

**REPORT TO:** Children & Young People Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People & Economy

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People and Families

**SUBJECT:** Care Leavers Charter

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To share the revised Halton Care Leavers Charter and seek endorsement of it.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

- i) The Halton Care Leavers Charter is endorsed and supported by all Corporate Parents in Halton.

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In November 2012, the Department for Education published the first Charter for Care Leavers. This was produced by care leavers themselves and reflected their aspirations and expectations in their own words. Each local authority was requested to sign up to the Charter and to discuss with their Children in Care Councils what needed to be done to embed its principles in day to day practice.

3.2 After consultation with Halton care leavers, the DfE Charter was adopted with some slight amendments to reflect issues that they felt were important to them.

3.3 The Charter was adopted by the Council and Corporate Parents in May 2013. The Charter is included in the children in care welcome pack and is shared with foster carers and placement providers. All young people are made aware of it again as they approach their Pathway planning stage (16yrs of age). Copies are also made available to them when they leave care at 18 yrs.

3.4 A plan to review the Charter with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leaver Consultation group was in place for 2015. The original Charter was a 'wordy' document that was not necessarily easily understood or meaningful to young people. This was further supported by the Ofsted inspection in December 2014 which identified that whilst 'the

local authority has adopted the DfE charter for care leavers, the majority of care leavers spoken to were not aware of it’.

3.5 The review has now been undertaken and a revised charter has been developed. (Appendix 1) It represents a more meaningful and focussed statement of the key issues for care leavers. The young people have worked on the design of the Charter and produced a format that they feel happy with.

3.6 As with the previous version, the revised Charter will be widely shared with Corporate Parents, placement providers and with children in care and care leavers. The Children in Care Council and the Care Leaver Consultation group will be involved in discussions about how this can be best achieved

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Charter reflects the Council’s support for children in care having high aspirations and achieving positive outcomes when they transition into adulthood.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The proposals would support high aspirations for all care leavers.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Access to opportunities will be enhanced if care leavers feel well supported and are able to establish themselves with appropriate support.

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Healthy outcomes will be supported by the proposals.

##### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Stability within their own community can positively impact on a young person’s ability to develop as a socially aware citizen, able to protect themselves and others.

##### 6.5 **Halton’s Urban Renewal**

Improving outcomes for care leavers will enhance their ability to contribute productively to the Borough.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to revise the Charter would be contrary to Ofsted findings and to achieving best outcomes for care leavers.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 High aspirations and appropriate support are key to ensuring that the needs of care leavers are met and that they are given the best opportunities to achieve in line with their peers.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.