	114%	7	100%	8	114%	9	129%	9	129%	8	114%
FT edu	21	100%	22	105%	23	110%	21	100%	19	90%	17	81%	29	138%	29	138%	30	143%	26	124%
PT edu	11	100%	10	91%	9	82%	8	73%	9	82%	6	55%	7	64%	8	73%	8	73%	10	91%
TOTAL	78	100%	79	101%	78	100%	77	99%	74	95%	70	90%	93	119%	95	122%	93	119%	86	110%

25.1 Despite the pandemic, young people are continuing to enter and sustain work. The table above shows that the number of YP in full time work has actually increased since the start of the pandemic (from 22 to 30) but the number in part-time work has decreased (from 17 to 12).

25.2 Young people have been targeting jobs in care, warehouses and supermarkets particularly during this time as these are essential services.

26. The improvement in Education training and Employment overtime for young people in the Reboot West project

			Earliest EET		Most recent EET	
EET status	NEET	EET seeker	59%	73%	42%	53%
		Unable (health)	9%		7%	
		Not required (parent)	2%		2%	
		Econ inactive	2%		1%	
	EET	FT work	2%	27%	16%	47%
		PT work	4%		5%	
		Training	3%		4%	
		PT work/PT edu	0%		5%	
		FT edu	11%		15%	
		PT edu	6%		5%	

27. Care Experienced Apprentices

27.1 Our commitment to leading the way employing young people with experience of care and ensuring the voice of care leavers is at the heart of our service means we have employed 3 care leaver ambassadors as apprentices (one of whom is now employed in the service permanently) and have just launch a campaign to recruit 6 new apprentices working across Permanency and Specialist services who will have leading roles as young commissioners, assessors in foster care, co-production projects and interviewing staff. The service also benefits from having a care experienced practice lead and a care experienced social worker.

28. Next steps

28.1 Since the Ofsted Inspection in 2018 where we were judged as Requires Improvement the service has maintained and improved its performance for Care Leavers in the key indicators of Education, Employment and Training, Keeping in Touch and Suitable Accommodation whilst flexing to respond to the unique challenges of the pandemic.

28.2 However, there is still work do and we remain ambitious of our young people and our plans are set out in the 45 actions in the new Corporate Parenting Strategy 21-23 under the 8 Priority areas.