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| Agenda Item | 19. |
| Report No | PEO 20/17 |

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: People's Committee

Date: 23 August 2017

Report Title: Response to HCF Consultation: Moving on – Life after school

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1.

Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Highland Council Care and Learning Service commissioned a consultation to be undertaken independent of the Council, by Highland Children's Forum (HCF), to inform the strategic planning within the service in relation to transitions for young people with additional support needs: The report of this consultation relates to the experience of 63 young people with a range of additional support needs as they went through transition from school to adult services: <http://www.highlandchildrensforum>
- 1.2 HCF engaged with young people from 14 to 18 years and listened to their experiences with the aim of informing future provision and helping services take the necessary steps to get transition right for all. The HCF report was presented to the Education Children and Adults Committee, with a request from Members for a further report to be submitted by the Care and Learning Service in relation to the recommendations from the HCF consultation.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of some of the work being undertaken within Care and Learning to address the issues raised in the recommendations from the HCF report, much of which has been ongoing for some time. This work has been validated as a priority action by the additional information provided by the young people who took part in the HCF consultation.

Recommendations

2.

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note that the consultation report previously presented to Committee by Highland Children's Forum has been considered in detail and reflected upon by staff with responsibility for transitions in Highland.
- Comment on the ongoing work within the Care and Learning Service and with partner agencies, to support transitions from school to adult services, to ensure more consistent planning and support for all young people and their families at this key time in their lives.
- Agree the ongoing commitment to improving the experience of young people and to track their outcomes as an indicator of how successful this work has been.

3. Highland Context

- 3.1 Data on school leaver destinations in Highland has consistently been very positive. For the 2015/16 school leaver cohort, Scottish Government data in June 2017 shows that, 93.4% of Highland school leavers were in a positive destination. This compares with the National figure of 91.4%.
- 3.2 In relation to those pupils identified with additional support needs in Highland, 87% of the 2015/16 cohort listed as ASN¹ are in a positive destination. This compares to the National figure of 84.7%. Within the HCF consultation report, only 4 of the 63 young people involved said that they had no positive destination (6%) and 5 said they were worried about getting a job.
- 3.3 These figures reflect positively against the national figures. However, there is certainly room for improvement and it is important not to become complacent, as a significant number of the young people who leave school with no positive and sustained destination, have high levels of disability and/or mental health needs.
- 3.4 The Highland Children's Forum consultation focused on the views of a small group of young people (63) aged between 14 and 18 years old. Information and the views of staff were not considered during the consultation, and only a limited number of parents were involved (4). The range of needs was inconsistently represented (e.g. 23 pupils with ASD and 2 pupils who were Care Experienced) and therefore some recommendations made about specific groups are based on a very small sample size. Having said that, the views of all young people should influence and inform service delivery, and thus all 8 recommendations made on page 5 of the HCF report have been considered and reflected upon in relation to the work of Highland Council staff and services that support transitions for young people.

4. Getting it Right for Transition Lifelong

- 4.1 In Highland, the guidance issued to schools and other services, to support the transitions phase, is the "Getting it Right for Transition Lifelong" joint transition protocol (which can be accessed [here](#)). The protocol uses ***The Principles of Good Transition 2*** as a basis for good practice in transition. This publication, now in its recently published third edition, is used by the Scottish Government as an exemplar of good practice and suggests that all agencies supporting young people through transition stages should use this.
- 4.2 The consultation by HCF took place between February and June of 2016, predating the launch of the Highland protocol, which was formally released across the multi-agency platform in November 2016. Since the release of the protocol, it has been sent out to all secondary schools and partners in social care, NHS Highland and various other partner organisations. Some of the recommendations and support that the latest protocol provides helpfully addresses many of the issues raised by the young people in the HCF consultation (see page 9 point 4.1 of the Protocol).

¹ This data is drawn from the Skills Development Scotland datahub and is of a sensitive nature. ASN in this context is a generic listing covering ASN in its widest sense.

5. Hi-Hope

- 5.1 The protocol can be accessed electronically via the Highland Council website and from the hi-hope website www.hi-hope.org. To further support the transitions process, the link to hi-hope leads the user to a wide range of resources, not just the protocol, and analysis of the data from the use of the website would indicate that it is being used by young people, parents, children's and adults' services and school staff. The hi-hope page is updated frequently by the Transitions Co-ordinator and attracts practitioners back regularly, to support their on-going awareness and practice.
- 5.2 During school session 2016-17, training has been delivered around transitions and the use of hi-hope across Highland to a wide range of partners, with regular updates on sharing practice and helpful resources being sent out to practitioners. Hi-hope has also increased its presence on social media to ensure that a wider network is being reached and that information is accessible to all.

6. Actions in Relation to the Recommendations from the HCF Report

- 6.1 Overall, the HCF report highlighted that for most young people who participated in the consultation (69%), '...their planning for leaving school was positive and supported. They felt they had choices, good information and a positive school destination'. P 35. However, it also reported that '...young people had very mixed experiences of transitions planning.' P.35

6.2 Recommendations 1 and 3

- 6.2.1 In Recommendations 1 and 3 the HCF report asks that help and support be prioritised, and that information and communication be considered.

- 6.2.2 The Highland Council and partner agencies are addressing these recommendations in a variety of ways:

- i. The "Getting it Right for Transition Lifelong" joint transition protocol states 'it is important to assess needs, research opportunities and be creative in getting the right support in place in the right format at the right time'. There are various planning tools featured within the protocol and on the transitions page of hi-hope. This range of tools and guidance reflects the differing needs of each young person and their family and allows those involved in the transition planning to select the tools most appropriate for the young person. This encourages person centred planning, which has been an approach taken in adult services over a long period of time. In the last year, several staff in adult services trained in person centred planning with Helen Sanderson & Associates.
- ii. The Education (ASL) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires Care & Learning to carry out transition planning no later than one year before the young person plans to leave school. Our protocol requests that planning begins at 14, and that Child's Plan meetings would take on a transition focus at this stage as well. This corresponds with the Scottish Transitions Forum's Principles of Good Transition. For all young people across Scotland, the *Local Authority-Skills Development Scotland Opportunities for All Data Sharing Guidance*, requests that schools identify leavers who are likely to require support for their

transition as they enter S3.

- iii. The transition pathways within the protocol give clear guidance around what should happen, led by who, and when. They include the responsibilities of both children's and adult's services. There are several mentions of planning and support being given 'at the right time'. The nature of transition means that this will be different for every young person.
- iv. One aspect of the role of the Transitions Co-ordinator is to collate data which will predict future need and share this with appropriate partners at the beginning of each school year. This allows for all agencies involved to identify pressures on their services and ensure that they can manage upcoming need effectively and provide the service needed to each young person.

6.3 Recommendation 2

- 6.3.1 Recommendation 2 from the HCF report is concerned with listening to and involving young people.
- 6.3.2 As per the Highland Practice Model, it is imperative that the child's voice is included within the child's plan. Each young person has a lead professional who will be the main point of contact. However, listening to young people is not solely the responsibility of the guidance teacher or careers advisor and some young people will identify with an alternative member of staff who may be better placed to support them directly at this time.
- 6.3.3 There is a range of ways that our young people have their voices heard in Highland. Profiling (also covered within the Protocol) allows young people to participate in their own learning and planning for life, and begins in nursery. The Curriculum for Excellence encourages this kind of self-advocacy, and has an emphasis on young people participating in their learning and planning for life. There are examples across the authority where schools have adapted profiling to suit the needs of young people with an additional support need. Tools like 'My Transition Guide' and 'The Interactive My World Triangle' are helpful in engaging the young person's voice in an alternative method.
- 6.3.4 There are also very active and diverse youth forums and pupil councils across the authority that are involved in implementing change in their areas.
- 6.3.5 In relation to Care Experienced Young People, who also often experience complex transitions, there is currently in progress a consultation being coordinated by the Transitions Coordinator, looking at how change, loss & bereavement impacts on having a successful transition and how this can be improved for this particular group of vulnerable young people.

6.4 Recommendation 4

- 6.4.1 Recommendation 4 asks that Transition Planning Meetings be accessible and person centred.
- 6.4.2 The Transitions Protocol requires Child's Plan Meetings to take a transition focus at age 14. These meetings should be both person centred and accessible as described in the Highland Practice Model. These meetings should also be solution focused and set clear actions for all parties to undertake going forward.

6.5 **Recommendation 5**

- 6.5.1 Recommendation 5 suggests that young people need improved practical and personal life skills.
- 6.5.2 Schools in Highland are undertaking this work in partnership with a variety of other support services and agencies, including the work to develop wellbeing and resilience in conjunction with the Psychological Service among others.
- 6.5.3 Schools in Highland are currently working to the Developing the Young Workforce Agenda which covers the 3-18 age range. This encourages work related learning (including skills based learning) across all subjects. This is supported by local DYW groups who have a role in employer engagement and have increased the work experience database (on hi-hope) and employer related opportunities over the past year across the Council area.
- 6.5.4 Skills Development Scotland have developed lesson inserts as per the Career Education Standards and these can be accessed and used by all staff. Some schools are running their own careers events (including our special schools), and cross curricular learning events.
- 6.5.5 The Personal Social Education (PSE) working group have developed resources to ensure that PSE is covering topics that are both relevant and useful to young people across a broad range of issues and life skills.
- 6.5.6 Parents are encouraged to attend careers events with their children as it is important that they are involved in the planning and decision making to support the development of skills to ensure their child has the tools they need for transition.

6.6 **Recommendation 6**

- 6.6.1 In relation to Skills Development Scotland (and **Recommendation 6**), they operate their offer of service via their 'risk matrix' which draws on information extracted from the schools database (SEEMiS). There is a description of this offer under point 3.5 in the Protocol. They offer the most face to face support to those who are deemed as being in the greatest need of support. Schools continue to be strongly encouraged to ensure they input all relevant data to SEEMiS in good time so that SDS have accurate information to inform their provision and offer the right service to each young person.
- 6.6.2 All pupils will receive some kind of support from SDS, whether this is through group work or 1:1 will be decided by need. At the discretion of SDS and school staff, anyone could request an appointment with the careers advisor, regardless of where they are on the risk matrix. SDS will also meet with Parents and do attend Child's Plan meetings at Transition stages.

6.7. **Recommendation 7**

- 6.7.1 Recommendation 7 asks that staff have comprehensive training around the issues faced by young carers.
- 6.7.2 86% of identified young carers in Highland are recorded as being in a positive destination post school. This is lower than the general population in Highland and

identifying and supporting Young Carers as an ongoing and active role for the four very active young carers groups who support not only the young person, but the family and the school. This work is supported and coordinated through the Young Carers' Improvement Group.

6.7.3 In November 2017 Connecting Young Carers held a transitions event which was well attended. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of the group identifying that they knew what they wanted to do and how they would get there.

6.7.4 There is a requirement for schools to ensure that they are recording young carers on SEEMiS so that they are flagged as potentially needing extra support around transition. There have been significant increases in recording, and due to the work of the YC groups this is continuing to rise. The Young Carers Improvement Group have devised and released a survey for young carers in transition which will help to inform future practice specifically around this group of young people and to support an increase in the number of young carers reaching and sustaining a positive destination.

6.8 **Recommendation 8**

6.8.1 Recommendation 8 highlights the need to ensure that transitions from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), to Adult Mental Health Services, is planned and provides continuity of care for young adults.

6.8.2 This issue has been raised previously in consultation with service users in CAMHS and is a point well made and understood by NHS Highland, who have responsibility for Mental Health Services.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 It is acknowledged that transitions are complex and that they will be different for each young person and their family. Sometimes transitions prove difficult for staff to manage if processes are not clear or straight forward, if expectations are not realistic or achievable and when emotions run high as they do at times of change.

7.2 In an effort to ensure clarity in this process, the "Getting it Right for Transition Lifelong" joint transition protocol has been written with reference to the Principles of Good Transition. Engaging young people and their families from a very early stage in transitions planning can also ensure clear and realistic expectations and can support them through what can otherwise be a difficult process. The joint work between children's services and adult services in considering a transitions team, to support our most vulnerable young people through transitions, is also a result of reflecting on the views and experiences of young people themselves and will hopefully in time address some of the specific needs of particular young people with high levels of need.

7.3 The transitions protocol encompasses tools, resources and information that will cover most issues and should be used as a signpost to the right support, at the right time, in the right format for each young person. The recent announcement of the ILF [fund](#) to support 16-21 transitions is also an exciting prospect in transitions planning and could provide an opportunity to support some young people who may not previously been able to access this.

7.4 The Scottish Transitions Forum recently conducted a national transitions survey;

'Facing the Future', carried out by an independent consultant. This survey will be available on their [website](#). There are some similarities across the two consultations, both of which consulted with young people with an additional support need. The Facing the Future consultation garnered responses from 270 young people and 470 parents & carers. Feedback was also sought from local authorities at the same time and there is a plan to set up a meeting for all the local authorities involved, including Highland, to share good practice and ideas in order to improve transitions on a national level.

7.5 There is broad agreement across service providers with two key statements in the HCF Consultation report (p.35):

1. A key issue for staff and services is to ensure that transitions planning is consistent and a positive experience for all young people with additional support needs across Highland.
2. There also needs to be a recognition that young people with additional support needs often have added barriers and challenges to their transitions planning and staff need to be supportive and person-centred in their responses.

8 Implications

8.1 There are no additional **resource, legal, climate change/carbon clever** or **Gaelic** implications relating to this report.

8.2 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** - This report outlines the current support provided to those groups of young people with protected characteristics who may face additional barriers to finding positive and sustained destinations. It therefore supports the Council's responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010).

8.3 **Risk** – There are no additional risks identified in relation to this report. The work being undertaken will reduce the risk of poorer outcomes for young people as they move into adulthood.

Designation Director of Care and Learning

Date 7 August 2017

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Background Papers

- "Getting it Right for Transition Lifelong" joint transition protocol [here](#)
- "Moving on – life after School" www.highlandchildrensforum.org