

APPENDIX

4.3 ACTIONS

- i). The Children in Care Strategy (Appendix 1) and JAR improvement plan identify the actions required to address the areas for improvement identified in the JAR and in the Care Matters Change for Children program. Care Matters sets out a new deal for Children in Care and for care leavers. This new deal provides many challenges for the Council and the Children's Trust but in many ways provides us with a real opportunity to get things right.
- ii). We will need to improve the continuity of planning for children as they leave care and delay the "event" until the young person is ready to leave home. Extending the offer for young people to stay with their carer until they are 21 is the beginning of this process. Whilst this will cost money and may impact on the availability of placements for other children this is an essential first step to improving outcomes for Children in Care. A feasibility exercise is currently being undertaken in social care as part of the development of a placement strategy for Children in Care.
- iii). Social care teams will need to be reconfigured to avoid the transfer of case management when a young person reaches the age of 16. A more suitable age would be 13/14 as this is a time when all young people start to consider their futures as they decide on the Key Stage 4 options.
- iv). The Council and Children's trust will need to fully implement the Care Leavers employment policy, which guarantees care leavers a job or an entitlement to ongoing training and learning. All Directorates in the Council, the LSP and Children's Trust will need to commit to this policy. The support services required to enable young people to engage with this offer are managed by social care.
- v). The Council, LSP and Children's Trust will need to secure from local housing trusts and registered social landlords a range of accommodation sufficient to give a choice to care leavers about where they live.

4.5 NEXT STEPS

- The Corporate Parenting conference is rerun in February 2009 for all Members, Senior Officers in the Council, LSP and Children's Trust, Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors. This event would ensure that all these key people are made aware of their role and responsibilities with regard to Children in Care, and are able to explicitly identify how they intend to take forward their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

- Members scrutinize the implementation of the Children in Care Employment Policy to ensure that care leavers are given every opportunity to find employment in the Council, LSP and Children's Trust partner agencies.
- Members scrutinize the provision of accommodation for care leavers and in particular the reasons why care leavers live in temporary accommodation.
- Members scrutinize the implementation of the Children in Care Strategy and JAR improvement plan.