

Children and Young People in Care

Newsletter Volume 1
Issue 4 April



Care Leavers
Independence
Collective

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG. 2 Sufficiency strategy

PG. 3 Keeping Safe

PG. 4 Care Leavers

PG. 5 Children in Care

PG.6 Education,

Employment & Training

ABOUT US

If you are interested in joining our Children in Care Council (ages 11-16), Care Leavers Forum (17-25) or have any improvements for the newsletter please contact the participation team on:

Telephone- 01902 550892

Email- Corporate.Parenting@wolverhampton.gov.uk

SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

On Friday 21st February members of our Care Leavers Forum and Children in Care Council took part in the Sufficiency Strategy workshop. The sufficiency strategy focuses on placement stability and making sure placements are best suited for young people. During the workshop professionals and young people took part in different activities highlighting the importance of placement stability and also areas which can be improved.

Member of our Care Leavers Forum and Children in Care Council delivered a Total Respect activity which focuses on a young person in a placement. The activity addresses some of the issues which can affect a young person, issues which can affect placement stability and follows their journey into independence.

They changed the original activity to make it more relevant and included different factors which can either positively or negatively impact on a young person in a placement or while they are living independently.

The activity delivery was fantastic and gave professionals an eye-opening insight into the issues which can make placements break down and the journey young people go through. The group also took part in discussions suggesting a range of different levels of support they feel can provide children and young people in care more stable placements and young people who have left care the support they need to adapt to their independence.

We are looking to review our sufficiency strategy each year so our young people have the opportunity to continue to be the voice of children and young people in care and care leavers across Wolverhampton and keep the council informed on what needs to improve to provide young people with more stability.



KEEPING SAFE DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Over the last two months ever day life has changed, and it has impacted us all. The global Covid-19 Crisis is providing us with testing times as a nation and a worldwide population. Despite the difficult times we are in, this period has also showed how much others care about the wellbeing of those in their communities and their willingness to help and be there for others.

Staying connected during this time is very important to make sure you are looking after your wellbeing and those that you care about. Doing things which you enjoy and having time for yourself allows you to take your mind of things which may be worrying you during the crisis and can help you feel more positive and at ease.

Since the lockdown we have met virtually with our children in care council and care leavers forum who realised the importance of supporting each other and other young people across Wolverhampton during this time. They wanted to support young people and give them tips which they can use to keep themselves safe during the crisis and their top tips are:

1. Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds. Once dried moisturize your hands to make sure they don't get damaged or dry due to constant washing.
2. Make sure you set time aside each day to complete your school work. Try and keep within your normal school hours and routine.
3. Make use of social media to keep in contact with friends and family
4. Keep fit by doing simple home workout routines- This could be yoga stretches and breathing techniques
5. Try to keep to your normal sleeping pattern and have times in the day where you have your own chill time to look after your well-being e.g. watching Netflix
6. If you have pets make sure you keep a close eye on them to make sure they have enough food, water and can still do some daily exercise.
7. If you have children- Try different creatives activities for learning and fun which are simple to do

Our children in care council and care leavers forum will be making some videos with this information which you will be able to find on our website.

Please visit our website to keep up to date with the latest developments.



CARE LEAVERS FORUM

[Virtual meetings](#)

During this time, it is extremely important for our young people to stay connected and talk about what they are experiencing. Our Care Leavers forum provides young people with the opportunity to express themselves and contribute to the improvement of services available for Wolverhampton's care leavers and connect and form positive relationships with other care leavers. Currently due to Covid-19 we are meeting with our forum virtually over Microsoft Teams every two weeks on a Wednesday morning at 11am. To find out more about our virtual meetings please visit our website www.wolveschildrenincare.com where you will find the links to our meetings, guides on how to use Microsoft Teams and contact details for our staff.

[Annual care leaver survey](#)

You will have the opportunity to provide your feedback for the services you receive over the next few weeks when we release our annual care leaver survey. Your response will be used to make positive changes to the support you receive based on the areas of improvement you highlight when completing the survey. The survey will be sent to you by your YPA and will also be available on our Facebook and website.

[Kooth](#)

The access for Kooth has now been extended to 25 providing our care leavers with the opportunity to access further support if they need advice and someone to talk to. Kooth provides an online support service where young people can seek advice and guidance. During this time of isolation Kooth would be good way for our young people who may be feeling isolated to access support through a one to one conversation, discussion boards, articles which provide tips from other young people and the opportunity share their personal experiences. Please visit <https://www.kooth.com/> for more info.

[Daily Covid-19 press conference](#)

If you are 18+ you can submit a question which could be selected for the daily Covid-19 press conference. If selected your question would be answered by a government cabinet member during the broadcast.

Please visit the following link if you are interested www.gov.uk/ask .

Next meeting is: Wednesday 29th April 11am.

MEETING LINK



 **STAY AT HOME**

PROTECT THE NHS

 **save lives**

CHILDREN IN CARE

Next meeting is: Wednesday 29th April 5:30pm.

MEETING LINK

Virtual meetings

As our children and young people in care are spending most of their time in their homes some young people may feel isolated and may not be in regular contact with other young people in similar situations to them. As with our care leavers forum we are meeting our children in care council every two weeks on a Wednesday at 5:30pm using Microsoft Teams. Our children in care council gives all children and young people in care between the ages of 11-16 the opportunity to stay in regular contact with likeminded young people and share their experiences to improve the services for all our children and young people in care. We have already recruited new members during this period who have settled well into the group and have made a positive impact with their ideas and creativity.

Please visit our website for more information on how to join our children in care council and get involved with our virtual meetings

www.wolveschildrenincare.com

Annual survey

Our annual children in care survey will soon be available for you to complete. The feedback you provide on the survey will identify areas for us to improve your care experience. Your social worker will let you know when the survey is available, and you will also be able to access it on our Facebook and website.

Reviews

The way your reviews take place will be changing. Currently your independent reviewing officer (IRO) chairs the meeting. With the changes being made young people will have more of a say on what is spoken about during the reviews and how this takes place. Our children in care council will be producing an information video to further explain the changes. If you have any questions about your reviews and how they will change or be completed during the Covid-19 crisis please speak your IRO or social worker.

Please visit our website for the latest update on these changes by the IRO team

Virtual Squad

WV holiday squad is now providing virtual activities due to the social distancing measure put in place. Young people and their families can access online activities including exercise classes and arts and craft sessions to give you something fun to do while at home.

Please visit www.wvvirtualsquad.co.uk/ for more information about activities available.



EDUCATION,EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Adult education providers funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) are changing the way they deliver training during the Covid-19 outbreak, so that local people continue to learn new skills.

Training colleges and private providers have moved swiftly to deliver adult education courses online instead of face-to-face, or by telephone or post for those learners who do not have internet access.

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street said: “We know that this is a very difficult time, both for our adult learners and our education providers.

“It is, however, crucial that local people can continue to gain the qualifications and skills they need throughout this period, and the WMCA has been talking to all our providers about holding classroom sessions in a different way to make this happen.

“I am pleased to say that there has been a very positive response, and that a vast number of courses are being made available online.

“We have collated a list of all the training available for adult learners, and are publicising it on our [Covid-19 support](#) site. I would urge anyone who is interested to sign up now.”

<https://beta.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/covid-19-support/online-resources/>

[Connexions](#)

Connexions Wolverhampton has a new daily online duty arrangement in place for young people living in Wolverhampton and their parents/carers.

Young people can still seek impartial careers advice, guidance and support from the Connexions Team who are currently working from home. Check out our video below for more information.

<https://youtu.be/dYYnWKR0wBk>

Colleges are conducting virtual open days for young people wishing to start September and will complete interviews over the phone for guaranteed places for September start.

For year 11 school leavers you can use your expected grades to apply!

Wolverhampton College: <https://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/>

Walsall College: <https://www.walsallcollege.ac.uk/modes-of-study/courses-16-19s/>

Sandwell College: <https://www.sandwell.ac.uk/>

Dudley college: <https://www.dudleycol.ac.uk/>

A Level results day- Will remain the same and your grades will be released on the **13th August 2020.**

GCSE results day- Will remain the same and grades will be released on the **20th August 2020.**

Please visit the link below for more information.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-52309763>

Student Finance

For new students planning to go to University in September 2020 Student Finance is now open for you to apply. The deadline for your application is the **22nd May 2020** (remember to apply for independent status as a care leaver to access your enhanced entitlement) they will require evidence of your care leaver entitlement form your YPA.

Existing and returning students the deadline for Student Finance is the **19th June 2020**.

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

UCAS

Have extended the offer deadlines and the decision deadline for an offer from the University is the 20th May, please see the link for further details. If you receive your last decision on or before **4 June 2020**, your reply date is **18 June 2020** (except if you're using Extra to find a place) .

If you receive your last decision on or before **13 July 2020**, your reply date is **20 July 2020** (including Extra choices).

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/undergraduate/type/key-date>

Friday afternoon drop in at The Way in currently closed due to Covid 19, we have a NEW Drop in service currently being review (watch this space for updates from your YPA) .

Employment

Please access our Workbox web page for support looking for employment opportunities, help with application forms and CV's and lots of other useful information and links to Black Country Impact, Training providers, Apprenticeships, Talent Match and lots more.

<http://wolvesworkbox.com/>

The EET apprenticeship vacancy has been extended to the end of May due to Covid 19, this is a level 3 apprenticeship working alongside the EET coordinator, you can access the job description and application form from either your YPA or the EET coordinator. This is a fixed term 18-month contract.

We are looking for an enthusiastic individual who can work with the children young people in care and care leaver service to support the EET Coordinator with all aspects of education employment and training needs of children young people in care and care leavers both in and out of city to enable them to access, sustain and achieve their full aspirations and academic ability enabling them to progress into the labour market. The successful candidate will receive on the job training and will complete a **Certificate in Level 3 Learning & Development**.

Finally if you have any queries about your current education, plans for post 16, unsure about what to do September you can contact either your YPA for support or the EET coordinator: helen.woodvine@wolverhampton.gov.uk or you can call her on 07900708268.

