

Aspirations for Children in our care and Care Leavers

Lancashire's Leaving Care Service

Aims

- To ensure that children in our care and care leavers have access to opportunities, have their aspirations raised and supported and to achieve in line with their peers and their own goals.
- To create an aspirational community and become corporate parents who offer exceptional opportunities to the children in our care and care leavers.
- To increase the number of care experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training to the number of young people generally.

Context

- 53.6% of Lancashire care leavers are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- There are 3 different categories of NEET:
 1. G4 – NEET due to illness or disability (*account for 20.1% of NEET*)
 2. G5 – NEET for other reasons (*account for 63.1% of NEET*)
 3. G6 – NEET due to pregnancy or parenting (*account for 16.8% of NEET*)
- *Data accuracy and agreed definitions of EET may vary slightly across the county, which we need to address as a service, however this will only provide minor variance and shouldn't distract from the importance of overall issue.*

Break down of NEET data

- In all 3 localities G5 NEET 'Other' has the lowest proportion of long term (+6 month duration) NEET status, in both Central and East G6 – Parenting had the a higher proportion of Long Term duration whilst in North G4 – Disability did.
- Long term (LT) NEET made up 34.9% of all care leavers and 65% of the NEET population.
- Care Leavers accommodated at age 5-10 had the lowest proportion of NEET, children aged 11-15 years at the time of becoming looked after had the highest proportion at 61.8%
- Care Leavers that started their last placement prior to age 16 had much lower proportions of NEET.
- Indeed young people who had been in their last placement for 0-6 months had the highest proportion of NEET (67.1%).

Comparison between Care Leavers who have graduated university and Care Leavers who have been NEET for the longest period of time.

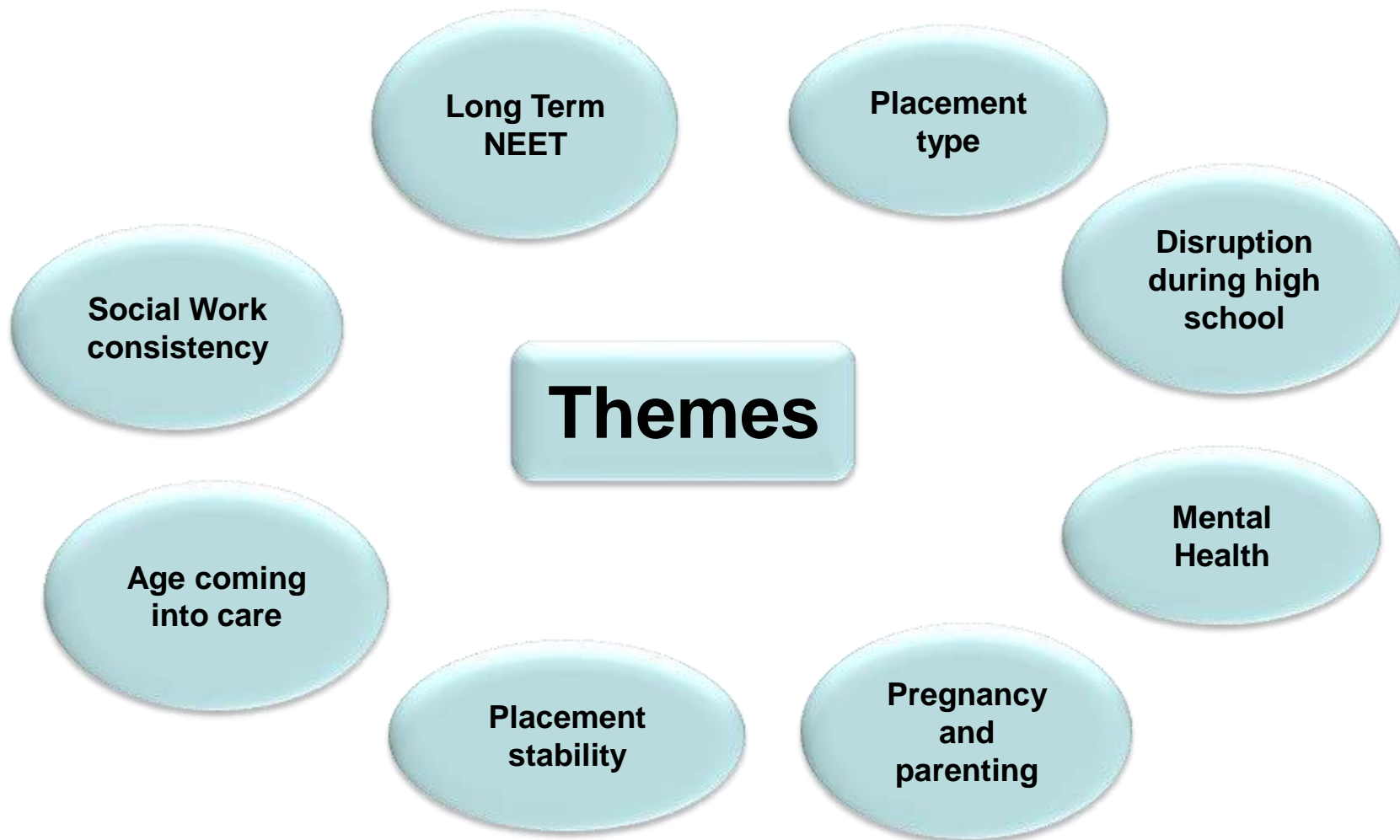
Stability

- The amount of social worker changes each group experienced was a factor, the uni grads had an average of 1 social worker change per year in care, the LT NEET young people had an average of 2 social worker changes per year.
- 2 out of 10 of the uni' grad' young people attended 2 secondary schools. 4 out of 10 (with information not available on 3 out of the 10) attended more than one primary school in this group. Compared with 9 out of 12 LT NEET attending 2 or more secondary schools, primary school information wasn't available for most of this group due to their later admission into care.
- The majority of the LT NEET group had come into care between the ages of 11-15, which is reflected in the NEET population as a whole. Admission into care during these years will cause disruption during a child's secondary education.

Comparison between Care Leavers who have graduated university and Care Leavers who have been NEET for the longest period of time.

Placements:

- 9 out of 10 who graduated Uni' were in foster care at the time of leaving care.
- 8 out of 12 LT NEET were in 'Other' placements at the time of leaving care.
- The average uni grad had 3 placements during their time in care with the average LT NEET having 5, despite the fact that the uni grad group had significantly more years in care between them than the LT group, with 6 out of 10 having 5+ years in care compared to 3 out of 12 of the LT NEET group.
- The average length of the final placement of care leavers in these 2 groups differed greatly also, with the uni grad's final placement lasting an average of 4.8 years and the LT NEET's final placement lasting 0.7 years.



Recommendations from findings

- Focus of the 13+ team will be to keep families together, offering bespoke packages of support for families managing teens and issues of contextual safeguarding, upskilling social workers in this team and taking learning from CWD in this area.
- Family Safeguarding Model will focus on keeping families together and provide the resources to achieve this.
- Implementing targets for the proportion of CLA who are placed in foster placements, alongside a targeted recruitment drive for certain areas to support CLA remaining in their existing schools.
- The proposed increased staffing levels will increase social work continuity for CLA and lower caseloads of both social workers and PAs will increase quality of work and outcomes for young people.
- Increased training for PAs around coaching, careers advice and support in employment.

Recommendations from findings

- Sexual health services and child care support
- Accommodation strategy
- Mental Health strategy
- Recruiting our young people to our 'family business' by creating more opportunities for our young people within our own organisation and within our contracts with others
- Creating a culture of aspirations and meaningful occupation for care leavers, at every level of the organisation.