

**Getting to Work:  
Creating Relevant and Sustainable  
Employment Opportunities for  
Looked after Children in the North  
West**

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## Foreword

The needs of children who are looked after are at the core of CWDC's business. We work with colleagues in the workforce to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to help these young people have the opportunity to succeed and prosper like other young people. This research has helped us to see how far we have to go to open up opportunities for some of the most vulnerable children and young people. It has helped us to see what we need to do to put in place an employment and training strategy which provides good quality opportunities and apprenticeships. It shows us what works and the need for planning and co-ordination to ensure success. It also shows, as with many any areas of research, that the answer is already there, that colleagues are already delivering good practice and that we can learn from each other.

This research will help you to see what you can do to make a difference. In CWDC we will use the findings to help us respond to children who are looked after in our own employment practices. I hope that the North West can help all of us learn and do better for these children and young people. My thanks to all of you who participated.

Jane Haywood  
Chief Executive

# Executive Summary

## 1 Introduction

In February 2008, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) commissioned the Social Work Department at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to map where Local Authorities in the North West had progressed to in their plans to provide sustainable employment opportunities for children who had been looked after. The research was undertaken between March and May 2008 and consisted of an analysis of the work of the Learn Together Partnership (a partnership of the seven Merseyside authorities with Cheshire) which was planning a sub-regional scheme; a mapping of the situation across the North West and a series of three workshops for representatives of nominated workforce leads and key wider partners which gathered information on what was needed at local and regional level to promote more effective services.

In all 21 of the 22 areas in the region participated in the research (see Table 1 on page 10). The researchers took an action orientation working closely with a regional planning group which has quickly translated findings into action including a planned regional summit in July 2008 on this topic.

## 2 Background

Despite considerable efforts to improve services for children who are looked after, the outcomes on leaving care for a large proportion of them are still poor and they are highly likely to be socially excluded. Care leavers are more likely than other young people to be unemployed, homeless, have few qualifications, have mental health problems, be imprisoned, and to experience teenage parenthood. The searches carried out during the research for schemes for care leavers across the England showed that there are patches of developing practice but the overall situation in the North West seems no worse than that found across the country.

### Key Findings

#### *Need for strategic planning for a comprehensive service*

The research found that nine out of twenty local authorities had a policy, strategy or plan related to employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. Others said a plan was being developed and, even where there was no plan, there was usually a service in place or being developed. However, there were no examples of a comprehensive range of services designed to meet the needs of all relevant care leavers.

#### *Regional and local action needed*

Action was needed at the local level "to get our own house in order." It was felt that having someone responsible for this work at the local level was very important. However some issues also required action at the regional or sub regional level. Many care leavers do not live in the local authority area responsible for funding services for them and this requires effective arrangements to allow them access to provision where they live. Also, it was felt that work could be carried out at the regional level to broker the involvement of large employers.

### *Large numbers in need*

Department for Schools, Families and Children statistical returns (DSFC 2007) for the North West region show that from a sample of 790 young people aged 19 years in 2007 who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years (see Table 5 on page 61), 270 (34 per cent) were not in education, employment or training. If this is applied to the 2930 young people who left care aged 16 or over between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 (DCFS 2007), it would suggest that almost 1,000 of them might not be in education, employment or training at age 19 and this is likely to be an underestimate of these care leavers needing support as it does not include those who are in casual or temporary employment or low level education (Dixon 2008)

### *Developing area of work*

All but one of the 21 authorities studied have some provision. However, developments were patchy and none had a comprehensive service covering all aspects listed below and all looked after children and care leavers who might need services. The research identified a range of types of support offered in schemes for looked after children and care leavers into employment. These were:

- preparation for employment /Employability schemes
- work experience
- work placements/traineeships
- ring-fencing posts/placements
- apprenticeships
- mentoring

The research identified a need to share information on developments. Appendix 4 provides details of schemes identified in the survey in the North West and Appendix 3 provides details of examples found across England

### *Limited Information*

There is limited information on the numbers and needs of children who might require services. Much of what is available uses the information drawn from statistical returns. In particular there is little use being made of information from individual plans and assessments for service planning. Whilst there was some evidence of consultation with looked after children there was still little information available concerning their needs and desires particularly of those who have left care.

### *Ring-fencing Schemes and Opportunities*

Whilst the benefits of inclusion in generic schemes were recognised, positive discrimination or ring-fencing was proposed at all workshops as a way of ensuring that looked after children and young people were provided with sufficient high quality opportunities and to prevent them 'losing out' in the competition for opportunities.

### *Practical problems*

A number of practical problems were identified that hindered the development of schemes. These included issues around pay, contracting, equal opportunities, short term funding and interagency cooperation. Whilst some areas had found answers these were not necessarily communicated to others. It was felt a regional blueprint or toolkit would aid the implementation of services at the local level.

*Recommendation 1: Specialist schemes are needed for employment opportunities for looked after young people and those who have left care as well as support mechanisms for those who can engage in mainstream services.*

“We need to long-term track people to mid-twenties”

The research highlights the need for a wide range of specific support for young people who have been looked after. Because of lower educational achievements there are still a very significant proportion of them who will not be able to engage with schemes aimed at the wider population and there is a danger that in generic schemes their needs will be unmet.

*Recommendation 2: Consideration should be given by organisations involved in providing children’s services to provide apprenticeships specifically for young people who have been looked after.*

“They do need some form of ring-fencing or special consideration in order for them to access the opportunities that are there”

As corporate parents, the children’s sector needs to take a lead in ensuring schemes lead to ‘real jobs.’ One possibility is through the provision of apprenticeships and the use of supernumerary posts leading to long term employment. This should run across all the functions of the agencies involved.

*Recommendation 3: : A mechanism is needed to share the growing experience of providing employment opportunities. This research provides a map of what is currently available and contacts for projects. These should continue to be updated and published and this responsibility could be assumed at regional level.*

There is a wide range of experience and knowledge to be shared within and between local authorities in the North West.

*Recommendation 4: : Each local authority, along with its partners, should develop an education, employment and training strategy to cover all young people in their area who have been looked after. This should include plans for better information systems; communication to staff at all levels of their responsibilities in this area; and mechanisms to provide mainstream funding for services.*

“We realised that there is a lot of money around but that it is tied up in existing care costs ... We also looked at the range of opportunities that might be around in terms of pooling or sharing or starting to recycle money and that might realistically be the way forward”

There was no evidence that assessments of the extent of local need were undertaken and the information currently collected on individuals appeared to be underused and under-analysed. There is also a need for mainstream longer-term financial support for schemes and initiatives. Commitment by chief executives and members to strategic plans and projects was seen as a key to this.

*Recommendation 5: Each local authority area should have a coordinator whose sole responsibility is to develop sustainable employment opportunities.*

“I am not sure we would actually have the volume to keep somebody full-time engaged in this .... So we feel that there is real mileage in small clusters or pairs of authorities sharing that resource.”

A key problem was that responsibility for this work was either split between a number of people or was one small part of a busy person's job. Stronger ownership could be achieved by having a coordinator. Where an authority has a small number of looked after children, such a role might be shared with neighbouring authorities.

*Recommendation 6: There needs to be detailed consultation with looked after children and care leavers to identify their priorities and the best way to meet them*

“... needs to be overarching, involvement and participation of children and young people in all this agenda.”

While some consultation had been undertaken, there was clearly scope for consultation that was both wider and more in-depth and should include care leavers.

*Recommendation 7: A key requirement is the further development of stable accommodation for care leavers who participate in training and employment opportunities.*

“The lack of appropriate accommodation for young people is a huge barrier to them sustaining employment”

Research identifies the need to relieve young people of concerns about their accommodation if they are to engage successfully in gaining employment. This requires further improvement in the joint actions between housing suppliers and departments for children's services as well as financial support for the accommodation of young people engaged in employment and training.

*Recommendation 8: A regional toolkit should be developed to provide advice and guidance on best practice in developing employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers.*

“What we felt we would like to get out of the region was a single model or a single template that would cover not just pay but learning and development.”

A key action is for certain 'sticky' problems to be resolved by advice or guidance at the regional level. This would include guidelines for a pay structure; mechanisms to engage major contractors and developers in providing employment opportunities; and advice on dealing with issues of equal opportunities amongst much else.

*Recommendation 9: A scheme for brokerage with large employers should be developed at regional level.*

“We need to look at our relationships at executive level with the private sector, particularly with the major employers.”

A major issue is the need to involve employers in the private sector in providing opportunities for young people who have been looked after. The workshops felt that a key role at regional level should be to provide brokerage with large employers to gain their commitment to providing employment opportunities across the region.

*Recommendation 10: Training and education at all levels for carers needs to promote the importance of education and employment for looked after children*

The attitudes and values of carers about education and employment are key factors in the motivation of children. The children's workforce needs to be prepared for their role in raising children's aspirations for and preparing them to do better in education and employment.

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# 1 Introduction

The problems that looked after children face as they leave care are well documented. Whilst some children have the resilience to deal with the adversities that brought them into the care system and the problems they face whilst looked after, a significant proportion fair badly in adult life. The poor outcomes for looked after young people will be discussed in later chapters but a key issue is that children are not sufficiently prepared and supported by their corporate parents to engage with education and employment in a way that will form a foundation for their futures. For most young people gaining employment is a key stage in their transition to adulthood. This research addresses this important issue and aims to ensure that looked after children across the North West have access to the support and training necessary to help them gain employment when they leave state care and accommodation.

In February 2008, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) commissioned the Social Work Department at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to map where Local Authorities in the North West had progressed to in their plans to provide sustainable employment opportunities for children who had been looked after. The background to this initiative was that one sub-regional group, consisting of seven Merseyside Authorities along with Cheshire, was starting to explore the need for collaboration and a joint scheme co-ordinated by the Learn Together Partnership was under development. The research was aimed at understanding the nature of this proposed collaboration, mapping plans and actions more widely across the North West region and making recommendations for what was required regionally and locally to ensure the provision of relevant and sustainable employment opportunities for looked after children and young people (LAC). The research commission grew out of work undertaken by the CWDC with the North West Regional Workforce Planning group which identified employment opportunities for looked after children and young people as a key issue for development in the region.

The tender for the research laid out the following objectives:

- to provide CWDC and the North West Regional Planning Group with an analysis of the Learn Together Partnership proposal, including the concept of an integrated children's services worker and the links between this project and the 14-19 diploma agenda
- to liaise with each local area's workforce leads in the first instance and seek to identify key wider partners in that local area such as PCT staff, chief executives etc. to determine the appetite for and commitment to the scheme. This could include one- to-one meetings, focus groups or workshops
- to feedback findings to the regional planning group, the Learn Together Partnership and CHDP as part of a project management group
- to make recommendations to the individual local areas, the regional group and CWDC about the learning from the project and how it can be mainstreamed

The research was undertaken in a three month period from March to May 2008 by a team consisting of Andy Bilson, Joanna Price and Nicky Stanley. The developmental nature of the research suggested the use of a participative action approach. The researchers collected data using a variety of methods and engaged representatives from across the region in workshops aimed at generating discussion about what was needed at regional and local level to implement a regional vision for all looked after children across the region to have access to sustainable employment opportunities.

This research report covers the background and methodology of the study and provides details of a literature survey that includes information on approaches to providing employment opportunities across England. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 address the three areas researched, namely the work of the Learn Together Partnership; the results of the North West Region survey, which includes information on the current stage of development of plans for employment for looked after children and young people, and the issues identified by three regional workshops held as part of the research. The report concludes with recommendations for action.

## 2 Background to the study

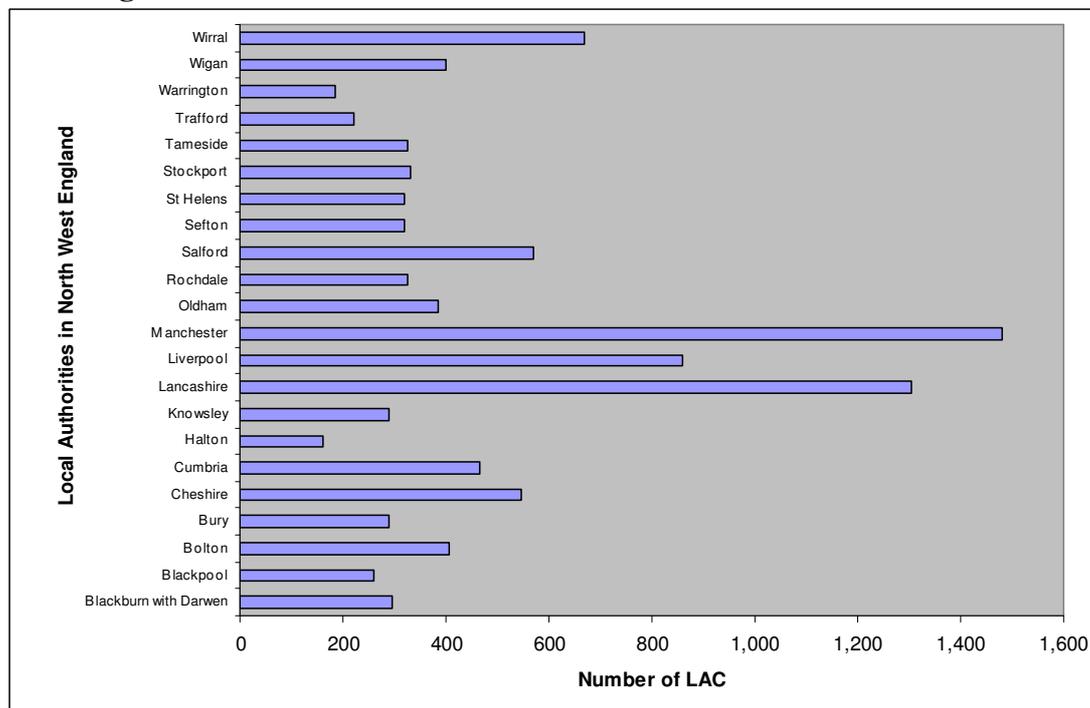
### 2.1 Introduction

This section will consider available information on young people who have been looked after and the outcomes for them.

### 2.2 Statistics on Looked After Children in the North West

The North West Region is made up of 22 Local Authority areas<sup>1</sup>. According to data from national statistics available from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), a total of 60,000 children were looked after in England on 31 March 2007. The region responsible for the most looked after children and young people was London (n=11290), followed by the North West region (n=10410 LAC); 17 per cent of looked after children in England are looked after by the North West region. As Figure 1 shows, within the North West, the authority responsible for the largest number of looked after children and young people in 2007 was Manchester (n=1,480), followed by Lancashire (n=1305).

**Figure 1 Number of LAC in 2007 according across Local Authorities in North West England.**



Source: DFSC 2007

<sup>1</sup> **Shire Counties:** Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire

**Unitary Authorities:** Blackburn & Darwen, Blackburn, Halton, Warrington

**Metropolitan Districts:** Bolton, Bury, Knowsley, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Sefton, St Helens, Stockport., Tameside, Trafford, Wigan and Wirral

Within the North West region, 27 per cent of looked after children and young people are placed outside the geographical boundary of the responsible local authority. Provision for these children's health and education is legally the responsibility of the local authority where they are placed but services to prepare them for leaving care, including preparation for employment, are the responsibility of the placing authority. This difference of responsibility means that where looked after children and young people are over the school leaving age, (assuming the distribution is the same as for looked after children and young people generally), over a quarter of those requiring preparation for employment will be placed in another local authority.

When focussing on those over school leaving age, using the same data source, there were 1630 looked after children and young people in the North West who were 16 and over on 31st March 2007. In addition, 1010 young people who were 16 or older had ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2007. This means that there were 2640 young people in the North West who were aged 16 or over and had been looked after during 2006-7. Table 4 (page 60) shows the distribution of these children in the authorities that make up the North West Region where it will be seen that numbers vary from 40 in Halton to 515 in Manchester. These figures are likely to underestimate numbers of young people aged 16 to 21 who had been looked after when aged 16 as it does not include young people who left care or accommodation in earlier years.

The DCSF also collects data on the education, employment or training status of young people aged 19 years in the current year who were looked after on 1 April three years earlier and then aged 16. This thus represents a single year's cohort of 19 year-old young people who had been looked after. An estimate of the cohort of young people aged 16 to 19 would thus be approximately three times this number.

The currently available information is for all children aged 19 years on 31st March 2007 who were looked after on 1 April 2004, then aged 16 years. Across England, this sample consisted of 5800 young people, 790 of whom were in the North West (see Table 5 on page 61). The data show that 450 of the 790 young people (57 per cent) in the North West were engaged in education, training or employment at age 19. However, 270 (34 per cent) were not in education, employment or training, and the remaining 60 (8 per cent) were not in touch with the local authority. The accommodation of these 19 year-olds is also recorded (see Table 6 page 63). This shows that, in the North West, only 120 (15 per cent) are living with parents or relatives and 320 (41 per cent) are in independent living and 30 (4 per cent) are in community homes. The others are in various forms of accommodation or supported living arrangements. The proportion of these young people living within the responsible local authority's geographical boundaries is not recorded.

This figure of 34 per cent not in education, employment or training (NEET) probably underestimates the potential target group for those requiring support with employment opportunities, as a substantial proportion of those who are in education, employment or training are likely to also require support. For example, Dixon et al. (2004) found that much of the work or education in which young people in their study were engaged was routine or low level and consequently not fulfilling for them. However, if this is applied to the 2930 young people who left care aged 16 or over between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 (DCFS 2007) it would suggest that almost 1,000 of them might be NEET at age 19 and this is likely to be an underestimate of the numbers needing support.

### **2.3 Poor outcomes for care leavers**

Research shows that looked after children and young people are at a high risk of a variety of poor outcomes (see for example Stein, 2006). A key outcome relevant to work opportunities is their level of educational attainment and qualifications. Looked after children and young people are less likely than the average population to achieve any qualifications at GCSE and are also less likely to achieve the higher grades. Because of this, looked after children and young people are at a disadvantage when it comes to meeting qualification criteria for jobs and training opportunities. However it should be noted that this poor attainment may not be entirely caused by placement in accommodation as many children and young people already have educational deficits prior to entry and a similar profile of poor educational attainment can be seen in some of the very poor communities from which many of these children originate. It is clear however that being looked after does not ameliorate educational difficulties and there are a number of factors including changes in placement and school and poor school attendance that can be seen to affect school achievement. In addition these children have a range of other poor outcomes that make them likely to be socially excluded as will be discussed below.

Narrowing the gap between the educational achievement of looked after children and young people and that of their peers is a specified target for local authorities articulated in the Public Service Agreement and, in 2006-07, 44 per cent of looked after children and young people in England achieved at least one GCSE or GNVQ and seven per cent had obtained at least 5 GCSEs at grade A\* to C (DCSF 2007). This represents a slight improvement on the six per cent who achieved that level in 1998 but falls well short of national targets. Thus the Ofsted Annual report 07-08 states (Ofsted 2008 p. 67):

*In particular, attendance and educational standards achieved by looked after children remain low. Latest available data show that their attainment, in terms of five or more higher grade GCSE passes, has improved in recent years. However, attainment by this measure has risen more quickly for all pupils nationally. The gap between the standards reached by looked after children and by their peers is therefore growing, despite the huge resources from and commitment of agencies to improve them.*

In the North West in 2006/07, 805 looked after children and young people were in Year 11 and old enough to sit GCSE or GNVQ equivalent exams. Only 69 per cent of them sat one of these exams and 66 per cent obtained one or more GCSEs at grade A\* to G. In comparison, 97 per cent of all children in the North West obtained one GCSE at grade A\* to G. Again, only 41 per cent of looked after children and young people in the NW achieved 5 GCSEs grades A\* to G, compared to 90 per cent of all children in the NW. Finally, 13 per cent of looked after children and young people in the North West achieved 5 GCSEs grades A\*-C (or equivalent) compared to 57 per cent of all children in the North West (DCFS, 2007). It can thus be seen that education will need to be central to strategies for improving the opportunities for employment of looked after young people.

Other indicators of poor outcomes for looked after children and young people are that they are very likely to end up in prison. The Social Exclusion Unit (2002 p. 157) reported that a survey undertaken in 2000 of prisoners aged 16–20 found that 29 per cent of male sentenced and 35 per cent of female sentenced prisoners and 42 per cent of male remand prisoners had been taken into local authority care as a child and in 1997 it was estimated that half of all prisoners aged under 18 had had a history of being in care or having social services involvement.

There is also evidence that looked after children and young people are more likely than young people not looked after to have a mental disorder. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) reported in 2003 that 49 per cent of 11 to 15 year olds looked after had a mental disorder, compared with 11 per cent of those in private households (see Meltzer et al 2003). Mental health problems are both a product of and contribute to a lack of stability in the lives of looked after young people (Stanley et al 2005). Young women leaving care are more likely to be pregnant or already be a mother than other similarly aged women. Estimates suggest that about one in four young women leaving the care system is pregnant or already a mother, while nearly half of female care leavers become mothers between the ages of 18 and 24 (SCIE 2004). The responsibilities of parenthood are likely to limit the availability of suitable employment opportunities for this group and low income and limited access to child care for young parents can combine to exclude them from training and education (Craig and Stanley 2006; Chase and Knight 2006; Hobcraft 1998; Hobcraft and Kiernan 1999).

## 2.4 Summary

Despite considerable efforts to improve services for children who are looked after, the outcomes for a large proportion of them are still poor and they are likely to be socially excluded. Care leavers are more likely than other young people to be unemployed, have few qualifications, have mental health problems, be imprisoned, and to experience teenage parenthood.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The research was undertaken with an action orientation using a constructivist participatory methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, 2005; Stewart, 1994; Heron and Reason, 1997, Bilson 1997, 2006; Bilson and Ross, 1999, Bilson and White 2004, Bilson and Thorpe 2007) which focuses on co-constructing new understandings and actions. The focus of this approach is to generate new understandings through participating in ‘conversations’ with participants. In this way the research process is one of engagement rather than detached observation. The research uses formal research methods such as surveys and interviews within this framework of engagement.

The research had a number of core elements:

- a review of literature on research into work aimed at promoting relevant and Looked After Children
- analysis of Learn Together Partnership undertaken through a series of telephone interviews and observation of the launch conference.
- a questionnaire survey of the 22 local authorities
- a series of 3 half day workshops for representatives of nominated workforce leads and key wider partners which presented the interim findings from the earlier research and gathered information on what was needed at local and regional level to promote more effective services for sustainable employment opportunities for Looked after Children

### 3.2 Review of Literature

Neither the remit nor the scale, focus and time span of this project required a systematic review of the literature. A preparatory search of research databases was undertaken and this revealed that there is a limited amount of published research in the UK on best practices for promoting sustainable employment opportunities for looked after children. However, there is now an established body of research into the outcomes for children on leaving care and this offers evidence on the needs of care leavers. Given the lack of evaluative research on employment initiatives for care leavers, the search strategy was expanded to cover the following areas:

- statistics and data on numbers of children and young care leavers and their employment and training status
- research and evaluation of schemes in England promoting employment opportunities for looked after children and young people and on the needs of care leavers
- strategies and schemes to promote employment opportunities for looked after children and young people in England (this is reported in section 0 in the report)

### **3.2.1 Research literature**

The researchers were able to draw on their previous work on looked after young people to identify relevant literature for this study but the team also undertook searches on the Social Care Institute for Excellence's Social Care online database which provides a comprehensive database of English language research in social care. Despite this, the use of a single database may limit the comprehensiveness of the review. Social Care online is categorised into topics. A total of 41 items were identified on a search cross-referencing the topics "leaving care" and "employment" and a further 15 on "leaving care" and "evaluation". From these, 13 research papers were identified on the topics of leaving care and employment which had been produced in the United Kingdom in the last ten years.

### **3.2.2 Statistics**

Statistics on looked after children were collected from the DCSF, mainly from the additional tables supplementing SFR27/2007 (DCSF 2007). These contain 29 local authority tables which give breakdowns of existing national data on children looked after at 31 March including the distance between home and placement at 31 March **and** of children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years by activity at 19.

### **3.2.3 Examples of Approaches to Promoting Employment Opportunities**

A search of the web and a variety of journals was used to identify examples of approaches to employment opportunities across England. In a number of cases those responsible for the schemes were contacted to gather information and this snowballing technique (see Salganick and Heckathorn 2004) yielded some interesting examples of schemes that were used to stimulate thinking and discussion in the regional workshops.

## **3.3 Analysis of the Learn Together Partnership proposals**

The methodology selected to analyse the partnerships consisted of an analysis of two key documents produced by the Learn Together Partnership, observation of and participation in the Partnership's launch conference and a series of telephone interviews. The two Learn Together Partnership consultants and six stakeholders representing five different authorities in the partnership were interviewed over the telephone using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 1) during March 2008. The schedule covered their participation in the Partnership and their understanding of its vision. Information was gathered on the work carried out by the Partnership and stakeholders' assessments of what had been achieved were captured.

Recruitment for the interviews was undertaken at the launch conference held by the Learn Together Partnership on 28th February 2008. The interviewees selected to participate in the research represented the two key members of the Learn Together Partnership responsible for the work on employment opportunities along with representatives of five of the seven participating authorities. An additional stakeholder in Liverpool was recommended by the author of the Learn Together Partnership discussion paper and included in the research. Table 1 on page 10 shows all the local authorities participating in this research and identifies those where interviews describing the Learn Together Partnership were held.

### **3.4 Survey of Local Authorities in the NW**

The workforce leads in the 22 Local Authorities in the North West Region were each asked to nominate a key contact from their area to be responsible for responding to the survey and to coordinate the participation from their area in the workshop.

Key contacts received a research information sheet (see Appendix 1) which outlined the nature of the research and their involvement and provided details on anonymity and confidentiality. The information sheet stated that key contacts would not be named in the report but might be identifiable by references made to their local area. A questionnaire was emailed to the key contact in each of the 22 Local Authorities areas. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) covered: information relating to developing employment opportunities for Looked After Children; policy, strategy and plans; services currently provided; and future plans. Where questionnaires were not returned promptly, key contacts were followed up by email and telephone. In total questionnaires were returned by 18 of the 22 North West authorities, a response rate of 82 per cent. Table 1 on page 10 shows which authorities returned questionnaires.

The questionnaire which was piloted included a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Analysis was undertaken on the open-ended questions through categorisation of responses and the identification of themes.

### **3.5 Workshops with Local Authorities in the North West**

The key contacts were also invited to attend a half-day workshop held on one of three dates in April/May 2008 and were asked to invite relevant partners. A programme for the workshops can be found in Appendix 1. In consultation with the key contacts, allocation of authorities and their partners to workshops was based on geography and already established groupings. However, in some cases, a workshop other than the one which these criteria would suggest was more suitable for key contacts and they moved from these initial groupings. Details of the fifteen authorities attending each workshop can be found in Table 3 on page 10. Nineteen key contacts planned to attend the workshops but because of urgent work commitments or personal circumstances four were unable to attend. It had taken some time to make arrangements for venues and to identify key contacts in each area so there was relatively short notice for participants.

**Table 1 Participation of Areas in Research**

Area	LTP interviews	Survey	Workshops
Blackburn with Darwen		✓	✓
Blackpool		✓	✓
Bolton		✓	
Bury		✓	✓
Cheshire	✓		✓
Cumbria		✓	
Halton		✓	✓
Knowsley	✓	✓	✓
Lancashire		✓	✓
Liverpool	✓		✓
Manchester		✓	✓
Oldham		✓	✓
Rochdale		✓	✓
Salford		✓	✓
St Helens	✓		
Stockport		✓	
Tameside		✓	
Trafford		✓	
Warrington		✓	✓
Wigan		✓	✓
Wirral	✓	✓	✓
<b>Level of Participation</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>18 out of 22</b>	<b>15 out of 22</b>

The aim of the workshops was to generate a reflexive conversation (Bilson, 1997; Bilson and Thorpe, 2007). The workshops began with a presentation from the research team presenting the assumptions on which we built our view of the subject of the research. This was illustrated by: figures relating to the number of looked after children and young people and care leavers over 16 in the North West; the employment support needs of looked after children and young people; some of the other initiatives in England; the interim findings of the research; the Learn Together Partnership proposal and an overview of the findings; and, finally, the issues for the development of a North West scheme.

After a break, key contacts and key partners worked in Local Authority groups (see Table 3 on page 10) to discuss and answer six questions relating to the next steps in creating employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. These were:

- what should be developed at the local level?
- what organisations should be involved?
- what existing/new structures might be used to support/plan an initiative?
- what resources could be accessed?
- what regional support/scheme would be required?
- what regional structure could deliver this?

A researcher observed each group taking notes. One person from each group fed back to the whole group and this feedback along with subsequent discussion was recorded on video camera. The video recording was transcribed and the data was analysed by coding into themes. The themes emerging from the data are described in Section 8 of this report.

### **3.6 Participation in the research**

Table 1 shows participation by representatives from each local authority area in the different elements of the research. Only one of the 22 areas did not participate in some way in the research.

## 4 Literature Review

### 4.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This review provides an overview of literature on research relevant to employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers. Given the constraints of this project, a full review was not feasible so this review is confined to UK material and is based on searches of the SCIE Social Care On-line database (for details see methodology) as well as a range of other materials identified by the researchers. It is split into the following sections: the needs of care leavers; evaluations of employment opportunities schemes; the What Makes the Difference Project.

### 4.2 The Needs of Care Leavers

Stein's (2006) review of research into children leaving care provides a useful and detailed overview of the research which can only be briefly summarised here. He firstly highlights the levels of social exclusion of many care leavers covering similar issues to those outlined in section 2.2 above. He also highlights how specific groups are particularly disadvantaged because of their status or characteristics which compound their exclusion. These groups include children with disabilities; asylum seekers, particularly because of their exclusion from the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000; and those coming from black and minority ethnic communities. In relation to the later Stein draws on the research of Barn et al (2005) to suggest that:

*Black and minority ethnic young people, including those of mixed heritage, face similar challenges to other young people leaving care. However, they may also experience identity problems derived from a lack of knowledge, or contact with family and community, as well as the impact of racism and discrimination. (p. 273)*

Stein goes on to discuss problems around transition for young people leaving care. He notes that care leavers consistently move to independent living earlier than other young people with the expectation that they will be able to achieve instant adulthood. This is against the general trend where many young people are experiencing extended periods of transition to adulthood with families playing a role in providing financial, practical and emotional support for longer periods of time (Jones 2005). In contrast, those leaving care have to deal with the key elements of transition – managing a home and securing an independent income - over a very short period. This increases the risks for them and makes a successful transition less likely.

Stein's conclusion is that there is a need to move to a resilience framework in which the focus is not on why young people fail but in what ways they succeed. This points to the importance of attachments and stability in care (in placements and school). Stein states that if we are to improve outcomes for looked after children we will need to intervene across their whole life course summarising this more comprehensive range of services as follows:

*(1) early intervention and family support; (2) providing better quality care to compensate them for their damaging pre-care experiences through stability and continuity, as well as assistance to overcome educational deficits; (3) providing opportunities for more gradual transitions from care that are more akin to normative transitions; and (4) providing ongoing support to those young people who need it, especially those young people with mental-health problems and complex needs. (Stein 2006 p 278)*

### **4.3 Evaluation and research of schemes to promote employment opportunities**

There are still relatively few studies of the effectiveness of programmes aimed at promoting employment opportunities (Stein 2006). One approach has been to follow cohorts of young people leaving care. There are a number of recent studies of this kind (Allen, 2003; Barn *et al.*, 2005; Dixon *et al.*, 2004). Dixon *et al.* studied a sample of 106 young people aged 16-18 who left the care of seven authorities in England. Baseline information was collected two to three months after leaving care and follow-up took place nine to ten months later. This work of Dixon *et al.* (2004) has led to a variety of publications from their study of the early outcomes of young people leaving care.

One particularly relevant publication (Wade and Dixon 2006) focuses on what they view as the key ingredients for a successful transition to adulthood – housing and employment. They found that 12-15 months after leaving care, the most likely employment status of the young people was being unemployed, with 44 per cent unemployed. Only 23 per cent were engaged in full or part-time education, 6 per cent in training and 8 per cent were caring for a child. They reported that “young people dropped out of education and training placements through financial difficulties, through being placed on courses unsuited to their abilities or interests, through personal or emotional difficulties in their lives or through lack of support and encouragement to maintain motivation” (p.205). These findings are echoed in Allen’s (2003) study of a group of care leavers in a rural area and in a study by Barn and colleagues of young people from black and minority groups (Barn *et al.*, 2005).

These studies suggest that housing may be a greater priority for care leavers than employment and that experience immediately after leaving care exerts a strong effect on the ability of young people to access and sustain involvement in education, training and work. Wade and Dixon (2006) found some evidence to suggest that targeted career support by professionals was associated with a better career outcome and that the age at which young people left care was linked to their career outcome: the older young people were when leaving care, the more likely they were to be economically active when they recontacted them.

Wade and Dixon’s study acknowledged the work of local authorities in developing schemes to increase the economic participation of care leavers, such as employability and mentoring projects. However, they state that “interventions at the time of leaving

care are made more difficult if the foundations are not laid while young people are looked after” (p.206). They suggest that “there is considerable scope for positive intervention” for care leavers and argue that “continuing financial and emotional support is necessary to help young people maintain direction and the connections between economic participation, stable housing, life skills and troubles also highlight the need for career planning to be envisaged as part of a comprehensive package of leaving care support (p.206).

One specific service which has received some attention is mentoring or befriending. As defined by the Home Office “Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee’s life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time” (cited in Clayden and Stein, 2005 p. 12).

For young people about to leave care, mentoring can provide additional and consistent support during transition. Gilligan’s study in Eire (1999), through a set of case studies, illustrated the way that mentoring which focussed on cultural and sporting activities could enhance the resilience of children leaving care. Similarly, a small study of one befriending scheme for care leavers in Northern Ireland (McBriar et al 2001) found benefits for care leavers associated with having someone to talk to and help pursue their interests.

Clayden and Stein (2005) carried out an evaluation of fourteen mentoring schemes specifically set up to support young people preparing to leave care. These projects were set up under the Princes Trust Leaving Care initiative which provided mentoring for young people in the process of leaving care between 2000 and 2002<sup>2</sup>. The study used a mixture of research methods including a file search of 181 cases and interviews with a small sample of seventeen young people, twelve mentors and ten project co-ordinators. The type of mentoring provided included both adult and peer mentoring. Mentors took part in a selection process, were trained and were supported during the time they were mentoring. Mentees were matched to mentors according to interests, distances they could travel and how much time they had available.

Clayden and Stein identified positive outcomes for 93% of the 181 young people participating. By the end of the mentoring relationship, achievements by these young people included positive outcomes such as increased confidence and self-esteem, success in examinations or gaining independent living skills. Just over three-quarters of them achieved all the goals they had initially set with their mentors. Furthermore, longer mentoring relationships were associated with a greater likelihood of a positive outcome.

Further evidence concerning the value attached by looked after young people to supportive relationships with carers or mentors who have personal experience of the

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<sup>2</sup> These projects were set up to offer young people aged 16–21 leaving care the support of their own volunteer mentor and to introduce care leavers to a range of opportunities through the Prince’s Trust grants and programmes.

looked after system is provided by Stanley's (2007) study of the mental health needs of looked after children. The young people participating in focus groups for this research highlighted the credibility and authenticity conferred by the experience of having been 'in care'. 'Survivors' of the looked after system can offer those struggling with its legacy positive role models and raise aspirations, as well as offering a realistic appraisal of the challenges which care leavers experience in transition.

#### **4.4 What Makes The Difference Project**

The *What Makes The Difference* (WMTD) project began in 2005 and aims to improve outcomes for older children in care and care leavers. It is a partnership of 60 organisations from national and local government, voluntary and independent sectors, with Rainer, a voluntary organisation working with care leavers, as the lead partner. It has a strong focus on involving young people in the project and aims to "influence national policy by re-engineering of the education, training and employment support process for those in and leaving public care to increase their opportunity for sustainable employment and enable them to reach their full potential" ([http://www.leavingcare.org/young\\_people/who\\_are\\_we/wmtd](http://www.leavingcare.org/young_people/who_are_we/wmtd)).

The WMTD project commissioned a peer research study (WMTD 2007), which took place between August and October 2006. Trained care leavers in 25 local authorities interviewed 265 care leavers, aged 15-23 years, about what made a difference for them whilst in and leaving care. The interviews were face-to face and data were collected using a questionnaire. Following the peer research, two focus groups were conducted to explore the findings further.

Education, training and employment were key themes addressed by this study. Care leavers described:

- their current education, training and employment status
- the support they received while in school
- the support they received from leaving care service with education, training and employment
- how care was seen to affect education, training or employment
- future hopes and aspirations

Getting a job was the most common answer to the question what could make a difference for you in the future. Young people also wanted practical, emotional and financial support and some mentioned continuity of support after the age of 21.

Another initiative supported by this project involved 11 local authorities developing employment and work experience workplans and then meeting regularly with WMTD to discuss progress on implementation. This work was then evaluated by young people, practitioners and local authority managers. Some of the key messages from this work were the need for a dedicated worker to oversee and implement education, training and employment initiatives and support, the requirement for opportunities and support needs to be needs-led and tailored to the individual and that practical and emotional support for the young people is key to success

(<http://www.leavingcare.org/data/tmp/4493-9021.doc>). This has similarities with Berridge et al.'s work (2008) which emphasises the importance of relationships with a key worker for improved educational attainment although Harker et al. (2003) found that looked after children considered social workers often failed to take their educational needs into account.

WMTD have produced a number of products and tools which are available on their website (<http://www.leavingcare.org/professionals/products/>). They include a guide to corporate parenting ([http://www.leavingcare.org/professionals/products/guide\\_to\\_good\\_corporate\\_parenting](http://www.leavingcare.org/professionals/products/guide_to_good_corporate_parenting)). The project has also developed tools for young people and workers to use, including a training pack entitled 'Preparation for adult life' which aims to provide workers with the key information required to support looked after children and care leavers as they make the transition to adulthood (<http://www.leavingcare.org/data/tmp/4088-8415.pdf>). They have also produced a CD-Rom for looked after children and young people entitled World Of Work (WOW) which includes activities and information relating to exploring skills and qualities, career choices and work experience. Also available are wall charts which explain the education and training opportunities available to young people. Some of the materials produced by this project had been used by schemes and initiatives in the North West identified in Appendix 4.

## 5 Examples of Employment Opportunity Schemes

### 5.1 Introduction

The research involved a limited search of the web, journals and databases to try to discover examples of schemes promoting employment opportunities across England. During this search a range of types of scheme were identified. This section outlines the types of scheme and provides brief details of some examples of these schemes which were found to be operating and for which we were able to gather some details of their operation.

### 5.2 Types of Scheme

The research identified a range of types of service offered in schemes for supporting looked after children and care leavers into employment. These were:

- preparation for employment /Employability schemes
- work experience
- work placements/traineeships
- ring-fencing posts/placements
- apprenticeships
- mentoring

**Preparation for employment schemes** focused on getting looked after children and young people and care leavers ready for employment by not only improving basic skills but also through enhancing personal development and promoting a realistic understanding of what would be expected of them in the work environment.

**Work experience schemes** involved either looked after children and young people at secondary school or looked after children and young people and care leavers post 16 undertaking usually unpaid work for a specific period of time in order to gain experience in the workplace. Looked after children and young people and care leavers were either prioritised within a scheme for all young people or the opportunity was part of a separate work experience scheme aimed specifically at looked after children and young people.

**Work placements and traineeships** enabled looked after children and young people and care leavers with no qualifications and no particular level of ability to gain a substantial amount of experience in the workplace and usually also to study for a recognised qualification. If looked after children and young people/care leavers were included in a more general scheme, placements were sometimes ring-fenced. This ring-fencing approach was also used for actual posts.

**Apprenticeships** focused on training looked after children and young people and care leavers on the job for three years alongside studying for an NVQ Level Two or Three. Unlike normal apprenticeship schemes, schemes for looked after children and young

people/care leavers had no entry criteria - applicants did not need to have any qualifications, however, the potential ability to achieve at NVQ Level 2 was required.

**Mentoring schemes** involved older looked after children and young people and care leavers engaged in education, training or employment mentoring younger looked after children and young people in secondary schools or on employment schemes. This support was delivered face-to-face or via email (e-mentoring). The mentors acted as positive role models, supporting and encouraging looked after children and young people to achieve at school and in employment settings and to consider their future career options.

The different models suggest that a range of responses to the training and employment needs of looked after children and young people have developed. This reflects the emerging understanding that the support required by young people in transition needs to be holistic in its approach (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005) and some of the schemes identified included a number of the models listed above. Although there is currently no firm evidence base for any of these schemes, they offer opportunities for exploring the value of different models in a variety of contexts. Further work would be needed to evaluate the schemes that are in place and to identify the most effective combination of models.

### **5.3 Examples of looked after children and young people employment schemes in England**

Schemes in areas in England outside the North West Region were identified by searching the Internet. Table 2 lists those schemes found by this method where we were able to gather details about contacts and the nature of the scheme and Appendix 3 gives fuller details. This is not a comprehensive list of projects but does cover the range of services outlined above. Details of the schemes were extracted from documents found on the Internet, or documents sent by scheme staff, or through a telephone conversation with someone who had knowledge of the scheme.

**Table 2: Employment schemes in England for looked after children and young people**

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Type of scheme</i>
Devon County Council	Ring-fencing within apprenticeship scheme
Ealing Council	Mentoring Scheme General apprenticeship scheme with support Work experience
Haringey Council	Work placements
Islington Council	Re-engagement Project Work experience Work placements
Lewisham Council	Mentoring Scheme Traineeship scheme
Lincolnshire County Council	Apprenticeship scheme
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Work placements (suspended)
Sheffield City Council	Apprenticeship scheme
Southwark Council	Employability scheme Ring-fencing within Apprenticeship Scheme
Stoke on Trent Council	Employment Policy - Work placements
Wakefield Council	Employability Project

## 6 Learn Together Partnership

### 6.1 Introduction

This section focuses on examining the vision and plans of the Learn Together Partnership (LTP) regarding the creation of employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. It is based on an analysis of papers produced by the organisation as well as telephone interviews with two consultants working with the LTP and six local stakeholders.

The LTP was established in 2004 with initial support from the Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) Innovations Unit. It includes seven local authorities in Merseyside: Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, Warrington and Wirral. Cheshire has also been involved in collaboration with the LTP.

The partnership is managed by a collective group consisting of the seven Directors of Children's Services from the member local authorities. It has a part-time co-ordinator and an external consultant provides support to the Workforce Development Strategy Group. It aims to promote collaboration and knowledge and skills exchange in developing responses to new initiatives in children's services. Its current areas of focus are the development of the children's services workforce and narrowing the gap in educational achievement. The LTP's sphere of interest and activities is therefore much broader than the employment of looked after children and young people, but this issue fits well within its agenda and approach. A number of education providers, including further education and higher education institutions, contribute to the work of the partnership.

The Workforce Development Strategy Group is a sub-group within the LTP which spends about a quarter of its time on the proposed apprenticeship programme for looked after children and young people. This group reports to the Directors of Children's Services within the partnership who meet every six weeks. The LTP Workforce Strategy Group and Cheshire and Merseyside Child Health Development Programme released a discussion paper in September 2007 entitled *Integrated Apprenticeships and Looked After Children*. A critique of the paper can be found below.

### 6.2 The LTP Proposal/Discussion Paper

This analysis focuses on an initial two page discussion paper, entitled *Integrated Apprenticeships and Looked After Children*, produced by the LTP Workforce Strategy Group and the Cheshire and Merseyside Child Health Development Programme in September 2007. The paper addresses the Partnership's ambition to create relevant and sustainable employment opportunities for looked after children and young people and care leavers. There are a number of very positive aspects to the work of the LTP which include the partnership structure which has brought together a range of organisations as well as higher education institutions. The report also

highlights the need to develop the possibilities for a 'real job' for young people through a range of approaches, including the use of supernumerary positions.

The paper suggests a particular type of opportunity for looked after children. The end goal of the LTP apprenticeships is envisaged as the Integrated Children's Service Worker, a generic worker within the Children's Workforce. This represents only one area of employment to which looked after children might aspire. The paper also places a strong emphasis on the 14-19 diploma as a stage on the route to an apprenticeship. Until the educational achievements of looked after children substantially improve, the LTP's approach of a sole focus on the diploma route is likely to have the effect of excluding some of the most disadvantaged looked after children who will not be able to engage with a qualification driven apprenticeship.

The figures for numbers of care leavers aged 19 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 in the LTP areas is around 240 (see Table 5 on page 61). In a full 3 year cohort, this would mean around 720 young people of whom we would currently expect around 250 to be not in employment, education or training at the age of 19 years. The paper did not seem to address service provision on this scale.

If local authorities in the North West are to emulate 'good parents', looked after children and young people will need to be consulted about their aspirations and interests. The choice of pathways to employment is negotiated between young people and their parents, not imposed. Looked after young people may draw on the views, advice and experiences of a number of key figures such as their foster carers, their social workers as well as teachers and Connexions advisers in considering the options available to them. For those looked after young people who retain contact with their own families, experience of and attitudes to employment and training within their families are likely to be influential. Rather than prescribing the type of opportunities offered, a range of training and employment opportunities will need to be developed in order that packages tailored to the needs of each looked after child can be offered. Restricting pathways into work to a diploma route is likely to be unproductive and, while the children's workforce does present a relevant range of training and employment opportunities for looked after children and young people, a wider range of work settings and employment goals is required.

### **6.3 Further Developments in the LTP**

In March 2008, whilst conducting the research, the LTP kindly provided the research team with a copy of the first draft of a report they had commissioned. The final report was made available in May 2008, near the end of this research. The report, *The Common Apprenticeship and Looked After Children*, focuses on developing proposals to promote the training and employment of care leavers in the partnership region and examines the feasibility of developing an apprenticeship for a generic children's services worker. This apprenticeship scheme is envisaged for those care leavers who, although engaged in education or training, have low levels of attainment and self-confidence and a lack of role models or workforce contacts.

The needs of looked after children and young people or care leavers who are not engaged and not ready to enter employment would be met by pre-employment training, which would focus on engagement, personal development and employability. Young people would be referred by Connexions. The report envisages a progression from pre-employment training to more demanding provision in college or with a training provider. Young people who complete the training would be one of the groups recruited onto the apprenticeship. Scheme incentives identified include the Education Maintenance Allowance and also enrichment activities, such as weekend residential events. The report suggests that those on the pre-employment training would not be guaranteed places on the apprenticeship and would have to apply separately.

Two levels of apprenticeship are proposed, the second being an advanced apprenticeship. The report recognises that the apprentices would benefit from appropriate support including “an induction and on-going support and development through group activity” (p.29) and a full-time member of staff would be required to provide this support. Workplace mentors are also seen as a source of support for looked after children and young people. This is confirmed by interviews with LTP stakeholders who suggest that some looked after children and young people require intensive support to engage with a training programme or placement.

The LTP scheme is to be designed for young people in the general population rather than specifically targeted on looked after children and young people. According to the report, “the model of an apprenticeship for care leavers exclusively was not favoured” (p.30) among the lead officers and practitioners interviewed for the report. A wider remit is justified on the grounds that it avoids stigmatising looked after children and young people and care leavers. The report proposes targeting the scheme on ‘vulnerable learners’ and reserving places for care leavers within the scheme. Thus, although the paper outlines a generic scheme, it also supports ring-fencing places for care leavers. This issues of the extent to which employment and training opportunities for looked after children and young people should be ring-fenced or designated has also been raised throughout our research and we will return to this theme later.

#### **6.4 Interviews with stakeholders and LTP consultants**

This section now considers the interviews undertaken with LTP consultants and stakeholders as part of our research. The main finding of these was that the LTP plans for an apprenticeship scheme are at a “*formative stage of development*” and that awareness of the work of the strategy group is limited across the LTP authorities. This finding may reflect the fact that not all those stakeholders we interviewed were active members of the strategy group although some were key people in the authorities signed up to the partnership. The LACEs conference on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008, organised by the LTP, had raised awareness among some of the stakeholders interviewed:

*“...up until that one initiative [LACEs conference] I have not had anything to do with the Learn Together Partnership”*

The stakeholder interviewed in Knowsley stated that there was a three year strategy in place for looked after children and young people and one aspect of it focused on developing recruitment pathways. A group had been established and was working towards operationalising this strategy. Cheshire was described as not yet having formalised a policy but the authority was working on one but hoped to have an integrated policy with the LTP members. Some stakeholders considered that their strategy was articulated by the LTP. Other stakeholders were unaware as to whether their authority had a strategy or policy in place for looked after children and young people and employment opportunities. This raises an important issue for this area of work as strategies and policy need to be owned by a range of different stakeholders. Here, those in workforce planning were not necessarily aware of plans in children's services.

The reported usefulness of the partnership in planning and developing employment opportunities for looked after children and young people lay in the coordination of an approach across the partnership area, providing authorities with the confidence to move forward, sharing good practice as well as problems and barriers, pooling resources, creating wider opportunities for looked after children and young people, providing fresh ideas and fresh approaches and offering support.

Those participating in this stage of the research considered that, as it was still in the planning stage, the LTP had yet to achieve any measurable outcomes, with no employment opportunities having been created at the time of the interviews. However, interviewees reported that it had achieved the engagement and collaboration of seven local authorities and a commitment to a co-ordinated approach led by the LTP. It was felt that the partnership had raised the awareness and the interest of key players in the partner local authorities, mainly through the LACES conference, and it had increased interest at a local level. It had also raised the awareness and interest of the issue in the North West, leading to this piece of research.

The majority of stakeholders were unable to describe a weakness of the LTP, either because they did not know enough about the LTP or because they were unable to identify any such difficulties. Weaknesses reported by the LTP Workforce Strategy Group Coordinator were that it had not had a high enough profile and there had been difficulty linking with key players in the local authorities involved.

Interviewees described both the advantages and disadvantages of extending the partnership to the whole of the North West. The advantages identified included a wider platform to share ideas and good practice, looked after children and young people being able to access employment opportunities in other areas, and being able to share resources and avoid duplication. One of the disadvantages reported was related to the number of partners that would need to be involved as getting everyone together was envisaged as problematic. Other disadvantages included increased opportunities for differences of opinion to emerge and the difficulty of working with a number of different funding streams. In some cases, stakeholders expressed the view that working at the local rather than regional level was preferable.

## 6.5 Summary

The Learning Together Partnership represents an important development for the North West Region; one of its key strengths is the involvement of training providers, particularly FE colleges. The Partnership has also succeeded in forging links between schools and training providers and this is an essential element of any employment and training initiative for looked after children and young people. The focus on creating apprenticeships is clearly in line with central government strategy: at the time of writing, the government has announced its intention of introducing an Apprenticeship Bill which will establish entitlement to an apprenticeship for all 16-18 year olds. LTP clearly has the capacity to inspire and provide a model to inform the development of partnerships in the field of training and employment opportunities for young people. The partnership has developed a long-term vision for its work and is in the early stages of designing and delivering a scheme for young people in the general population with a focus on education and training and the end-goal of the Integrated Children's Services Worker Apprenticeship. However, opportunities focused on education and training may not meet the needs of looked after children and young people who are less likely to be able to engage in this sort of scheme. There is also a risk that the needs of looked after children and young people will go unmet in a scheme that is targeted on the wider population of young people, rather than a scheme specifically focused on them. Given an estimate of over 250 young people (estimated using DCSF data for 2007) likely to be needing support across the LTP, with the majority having a low level of educational attainment, there may be scope for further development of specific schemes for care leavers in this part of the region.

## **7 Survey of Current Situation in the North West**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This section presents the findings from the survey of key contacts in the region. These are organised under the following headings:

- Policy, Strategy or Plans;
- Consultation with looked after children and young people and care leavers
- Information collected on employment needs of looked after children and young people
- Employment schemes in place
- Plans for employment schemes
- Support needed by local authorities to move forward
- Key issues identified in providing employment schemes.

Those schemes already in place in local authorities in the Region will also be outlined and discussed in this section. However, none of these schemes have as yet been evaluated - the information given is therefore descriptive only and is based on the information provided by the key contacts.

The questionnaire was returned by a key contact in 18 of the 22 Local Authorities in the North West. Table 1 on page 10 shows which local authorities returned questionnaires. In the case of two authorities (Cheshire and Liverpool) additional information was available from interviews that took place. Where possible the interview data is used to supplement the questionnaire findings.

The respondents were employed in a range of roles but most managed either children in care or leaving care teams: seven out of 18 respondents managed the children in care team in their local authority and four out of 18 managed the leaving care team. Other roles included a Connexions Principal Adviser, a manager of children's homes, a project coordinator, a virtual head, a head of human resources, a quality assurance manager in social care and one respondent was directly responsible for corporate parenting and placements.

### **7.2 Policy, Strategy and Plans**

Key contacts were asked if their local authority had developed a policy, strategy or plan related to creating employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. The research found that nine out of 20 key contacts reported their local authority had a policy, strategy or plan related to employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. Some of those key contacts whose authority did not yet have a plan reported that one was in the process of being developed or that there was a commitment to a development rather than a formal policy. Although 11 authorities did not have a plan, 10 of them did have a scheme in place that contributed to employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. Therefore, not having a policy, strategy or plan was not indicative of lack of action on employment opportunities for looked after children and young people.

### 7.3 Consultation with looked after young people and care leavers

Key contacts were asked if there been any consultation in their area with looked after children and young people in relation to creating employment opportunities. Over half of the key contacts (13 out of 20) reported that their authority had consulted looked after children and young people in their area on the issue of employment opportunities. The term ‘consultation’ was widely interpreted. Most authorities had consulted looked after children and young people informally through one-to-one discussions with their key workers. However, one authority (Cheshire) had undertaken a formal group consultation and another had gathered written consultation. Cheshire had recently established the Cheshire Care Council, consisting of looked after children and young people and care leavers aged 11 to 23 years old. It planned to consult this group of young people on how to take strategies forward.

Consultations with looked after children and young people had produced a range of findings relating to employment. One consultation produced a description of the barriers to employment for looked after children and young people as a lack of confidence and interview skills, the type of lifestyle looked after children and young people lead and not having the right clothes. Another found evidence of low expectations and aspirations:

*“Like a lot of 15/16/17 year olds, most looked after young people have no idea what they want to do in the future, have low expectations and aspirations and want money quickly. The difference is most young people have someone pushing them into activity”.*

Some key themes emerged from these accounts of local consultations concerning young people’s perceptions of their needs for employment opportunities and support. Consultations had indicated that looked after children and young people wanted jobs across a range of settings and that support systems need to be tailored for the individual and needs-led. Consultation had found that work placements could help to build the self-esteem of looked after children and young people and develop a work routines and patterns. Key contacts also reported that money is a key concern for looked after children and young people, especially at the age of 18. Looked after children and young people were seen to have concerns over the cost of accommodation and other essential living costs and to want to earn money quickly. Some consultations had found that looked after children and young people wanted paid employment rather than training.

## **7.4 Information collected on the employment needs of looked after children and young people**

The majority of key contacts (15 of the 18) reported that their local authority collected information on the need for employment opportunities for looked after children and young people in their area. The most common form of data collection was data for DCSF returns – this consists of very limited information on the number of 19 year olds in the area and their employment situation. No key contact reported that their authority did any in-depth analysis, for example using pathway plans to identify unmet need.

## **7.5 Existing employment schemes for looked after children and young people**

The majority of local authorities (19 out of 20) were reported to have an employment scheme in place which either targeted looked after children and young people and care leavers of a certain age, included them or prioritised them within a more general scheme. These employment schemes are set out in a table in Appendix 4 which includes the name of the scheme, the type of scheme, who the scheme is for, a brief description of the scheme and the main contact for the scheme. Once collated, the information on each scheme was emailed to the main contact of the scheme (not always the key contact for the research) in order to provide an opportunity for details to be checked and amended as necessary. It is hoped that this table will offer a useful resource and will allow authorities to identify examples of particular schemes and opportunities for sharing practice or resources. Stockport had the widest range of schemes available (four) however one of the schemes was not run by the local authority but by Pure Innovations, a not-for-profit organisation. The two biggest local authorities (in terms of the number of looked after children and young people) - Lancashire and Manchester - both had three schemes in place, compared to other smaller authorities with only one scheme.

A wide range of initiatives were described. These included apprenticeship schemes, work placements, work experience and mentoring. Schemes tended to focus on making young people more employable by providing skills, experience and/or qualifications. The range of support offered to young people participating in these schemes was broad and included skills assessments, ready for work skills training, basic skills training, help with accommodation and mentoring. Some schemes offered support targeted at workplace supervisors. There appeared to be little information available concerning entry into employment following participation in these schemes. However, some schemes did provide support to young people in looking for employment.

The majority of schemes were reliant on short-term funding although respondents were not asked to provide detailed information on funding sources. This theme is explored further in the discussion of the workshop findings in Section 8.

## 7.6 Plans for employment schemes

Key contacts were also asked to describe any employment schemes their local authority planned to develop specifically for looked after children and young people. Key contacts from authorities which were LTP members reported plans to develop apprenticeships in collaboration with the LTP. Other authorities also had plans to develop apprenticeships or work placements and establish funding for them, or planned to extend or review existing schemes. A couple of key contacts reported that their authority had no active planning to meet the range of needs of looked after children and young people but one stated that it:

*“...is an area in which County Councillors in the Corporate Parenting Panel are very interested and it will be taken forward as part of Care Matters agenda”.*

## 7.7 Support needed by local authorities to move forward

Key contacts were asked what kind of support was required in order to move forward with any plans. One form of support identified as potentially useful, a point made by three key contacts, was the support of politicians or senior management, including local councillors and heads of directorates. This was seen as essential to developing strategy, releasing resources and funding and achieving agreement to provide opportunities and ring-fencing of opportunities.

Another common theme was the value of learning from practice elsewhere in order to develop models of good practice. One key contact reported that

*“Advice and expertise from other areas that have developed relevant schemes would be helpful”* and another stated that it would be useful if reports of practice elsewhere could be used to identify *“the barriers”* and *“routes to success for disadvantaged groups”*.

The need for a range of organisations and agencies to contribute to both strategy and provision was recognised. One respondent commented that *“those supporting LAC don’t always have the skills in employment”* and it was stressed that a multi-agency approach and assistance were required *“to make sure this is a wider agenda than Children’s Services”*.

Similarly, a need for corporate commitment and action across the whole authority was stressed:

*“Ensuring that all parts of “Corporate Parent” accept responsibility for contributing to the provision of work placements for looked after children”.*

Establishing a wide corporate commitment was seen as a means of ensuring that a wide range of opportunities or placements could be offered and that the interests of looked after children and young people and care leavers would be more likely to be met. This sense of shared responsibility and ownership across local authority departments emerged as a strong theme in the workshop stage of the research and is discussed in more detail in the Section 8.

The support and inclusion of private employers were also identified as important and this was seen as involving a commitment by private employers to provide placements as well as to provide support to young people in placements. As one key contact reported: *“the greatest need for support is for the young people when they are actually in the workplace”*.

One key contact argued that a dedicated worker would help local development as it required *“someone working on it full-time”* and another considered that a specialised regional working group would be useful form of support.

## **7.8 Key Issues encountered in the provision of employment opportunities**

A key issue faced in delivering employment schemes for looked after children and young people was the need to address the support needs of looked after young people in the work setting. One key contact reported that a previous scheme had failed as there was *“a greater focus on finding placements than putting in the support”*. Young people needed to be supported *“to develop key skills”* and *“trained workplace mentors are essential”*. Finding employers willing to provide support in the form of trained workplace mentors/supervisors was considered to be essential:

*“Finding employers who are willing to take on the additional pastoral care role...Finding work placement supervisors who have the time and/or training to offer the pastoral support”*.

Employers who had developed an understanding of *“the background and needs of young people”* were described as more likely to *“stick with them”* when problems arose. For example, looked after children and young people might need additional support *“to accommodate the discipline required of a work placement”*. It was suggested that if employers were to be able to appreciate these difficulties, *“slow development”* was needed *“to allow placement providers to understand the care system and its complexities”*.

Respondents emphasised that the support needs of looked after children and young people outside the workplace were also relevant and noted the need to ensure that young people participating in employment or training schemes were living in suitable accommodation:

*“The lack of appropriate accommodation for young people is a huge barrier to them sustaining employment”*

The need to ensure that looked after children and young people participating in schemes were paid what they considered a reasonable wage was also identified as key to the success of any such scheme. The issue of confidentiality and what information should be shared with placement providers was raised and this was seen as something that looked after children and young people and care leavers should be consulted on.

Another common key issue related to the range of opportunities available for looked after children and young people. Ensuring that there were sufficient placements and choices which included part-time opportunities and that opportunities were perceived as valuable and attractive by looked after children and young people were considered important. One key contact reported that offering “*a wide range of opportunities to meet the wishes/interests of young people*” was also important. This suggests that involving looked after children and young people and care leavers in the development of schemes could be a means of ensuring that schemes meet their interests and aspirations.

## 8 Next Steps: Findings from regional workshops

### 8.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings from the regional workshops held in April/May 2008. A high level of commitment to the issue was demonstrated by attendance of representatives from 15 local authorities, despite relatively short notice (see Table 3) Participants in each workshop were organised into groups to work on the tasks set by the researchers (see Appendix 1). It had originally been intended to allow representatives from individual authorities to work in groups with their colleagues but since some authorities were only able to send one representative, some groups involved representatives from more than one authority as shown in Table 4. This approach proved fruitful since it offered the opportunity to share ideas and local practice and, in one group, representatives of two of the smaller local authorities agreed on the day to appoint a joint co-ordinator post to promote work on employment opportunities.

**Table 3: Attendance and groupings at the Workshops**

<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Areas represented and work groups for small group session</i>
Workshop 1 Tuesday 22nd April	Group 1: Blackburn with Darwen Group 2: Blackpool Council Group 3: Lancashire County Council
Workshop 2 Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> April	Group 1: Liverpool and Warrington Group 2: Wirral Group 3: Halton and Knowsley
Workshop 3 Thursday 1st May	Group 1: Bury, Wigan and Rochdale Group 2: Salford and Manchester Group 3: Oldham and Cheshire

During the workshops ideas were shared and developed quite rapidly in plenary sessions before, during and after the groupwork. Sometimes a theme or issue would be raised by an individual during a plenary and then worked on and developed in all groups. Similarly, when groups were feeding back they would tend not to discuss in detail issues already discussed in earlier feedback. Thus it is not possible to pinpoint the ideas or issue relating to particular authorities or groupings of authorities. This is a common issue in action research approaches where methods have the dual function of data collection and of facilitating the participative processes (Walterman *et al.* 2001).

This section will present the findings from the discussions and debates that took place across all three workshops. The analysis of the transcripts produced from the workshops identified a range of themes that emerged at three different levels: the local level (the local authority), the sub-regional level and the regional level.

## 8.2 Ownership

A central theme emerging from all workshops (which mirrored the survey findings) was the need for commitment to this problem as part of the corporate parenting agenda. In particular, it was felt that clear commitment from members and Chief Executives would help to raise the profile of this issue. It was also felt that the profile of the issue needed to be lifted up the agendas of local authorities and communicated to staff in all parts of the authorities as work opportunities should not be limited to children's services or the children's workforce but to all functions of agencies involved with children.

One group emphasised the need for this commitment to be part of arrangements for Children's Trusts. In all three workshops ownership or commitment from senior management levels was seen as a means of allowing clearer and more comprehensive policy and strategy to be developed and as triggering the allocation of resources and funding. As another group commented: *"there isn't a complete coherence to what we are seeking to do in terms of employment"*.

It was also seen as important that commitment at strategic level was tied in with commitment at operational level, so that strategy was implemented effectively. One group of participants from a single authority reported that they had commitment from their Chief Executive but that it had not permeated down to all operational levels across the authority and other participants indicated similar issues of communication. Thus commitment needs to be discernible at a high level and to be communicated to all levels of staff in all functions of the agency as well as to key partners.

There was general agreement that commitment at regional level was a means of eliciting stronger commitment at the local level and could provide a regional steer on policy and procedure.

## 8.3 Funding and Resources

The reliance on short-term funding for schemes was a theme which emerged across all three workshops. It was emphasised that, in developing employment opportunities for looked after children and young people, authorities had now reached a point where mainstream funding was needed. Several groups discussed the 'spend to save' notion as a way of pushing forward the agenda and meeting the employment needs of looked after children and young people. Several groups suggested that investing in looked after children and young people at an early age was key and others felt that such investment would reduce the need for provision in other sectors:

*"You can see the potential big benefits of saving the costs of the statistics that we arrange around imprisonment, homelessness and mental health. It is staring us in the face but where do you deliver up the money and convince people that the spend of money in the short-term will be of benefit later on."*

It was recognised that new funding was unlikely to be available. Thus, there was a need to make better use of existing resources and to recycle funding:

*“We looked at money and we realised that there is a lot of money around but that it is tied up in existing care costs but there is massive amounts of money. We also looked at the range of opportunities that might be around in terms of pooling or sharing or starting to recycle money and that might realistically be the way forward”*

Arrangements for sharing budgets to be used to fund employment opportunities for looked after children and young people were seen as an important area of practice to be better developed. It was noted that despite the government’s commitment to joined up arrangements for children separate budgets for departments and services created barriers to the development of new initiatives:

*“If you are with the Leaving Care Team you don’t have the Youth Justice budget and the Youth Justice doesn’t hold the budget for the Young Offenders centres. It is how you bring that together.”*

The lack of an evidence base for the effectiveness of initiatives was cited as another barrier to accessing funding. Developing knowledge about where and how to identify and access funds to support employment schemes was seen as vital.

#### **8.4 Legal constraints**

Participants discussed a number of possible legal constraints in developing employment and specific apprenticeships for looked after children and care leavers. One issue concerned the level of pay that children in apprenticeships should receive. One authority was currently having difficulties because they paid a small sum to care leavers who participated in apprentice roles which was below the minimum wage although this pay was supplemented by payments for accommodation and upkeep. This led to issues summarised as follows:

*“The difficulty we have currently is we are having some discussions with revenue and customs around minimum wage and whether we are exempt from payments or should we pay minimum wage.”*

Another issue raised across the workshops concerned whether schemes could be limited to looked after children and care leavers or whether this contravened equal opportunities legislation. Further issues concerned whether an organisation could legally include a requirement to provide work opportunities in service contracts with external bodies.

#### **8.5 Inter-agency collaboration**

Inter-agency collaboration and inter-agency working were seen as crucial elements in providing employment opportunities. Workshop participants recognised that the involvement of a range of different services was required to ensure that the complex support needs of looked after children and young people were met in the context of employment or training. There was concern that the issue of employment opportunities for looked after children and young people was seen as the business of social care and Leaving Care Teams. One group suggested that the employability

sector needed to collaborate more closely with leaving care teams and that concepts and language needed to be shared – a finding which echoes the recommendations of the Scottish Executives study on employability services for disengaged young people (Scottish Executive 2005)

The configuration of organisations required to contribute to initiatives was thought to be very complex. One group in Workshop 3 reported that *“just in one authority we listed 9 or 10 [organisations] that we need to pull together”*. The organisations which were identified as needing to collaborate on planning and delivery of initiatives included: children’s services, adult social care, young offenders teams, a range of health services, learning and skills councils, Connexions, voluntary organisations, housing agencies, and welfare benefit organisations. Achieving sign-up from a wide range of partners was considered to be one of the functions of children’s trusts.

## **8.6 Engaging with the Private Sector and the Third Sector**

Engaging with the private sector was identified as an approach which could unlock a range of untapped resources. It was felt this might take a number of forms from direct provision of money, through to apprenticeship opportunities. For example one group suggested that:

*“some of the big companies do have resources around training and development opportunities but they do also have that social responsibility dimension and some of them do sign up to it pretty well and whether there is scope for tapping into that a bit more?”*

A key issue raised by many workshop participants was the potential for a regional scheme to assume a brokerage role with large private sector employers and trade unions in the North West.

It was also thought that that there was scope to build placements for looked after children and young people into local authorities’ service contracts (although that there were some concerns around the legality of this as discussed above), and it was noted that this approach might be promoted through *“some sort of regional steering on that to Chief Executives in the departments”*. This approach was also mentioned as relevant for local authorities’ relationships with the third sector. One group in Workshop Three felt that the third sector were well-equipped to support looked after children and young people in work placements and it was suggested that work opportunities for looked after children and young people could be built into service contracts with these organisations.

## **8.7 Addressing employment opportunities over time**

Early intervention with looked after children and young people to flag up the issue of employment and to raise career aspirations was seen as important. One group suggested that job preparation should begin in Year Seven at school. This was seen as a task that Virtual Schools for looked after children and young people (a new initiative recently discussed at the 2008 Education Matters Conference to provide a

body to overview the education of looked after children throughout an area) could take on:

*“I think the trick is to use the Virtual Schools now to get into Years 9, 10 and 11, to be working with those kids, identifying what the issues are and getting them introduced more rapidly to the services that can assist them with the employment and accommodation as well.”*

Introducing looked after children and young people to the relevant local authority services such as those for accommodation employment at an early stage was also seen as a useful strategy.

Developing and sustaining high aspirations in relation to employment was seen as a key task that needed to commence at an early stage in both the school and home settings. Training for carers and social workers to promote and embed high aspirations for the looked after young people in their care was identified in two workshops as a means of ensuring that they don't underestimate the capabilities of the young people. Workshop participants argued that carers and social workers needed to be better informed about the locally available training and employment opportunities. It was suggested that carers did not always establish education as a priority for looked after children and young people, perhaps because their own levels of educational achievement were low. One group in another workshop stressed that access to employment opportunities for looked after children and young people was closely linked with them gaining standard educational qualifications and there was a need to give a high priority to stability of educational placements in care plans.

The transition from children's to adult services is acknowledged as a period of high risk for vulnerable young people (Office of Deputy Prime Minister, 2005) and the problems posed by changes of workers which looked after children and young people experienced at the age of 15-16 and again at 18 were discussed at each of the workshops. Workshop members suggested that a greater synergy was needed between children's and adults' services. One group argued that the transition from children's to adult services was a response to the bureaucratic needs of the agencies rather than those of children and asserted:

*“We have to challenge our preconceptions about who should maintain that longer-term relationship with them.”* (Workshop Two).

The issue of continuity of support was discussed in the workshops and it was recognised that maintaining young people's key relationships could contribute to their success in training and employment. It was suggested that it would be more effective to have one person only to filter all the support. Also the entry into full employment can be an extended process and the need to maintain support for looked after children and young people seeking employment over time was emphasised:

*“We need to long-term track people to mid-twenties... in terms of knowing what actually happens to young people in the long-term. We only see a snapshot and deal with issues as they arise” (Workshop One)*

As seen in the schemes listed in Appendix 4, there are often age restrictions on the support and provision looked after children and young people are able to access post-16. Managing the other demands experienced on transition from the care system or the experience of young parenthood may lead some care leavers to delay entry into the job market. This group may consequently be too old to meet the age criteria set for employment schemes. Workshop participants commented on this and identified a need for flexibility over looked after children and young people and care leavers accessing support with employment:

## **8.8 Ring fencing schemes and opportunities**

Whilst the benefits of inclusion were recognised, positive discrimination or ring-fencing was discussed at all workshops as a way of ensuring that looked after children and young people were provided with sufficient high quality opportunities. One group described the effects of expanding a scheme to include a wider group of young people. This had resulted in looked after young people ‘losing out’ in the competition for opportunities:

*“because they are from a different starting point so they are so far down the pecking order that they are not actually getting a look in at the employment opportunities that are being found”.*

However, for some smaller authorities, prioritising looked after children and young people within a scheme focused on a wider group of young people appeared to be a more feasible approach:

*“When you look at some of the numbers that are involved in LAs...you will have more employment opportunities than you will have Looked After or care leavers, so it is a question of establishing a wider framework”.*

It was suggested at two workshops that providing opportunities where the young person was supernumerary to the required staffing levels was a helpful approach as it enabled organisations providing placements to manage issues such as unplanned absences or lateness for work more easily. A participant in Workshop One explained that this approach had proved constructive in placing young people in early years settings:

*“in terms of staffing ratios it is really important to early years that these kids don’t go in and become part of the staffing ratio because if that’s not working then all of a sudden then we don’t want these children on placement as they are a risk to us” (Workshop One)*

A group in Workshop Three also suggested that the opportunities provided to looked after children and young people and care leavers need to be closely linked with full employment; this might be achieved by extending opportunities or promoting the possibility of part-time work with the placement provider:

*“Really try to give them the experience that will link into their next steps, rather than just being an experience of work, to actually make it more real for them. And even afterwards with the employer, say is there any possibility of continued work experience or a Saturday or holiday job so they are keeping in contact.”* (Workshop Three)

## 8.9 Accommodation

The complexity of the support needs of looked after young people was commented on in all three workshops and it was noted that the range of services to support looked after children and young people into employment did not work together as a coherent whole. Workshop participants commented on the lack of clear pathways for young people to navigate the range of services providing support.

In particular the importance of accommodation was consistently highlighted in the workshops. Accommodation was identified as the most pressing priority for looked after children and young people themselves: For those young people who were not in stable accommodation, their priorities change and the chances of taking up training and employment opportunities were often restricted by their housing situation. One group suggested that the ideal solution was to guarantee accommodation for care leavers on employment schemes. *Supporting People* funding was identified as having potential to fund the accommodation. Support might be of a practical nature, for example, one group suggested that accommodation providers could support participation in employment schemes by ensuring that the young person was up early enough to get to a placement.

## 8.10 Dedicated Local Co-ordinators

Workshop participants felt that the job of promoting and developing employment opportunities was often the responsibility of several people. Thus one group suggested that development is limited because *“people are busy doing their day job”*. One workshop argued the need for a dedicated coordinator for looked after children and young people employment at the local level. However, in another workshop it was suggested that for smaller authorities sub-regional collaboration might be a more appropriate strategy:

*“I am not sure we would actually have the volume to keep somebody full-time engaged in this so we would have to give them something else to do and then they wouldn’t dedicate, etc. So we feel that there is real mileage in small clusters or pairs of authorities sharing that resource.”*

The role envisaged for such a coordinator would not just be working to develop placements but also to link across agencies, deal with legal and contractual issues such as terms and conditions of service and so on.

## 8.11 Children's Participation

At all three workshops the need was highlighted to develop more effective consultation with looked after children and care leavers and engage them in the development of schemes. Many participants said that they had arrangements for consultation with those in care which worked with varying degrees of success but that there was a greater problem in engaging with care leavers although the positive role of leaving care teams was recognised.

Whilst there were felt to be pockets of good practice overall there was still much to be done. One example given was an authority which was engaging a care leaver to be part of the team that was planning and delivering their service – this was a looked after young person who had previously undertaken work experience in the Leaving Care Team. Another authority reported that they had participated in the What Makes the Difference Programme discussed in section 4.4 above with a number of children involved in the peer research project which highlighted young people's views on their needs for support.

## 8.12 Regional Models

Workshop participants generally considered that it was too early to consider developing any regional scheme as there was still much that needed to be done at a local level. As one group put it:

*“We feel like we have to get our own house in order first and be very clear about what we were doing”* (Workshop One)

However, it was considered that the region might have a role in developing models or templates that could be implemented locally. For example, a regional agreement on pay and conditions for young people participating in employment schemes might be useful and save time and effort by each authority having to design and negotiate these terms for a scheme.

Workshop Two (which was attended by LTP stakeholders who had more experience of shared models) suggested that the model could extend beyond guidance on terms and conditions:

*“What we felt we would like to get out of the region was a single model or a single template that would cover not just pay but learning and development. So a single course content designed at regional level that could be delivered locally.”* (Workshop Two)

In two of the workshops it was suggested that a regional coordinator might be useful though it was stated that *“you don't want some massive structure set up at regional level, you really just want a paid coordinator at that level.”*

## 9 Summary and Recommendations

This section summarises the findings of the research and makes key recommendations. This research provides a map of the current situation of services for promoting sustainable employment opportunities for children and young people who have been looked after across the North West of England. It shows that, whilst there is a good deal of concern and commitment, there is a long way to go if the corporate parenting that these young people deserve is to be provided. Services and support to help them gain a real job are in their infancy despite the long history of evidence of poor outcomes for a significant group of children who have been looked after. The searches for schemes for care leavers showed that there are patches of developing practice but the overall situation in the North West seems no worse than that found across the country and there is evidence of an awakening to the importance of this issue as seen in the plans of the Learn Together Partnership to provide support across a significant part of the region. Alongside this research, a regional working group has been working to identify and act on the learning from this research. The linkage of action and research owes much to this group who not only proposed this area as a research priority but also gave their commitment to ensure that any findings would be translated into real opportunities for young people. This makes writing recommendations more difficult as many of the findings are influencing the actions of this group and of other participants in the research.

### 9.1 Current situation in the North West

A key aim of this research is to map the current situation in relation to the availability of employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers in the North West and to examine the plans of authorities across the region. This was done using interviews, a questionnaire, and workshops that have engaged people working in 21 of the Region's 22 areas. The following recommendations come from the research which shows the need for action to be taken at local authority and at regional level. A key message that came from the workshops was the need for local action. At the same time ways in which this could be guided and promoted by work at regional and sub-regional level by the full range of agencies and bodies responsible for children were identified.

Both this and previous research highlight the need for a wide range of support for young people who have been looked after. Whilst efforts are being made to improve educational outcomes there are still a very significant proportion of looked after children who will not be able to engage with schemes aimed at the wider population and there is a danger that in generic schemes the needs of looked after children will be unrecognised. Whilst the aim should be for apprenticeships and other educational schemes to meet the needs of all children and young people, this is likely to be a very long term goal. In the meantime, there is a need for specific schemes for children who have been looked after as well as extra support for those who are able to participate in generic provision.

*Recommendation 1: Specialist schemes are needed for employment opportunities for looked after young people and those who have left care as well as support mechanisms for those who can engage in mainstream services.*

A key issue is that any schemes lead to ‘real jobs’ for these vulnerable young people. As corporate parents, the children’s sector needs to take a lead in this. One possibility is through the provision of apprenticeships which lead to posts within the agencies involved in providing children’s services. Historically, such apprenticeships involved the use of supernumerary posts with a view to long term employment. This aspect of corporate responsibility runs across all the functions of the agencies involved. For example, local authorities could provide opportunities across the whole range of their services.

*Recommendation 2: Consideration should be given by organisations involved in providing children’s services to provide apprenticeships specifically for young people who have been looked after.*

All authorities, with the exception of one, were found to be involved in the provision of employment opportunities for looked after children and young people. This suggests that there is a wide range of experience and knowledge to be shared within and between local authorities in the North West.

*Recommendation 3: : A mechanism is needed to share the growing experience of providing employment opportunities. This research provides a map of what is currently available and contacts for projects. These should continue to be updated and published and this responsibility could be assumed at regional level.*

While the employment needs of looked after children and young people were a priority issue for research participants, there was felt to be a need for a wider development of strategy and ownership of initiatives within authorities. Commitment by chief executives and members to plans and projects was seen as a key means of obtaining this. This needs to be across the range of agencies involved with young people and in particular should include education and connexions. The regional working party running alongside this research is already seeking to identify ‘champions’ to promote this area of work and is planning a summit to involve senior officers and members from the range of agencies involved. This work will need to be taken further to establish a vision in each local authority area for this work.

Strategies aimed at meeting the full range of education, employment and training needs of looked after children and young people and care leavers across the whole of an authority appeared to be lacking and there appeared to be no comprehensive schemes designed to cater for this. Similarly, there was no evidence that assessments of the extent of local need were undertaken and the information currently collected on individuals for a range of purposes appeared to be underused and under-analysed. A key issue is that the strategy should cover children and young people residing in the area regardless of which local authority is responsible for them. Respondents also identified a need for mainstream longer-term financial support for schemes and initiatives as short-term funding might be helpful to initiate these services but the schemes will be required for the foreseeable future, just as foster care and other resources for looked after children require a long term commitment.

*Recommendation 4: Each local authority, along with its partners, should develop an education, employment and training strategy to cover all young people in their area who have been looked after. This should include plans for better information systems; communication to staff at all levels of their responsibilities in this area; and mechanisms to provide mainstream funding for services.*

A key problem identified by participants was that responsibility in local areas for this work was either split between a number of people or was one small part of a busy person's job. The survey found only one full-time person solely responsible for coordinating all initiatives within an authority. It was considered that stronger ownership would be achieved where there was someone whose job it was to coordinate the strategy for this work. Where an authority has only a small number of looked after children, such a role may need to be shared with neighbouring authorities. Indeed, two authorities made plans for developing such a post across their boundaries at one of the workshops.

*Recommendation 5: Each local authority area should have a coordinator whose sole responsibility is to develop sustainable employment opportunities.*

Meeting the support needs of young people participating in schemes was identified as crucial to their success and these support needs were seen to be wide-ranging and complex. Likewise, respondents stressed the need for the opportunities offered to be congruent with young people's interests and expectations. Both these findings emphasise the importance of adequate consultation with looked after children and young people and care leavers about employment and training opportunities. While some consultation had been undertaken, there was clearly scope for consultation that was both wider and more in-depth. This issue was recognised by the regional working group who are planning to have a summit for children and young people to follow the summit for chief officers.

*Recommendation 6: There needs to be detailed consultation with looked after children and care leavers to identify their priorities and the best way to meet them*

The literature review along with the respondents in this research identified the need to relieve young people of concerns about their accommodation if they are to engage successfully in gaining employment. This would require further improvement in the joint actions between housing suppliers and departments for children's services as well as financial support for the accommodation of young people who actively engage in employment and training.

*Recommendation 7: A key requirement is the further development of stable accommodation for care leavers who participate in training and employment opportunities.*

It was felt that developments at the local level could be enhanced by action on a regional or sub-regional level. The Learn Together Partnership shows that sub-regional coordination is possible and provides some indications for a process for regional initiatives. A key issue beyond providing stimulus and leadership discussed above is for certain ‘sticky’ problems to be resolved by advice or guidance at the regional level. This would include such issues as recommendations on a pay structure; mechanisms to engage major contractors and developers in providing employment opportunities as part of their social responsibility; and advice on dealing with issues of equal opportunities amongst much else. This advice might take the form of a toolkit for developing employment services

*Recommendation 8: A regional toolkit should be developed to provide advice and guidance on best practice in developing employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers.*

A major issue is the need to involve employers in the private sector in providing opportunities for young people who have been looked after. This should particularly involve large employers. The workshops felt that a key role at regional level should be to provide brokerage with large employers to gain their commitment to providing employment opportunities across the region.

*Recommendation 9: A scheme for brokerage with large employers should be developed at regional level.*

The research highlighted that the attitudes and values of carers about education and employment were key factors in the motivation of children. The children’s workforce needs to be appraised of their role in raising children’s aspirations for and preparing them to do better in education and employment. However, many members of the workforce in both fostering and community homes have negative experiences of education and, according to participants in workshops, a significant proportion of foster parents are themselves unemployed. This issue of valuing education and employment for looked after children needs to be integrated into the training and education of these key personnel

*Recommendation 10: Training and education at all levels for carers needs to promote the importance of education and employment for looked after children*

## 10 Conclusion

Young people who have been looked after are particularly at risk of becoming socially excluded. For a significant proportion of children, their experiences in their birth families are at best not ameliorated by the care they receive from their statutory parents. Many leave care to become isolated, unemployed and to experience a range of other problems. This research has shown that there is considerable enthusiasm across the agencies in the North West to try to provide services to break, what for some, is a spiral into unemployment, homelessness and despair. The literature search has shown that, whilst nationally there are pockets of developing practice, there is as yet no substantial body of evidence on what works best. The recommendations above stem from the research evidence so far available, examples of best practice in the North West and across England, and from the engagement with this research of staff from 21 of the 22 authorities in the North West. They offer a positive step towards achieving the careful management of services for these vulnerable young people. Many of those who contributed to this study were addressing the problem and attempting the solution identified by Dixon (2008):

*“Many of those engaged in post-care participation in education, employment or training reported casual or temporary employment or low-level, short term training and education courses and few were free from financial difficulties. This suggests that while encouraging and enabling participation is an important priority for leaving care services, it needs to be carefully managed so that young people are engaged in something which is meaningful, fulfilling and able to financially sustain their independent status.” (Dixon p.213)*

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## Appendix 1 Research instruments

### Interview Schedule for Learn Together Partnership Assessment

#### Creating employment opportunities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in the North West

#### Telephone Interview regarding the Learn Together Partnership

Have you read the information sheet?

Do you need any clarification about issues to do with the research before the interview starts?

Are you happy for this interview to be recorded?

#### **About the interviewee and his/her authority**

- 1 Which council do you represent on the Learn Together Partnership?
  
- 2 How long has your authority been associated with the Learn Together Partnership?
  
- 3 How does your current post link to creating employment opportunities for LAC?  
Prompts: Approximately how much of your time is spent on this issue?
  
- 4 Has the local authority developed a policy or strategy on employment opportunities for LAC?  
Prompts: When developed? Developed as a result of LTP? Can we have a copy? Main elements and timescales?

#### **About the partnership**

##### ***For partners***

- 5 How has your authority's association with the LTP helped to plan or develop employment opportunities for LAC?  
Prompts: What does the partnership offer? How would you describe your authority's relationship with the other members of the LTP? In your opinion, what are the strengths of the partnership? In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the partnership?

##### ***For Coordinators***

- 5 How has the LTP helped to plan or develop employment opportunities for LAC across the 6 areas?  
Prompts: What does the partnership offer? How would you describe the relationship between the members of the LTP? In your opinion, what are the strengths of the partnership? In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the partnership?

## What are the plans?

6 Please can you describe any schemes your local authority plans to develop for LAC's employment?

Prompts: Please describe the key elements of the scheme. Timescale for implementation? Number of places? What agencies are involved? Which LAC are covered by the plan? Linked to Diploma? Linked to integrated children's worker? Limited to children's workforce? Including work in private sector? Will it lead to permanent contract? What is the stage of implementation? How have looked after children been involved?

## Implementation

7 Do you have any schemes already in place which might contribute to training and employment opportunities for LAC?

Prompts: Please describe the key elements of the scheme. What agencies are involved? Which LAC can use the scheme? Number of Places? Linked to Diploma? Linked to integrated children's worker? Limited to children's workforce? Including work in private sector? Will it lead to permanent contract?

## Support needed

8 What support does your authority need in order to move forward with any plans?

Prompt: from whom? what kind of support? What are the barriers?  
What is needed to achieve sustainability?

## Future

9 If the partnership was extended to the whole of the North-West, what do you foresee as the advantages of this?

Prompts: What disadvantages might there be? What advice would you give to other authorities planning on setting up a similar partnership of Children and Young People's services?

10 What is the long-term vision for employment opportunities for LAC?

Do you have any other comments?

## **Information Sheet for Key Contacts Participating in Survey**

### **Research Information Sheet: Creating employment opportunities for Looked After Children**

The Children's Workforce Development Council in the North West has commissioned the Social Work department at UCLan to examine where Local Authorities in the North West are up to in realising a vision to create relevant and sustainable employment opportunities for Looked After Children. The Learn Together Partnership has a proposal around this and the first stage of UCLan's approach will be to analyse this for all Local Authorities. This will provide an assessment of the progress that has been made in Merseyside and any future plans. It will enable other Local Authorities in the North West to plan and implement employment opportunities for Looked After Children and identify the support they need to move forward.

The research is taking place between March and May 2008 and will involve the following four stages. **We are asking you to contribute to Stages 3 and 4 of the research.**

1. A review of literature on work aimed at promoting relevant and sustainable employment opportunities for Looked After Children.
2. Gaining an understanding of the vision and plans of the Learn Together Partnership and a description of what has been achieved to date. This will be achieved through a series of meetings and interviews with Coordinators of the Learn Together Partnership (LTP), and up to four local stakeholders representing different authorities.
3. Assessment of position in 22 local areas in the North-West region through a postal questionnaire to a key contact followed up by telephone interviews.
4. A series of half day workshops for key contacts and wider partners from across the North-West region. The workshops will: a) present our findings relating to the Learn Together partnership; b) present the assessment of the overall position in the region; c) present best practices identified in the literature research; d) provide a forum to promote this area of work; and e) gather information on the commitment and appetite for a regional scheme.

It is intended that the work will not only provide a detailed assessment of the current situation in the region but also provide opportunities to take the next steps in developing this important work.

**You have been identified by the workforce lead(s) in your Local Authority as the key contact for this research.**

We would be very grateful if you would support the research by:

- Completing a questionnaire and returning it by email, fax or post, or alternatively, arranging a telephone interview with our researcher, Jo Price, who will complete the questionnaire with you over the phone.
- Sending us any policy or strategy documents relating to this area.
- Attending a half-day workshop (during the week beginning 21<sup>st</sup> April or the week beginning 28<sup>th</sup> April).
- Inviting key partners from your area to the workshop.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time or decline to answer any of the questions. Questionnaires returned to us will be treated confidentially and will be securely stored at the University of Central Lancashire in line with data protection legislation. Although we will not refer to you by name in our final report, we cannot guarantee anonymity as you may be identifiable by any reference to your local area.

The timescale for the research is short and we would appreciate it if you would **return the questionnaire to Jo Price at JPrice4@uclan.ac.uk or at the address below no later than Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008. Or you can email or ring Jo (07709 348287) to arrange a telephone interview.** We plan to use your views and suggestions as the first step in improving employment prospects for Looked After Children across the region. Many thanks for your help.

**Research Team:**

Jo Price, Researcher  
Andy Bilson, Professor of Social Work Research  
Nicky Stanley, Professor of Social Work

**Contact Details:**

Social Work Department, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE

Tel: 01772 893838

## Survey Questionnaire

# Employment opportunities for Looked After Children in the North West

## Questionnaire for key contacts across the North West region

You will find detailed information about the research in the information sheet sent with this questionnaire. If you need more clarification about issues to do with the research before completing this questionnaire please contact the research team – their contact details can be found on the information sheet.

### Your contact details

We would like to collect your contact details so that we are able to contact those of you who agree to participate in a follow-on telephone interview. Your details will also be needed to organise the workshops. Your contact details will be stored separately to your responses to this questionnaire.

Name	
Job title	
Office number	
Mobile number	

### Overview of Questionnaire

The questionnaire has five sections:

- Section One: Information on needs of Looked After Children
- Section Two: Policy, Strategy and Plans
- Section Three: What is already in place?
- Section Four: What are the plans?
- Section Five: Any other comments

### Background Information

What is your role in, or relationship to, creating employment opportunities for Looked After Children (LAC)?

## Section One: Information on needs of Looked After Children

This section explores information you have gathered about the needs of LAC for employment opportunities.

1.1 Has there been any consultation in your area with LAC in relation to creating employment opportunities?

No  **Please go to Q1.2**  
 Yes  **Please go to Q1.1.1**



**IF YES:**

1.1.1 What did you learn from the consultation with LAC?

**IF NO:**

1.1.2 Is any consultation planned?

Yes  No

1.2 Do you collect any information on the need for employment opportunities for LAC in your area?

No  **Please go to Section Two**  
 Yes  **Please go to Q1.2.1**



**IF YES:**

1.2.1 What is the source of the information?

Child Care reviews   
 Local research   
 Management information systems   
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1.2.2 Please give details of the information (if preferable you may attach copies)

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

## Section Two: Policy, Strategy and Plans

This section asks you about any policies, strategies or plans in your Local Authority relating to creating employment opportunities for LAC.

2.1 Has your Local Authority developed a policy, strategy or plan related to creating employment opportunities for LAC? (please tick)

No  **Please go to Section Three**  
Yes  **Please go to Q2.1.1**



**IF YES:**

**Please can you send a copy of the relevant document(s) with this questionnaire.**

2.1.1 Is the policy, strategy or plan focused on developing....?  
(please tick all that apply)

Apprenticeships  **Please go to Q2.2**  
Work placements  **Please go to Q2.2**  
Another type of scheme  **Please go to Q2.1.2**



**IF ANOTHER TYPE OF SCHEME:**

2.1.2 Please describe the type of scheme.

2.2 Does the policy, strategy or plan link the development of LAC employment opportunities to plans for the 14-19 diploma(s)?

No  **Please go to Section Three**  
Yes  **Please go to Q2.2.1**



**IF YES:**

2.2.1 Please describe the link.

### Section Three: What is already in place?

This section asks about any employment schemes your Local Authority already has which involve Looked After Children (LAC).

3.1 Do you have any schemes **already in place** in your area, which contribute to training and employment opportunities for LAC? (please tick)

No  **Please go to Section Four**

Yes  **Please go to Q3.1.1**



**IF YES:**

Please provide details of any schemes. If there is more than one scheme, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to the questionnaire.

3.1.1 What is the name of the scheme?

3.1.2 Who are the target young people involved in the scheme?

LAC only

LAC and other young people

3.1.3 Which LAC are involved in the scheme? (please tick all that apply)

LAC in Local Authority

LAC placed outside Local Authority

LAC from other Local Authorities

Not sure

3.1.4 Please provide a brief description of the scheme.

(If there are any more schemes, please attach an additional sheet)

## Section Four: What are the plans?

This section asks about any plans your Local Authority has in relation to creating employment opportunities for LAC.

4.1 Please can you describe any employment schemes your Local Authority **plans to develop** for LAC specifically?

4.2 Who does your Local Authority plan to involve in the employment scheme(s)? (please tick one only)

- LAC only
- LAC and other young people

4.3 Which LAC does your Local Authority plan to involve in the scheme(s)? (please tick all that apply)

- LAC in Local Authority
- LAC placed outside Local Authority
- LAC from other Local Authorities
- Not sure

4.4 Is special support envisaged for LAC on the scheme(s)?

No  **Please go to Q4.5**  
Yes  **Please go to Q4.4.1** 

**IF YES:**  
4.4.1 What support is envisaged?

4.5 Which areas of employment will the scheme(s) focus on?  
(please tick one only)

A wide range of jobs within the LA   
A wide range of jobs including other employers   
Children’s Workforce only within the LA   
Children’s Workforce including other agencies  

4.5.1 What are the reasons for this choice?

4.6 What progress, if any, has been made implementing any plans?

4.7 What timescale (approximately) is envisaged for implementing any plans?

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Within a year                           | [ ] |
| More than one year but less than two    | [ ] |
| More than two years but less than three | [ ] |
| Three years or more                     | [ ] |
| Unsure                                  | [ ] |

4.8 What kind of support does your Authority need in order to move forward with any plans and from whom?

## Section Five: any other comments

5.1 What are the key issues faced in providing employment schemes for LAC?

5.2 Do you have any other comments?

5.3 Are you willing to take part in a follow-up telephone interview taking place in the next month?

Yes  No

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

Please return the questionnaire with any **relevant policies or documents** you are willing to share so that it arrives no later than **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008**.

**YOU CAN EITHER EMAIL, FAX OR POST THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Postal Address: Jo Price, Social Work Department, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE.

Email Address: jprice4@uclan.ac.uk

Tel: 01772 893838

Mobile: 07709 348287

Fax: 01772 892974

**Creating employment opportunities for Looked After Children in the North West**

**Programme for Workshop 1**

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008  
Harris Park Conference Centre  
Preston**

13.00 – 13.15	Welcome by Professor Andy Bilson
13.15 – 14.00	Creating Work Opportunities for LAC in the North West - Other models in England - What is currently happening in the North West - The research study
14.00 – 14.20	Tea and Coffee break
14.20 – 15.00	Taking the agenda forward, small group work in Local Authority groupings
15.00 – 15.40	Feedback from each Local Authority group.
15.40 – 16.00	Plenary and discussion

**Research Team:**

Jo Price, Researcher  
Andy Bilson, Professor of Social Work Research  
Nicky Stanley, Professor of Social Work

**Contact Details:**

Social Work Department, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE

Tel: 01772 893838  
Mobile: 07709 348287

## Appendix 2 Tables and information used in the report

**Table 4:** Number of LAC aged 16 and over looked after on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 and number of LAC who left care in year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007

	<i>Children aged 16 and over looked after on 31.3.07</i>	<i>Children aged 16 and over leaving care 01.04.06 - 31.03.07</i>
North West total	1,630	1,010
Blackburn with Darwen	40	25
Blackpool	25	25
Bolton	50	35
Bury	50	25
Cheshire	80	50
Cumbria	90	60
Halton	20	10
Knowsley	35	25
Lancashire	210	130
Liverpool	135	65
Manchester	325	190
Oldham	45	30
Rochdale	40	25
Salford	100	50
Sefton	40	35
St Helens	35	25
Stockport	55	30
Tameside	45	25
Trafford	35	30
Warrington	20	25
Wigan	60	30
Wirral	90	60

*Source: DSCF 2007*

**Table 5 Children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years (in their 17th year) by activity**

	All children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years <sup>1,2</sup>	Activity								Local authority not in touch with child
		Local authority in touch with child								
		In higher education i.e. studies beyond A level		In education other than higher education		In training or employment		Not in education, training or employment		
		Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Illness/disability	other reasons	
<b>England</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>60</b>
Blackburn with Darwen	20	0	0	-	0	5	0	0	5	-
Blackpool	10	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	0
Bolton	20	0	0	-	-	-	0	5	10	0
Bury	20	0	0	-	-	10	0	0	-	0
Cheshire	55	-	0	10	-	15	-	-	20	-
Cumbria	45	-	0	-	0	10	-	-	15	10
Halton	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Knowsley	15	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Lancashire	120	-	0	25	-	25	-	15	35	10

**Table 5 Children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years (in their 17th year) by activity (continued)**

	All children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years <sup>1,2</sup>	Activity								Local authority not in touch with child
		Local authority in touch with child								
		In higher education i.e. studies beyond A level		In education other than higher education		In training or employment		Not in education, training or employment		
		Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	illness/disability	other reasons	
Liverpool	75	-	-	15	10	15	10	5	15	-
Manchester	115	5	0	20	-	20	20	-	30	10
Oldham	30	-	0	-	0	-	5	-	10	0
Rochdale	15	-	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	0
Salford	40	-	0	5	-	15	-	-	10	-
Sefton	20	0	0	-	0	10	-	0	5	-
St Helens	15	-	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
Stockport	30	-	0	-	0	5	-	5	5	-
Tameside	20	-	0	-	0	5	-	-	5	0
Trafford	15	-	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
Warrington	10	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0
Wigan	30	-	0	5	-	10	0	-	10	0
Wirral	40	-	0	10	0	15	0	0	15	-

Source DSCF 2007

**Table 6 Children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years (in their 17th year) by accommodation**

All children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years	Accommodation												Local authority not in touch with child
	Local authority in touch with child												
	With parents or relatives	Community home	Semi-independent transitional accommodation	Supported lodgings	Ordinary lodgings	Foyers	Independent living	Emergency accommodation	In custody	Bed and breakfast	Other accommodation		
<b>England</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>
Blackburn with Darwen	20	-	0	0	-	-	0	10	0	0	0	0	-
Blackpool	10	-	0	-	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0
Bolton	20	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	-	0
Bury	20	-	0	-	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	-	0
Cheshire	60	10	-	0	10	10	-	20	0	-	-	10	-
Cumbria	40	-	0	-	-	0	0	20	0	0	-	-	10
Halton	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Knowsley	20	-	0	0	0	-	0	10	0	0	-	0	0
Lancashire	120	10	10	-	10	10	-	60	0	0	-	-	10
Liverpool	80	20	0	0	-	10	0	30	-	0	-	0	-
Manchester	120	20	-	20	0	20	10	40	-	0	-	0	10
Oldham	30	-	0	10	-	0	0	20	-	0	-	0	0

**Table 6 Children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years (in their 17th year) by accommodation (continued)**

All children now aged 19 years who were looked after on 1 April 2004 then aged 16 years <sup>1,2</sup>	Accommodation												Local authority not in touch with child
	Local authority in touch with child												
	With parents or relatives	Community home	Semi-independent transitional accommodation	Supported lodgings	Ordinary lodgings	Foyers	Independent living	Emergency accommodation	In custody	Bed and breakfast	Other accommodation		
Rochdale	20	-	0	-	-	0	0	10	0	0	-	-	0
Salford	40	10	-	-	0	-	-	20	0	0	0	0	-
Sefton	20	-	0	-	-	-	0	10	0	0	0	-	-
St Helens	10	10	-	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-
Stockport	30	-	-	-	-	-	0	10	-	0	0	-	-
Tameside	20	10	-	0	0	-	-	10	0	0	-	-	0
Trafford	20	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	-	-	-
Warrington	10	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
Wigan	30	-	-	0	-	-	-	10	-	0	-	-	0
Wirral	40	10	10	-	-	-	0	10	-	0	-	-	-

Source DSCF 2007

## **Appendix 3 - Employment schemes for looked after children and young people and care leavers in England**

### **Devon County Council**

Devon County Council has been providing a general apprenticeship scheme for 16-24 years olds for two years. There are plans to offer care leavers places on the scheme in September 2008 and the council are working with the Care Leavers Team and the Children in Care Team to implement this. There are eight placements available each year across the six directorates, wherever an opportunity is identified. It has not yet been decided how many places will be offered to care leavers, or if they will be prioritised. However, care leavers will be provided with extra support during the scheme in the form of a mentor. Connexions and the Leaving Care Team will be involved in identifying who may be interested in the scheme. The apprentices will be supported to find a permanent position in the council when they complete their apprenticeship.

The council is focussed on providing more entry to work schemes to meet their strategic plan of employing young people to compensate for the ageing workforce. The addition of care leavers to the scheme enables the council to meet their corporate parenting responsibility.

Contact: Tracey Holding (Apprentice Assessor/Coordinator)  
Tel: 01392 688208  
Email: [tracey.holding@devon.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.holding@devon.gov.uk)

### **Ealing Council**

Ealing have a mentoring scheme for looked after children and young people and care leavers. Older care leavers who are at university or are employed, mentor looked after children and young people in Years 10 and 11 to inspire and support them. They meet weekly at the Young Persons Centre (a one-stop shop for looked after children and young people and care leavers aged 11 and over) and engage in activities around career options and study support. A care leaver graduate coordinates the scheme and is supported by the post 16 teacher dedicated looked after children and young people teacher.

Ealing also has an apprenticeship which is for young people aged 16 to 23 who would have difficulty accessing employment. It is run by a local agency, Richmond Ways to Work. There are 100 full-time apprenticeships available over two years, 80 of which are in the local business sector and sourced by the regeneration team. The apprentices receive £130 a week and are supported by a trained workplace mentor.

Ealing council provides work experience opportunities to looked after children and young people usually at age 14, however, this can be set up at any age. The dedicated Year 10 and 11 looked after children and young people teachers coordinate this.

Contact: Marcella Phelan (Asst Director of Children and Families)  
Tel: 020 8825 8848  
Email: [phelanm@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:phelanm@ealing.gov.uk)

### **Haringey Council**

Haringey Council ran a 'Steps to Employability' Scheme between 2004 and 2005 which involved care leavers aged between 16 and 21 undertaking four week work placements across the Council. They received an allowance of £40.00 per week in addition to their regular subsistence payments. Care leavers were then supported to move onto other provision afterwards. In the two years it ran, the scheme involved just less than 30 care leavers but is currently on hold due to resource issues.

Contact: Maudline Sweeney (Education/Training/Employment Adviser)  
Tel: 020 8489 1634  
Email: [maudline.sweeney@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:maudline.sweeney@haringey.gov.uk)

### **Islington Council**

Project Progress in Islington is a re-engagement project working with 320 care leavers. The project is funded by LSC ESF grant from 2006-8 with hopes to secure more funding from Deutchebank this year, which will include a Virtual Head. Care leavers attend a one week course which enables them to gain about two recognised qualifications (VRQs) in various subjects such as customer service, and the course also covers employability skills. These quick successes help to re-engage care leavers and help to motivate care leavers to pursue further qualifications and/or employment. After the week course an individual learning plan and destination plan is designed. Young people are also supported to become involved in the Career Start Programme.

The Career Start project began in 2005/6 and is funded by the council as part of their corporate parenting duty. It involves work experience and work placements within the council. Each year 20 posts are ring-fenced for care leavers.

Contact: Leslie Rowe (Entry to Employment, Education or Training Advisor)  
Tel: 0207 5278552  
Email: [Leslie.rowe@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Leslie.rowe@islington.gov.uk)  
Website: <http://www.shaftesbury.org.uk/about/>

### **Lewisham Council**

Lewisham provide two mentoring schemes to Looked After Children and care leavers. One for Looked After Children aged 10 to 15 years and another for Looked After Children and care leavers aged 16-24 years old.

Mentors are recruited from the local community and commit to mentor a young person for a minimum of a year. Mentors are involved in a formal selection process, completing an application form, attending an individual interview, and taking part in a group selection day. Mentors then undertake 30 hours of training. The mentoring relationship is one-to-one and led by the young person. The support given is individual and needs-led. The younger looked after children and young people may be given support with

homework projects or support to access extra-curricula activities. Older looked after children and young people and care leavers may receive support with employability in partnership with the careers team, or the support may focus on building their confidence or supporting them to become more independent. The mentoring relationship enables looked after children and young people and care leavers to build trust in an adult relationship and have a consistent relationship.

Contact: Lee McDaid (Leaving Care Mentoring Scheme Project Manager)  
Tel: 0208 314 8083  
Email: lee.mcdaid@lewisham.gov.uk

Lewisham is in its second year of running a traineeship scheme for looked after children and young people and care leavers. Jobs in the council are ring-fenced for looked after children and young people and care leavers who are not in a position to go to university and do not necessarily have any qualifications. The traineeship is for one year and trainees spend one day a week at college studying for a formal qualification. Trainees are paid on the council pay scale. Posts have been in regeneration, admin and the children and young people's service but the council is looking to expand the opportunities to the entire council. Towards the end of traineeships the Leaving Care Team provide trainees with assistance to search for jobs.

Contact: Sue Pearman (Careers Adviser, Leaving Care Team)  
Tel: 0208 314 7832  
Email: sue.pearman@lewisham.gov.uk

### **Lincolnshire County Council**

Lincolnshire County Council began a Care Leavers' Apprenticeship Scheme (CLAS) in April 2006. The scheme supports care leavers to undertake an apprenticeship in either the county council, district councils or with private employers. All apprentices are enrolled on an NVQ sourced by the CLAS coordinator for one day a week. To be eligible for the scheme, applicants must have the ability to achieve an NVQ Level two. The apprentices are employed by Lincolnshire County Council and receive a salary of £120.00 a week or £6,256.80 a year. The apprentices working for private companies also have a full contract of employment with Lincolnshire County Council and are effectively 'seconded out' to private employers.

The CLAS coordinator is involved in identifying young people's vocational preferences and abilities, setting up placements, ensuring contracts of employment are in place, providing preparation for work training, and working with the young people, workplace supervisors and workplace mentors during the placement.

There was an article on this scheme in the Guardian on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and it is quoted in the DfES 2007 White Paper Care Matters: Time for a change on page 114.

Contact: Helen Stonebridge (ETE Co-ordinator)  
Tel: 01529 309052  
Email: helen.stonebridge@barnardos.org.uk

### **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**

The Get Real Team at Rotherham Borough Council ran a 'Teenagers to work' Scheme but this is currently suspended due to the coordinator not in post any longer. The scheme offered 30 day work placements to Looked After Children aged 15-19 years old. The aim of the work placement was to develop the skill-set of Looked After Children and to provide experience for their CV. Services involved in setting up the work placements were the Get Real Team, Bridges (Leaving Care Team) and Strategic Human Resources. Steps were taken to ensure that any young person commencing a placement is ready for the work environment and that potential needs and risk are identified.

Contact: Martin Smith (Get Real Team Manager)  
Tel: 01709 334612  
Email: martin.smith@rotherham.gov.uk

### **Sheffield City Council**

Sheffield City Council began a pilot apprenticeship scheme in March 2007. Four care leavers began a three year apprenticeship, being paid at market wages, with guaranteed employment on completion. The scheme was developed very quickly between December 2006 and March 2007. The scheme is run in partnership with Sheffield homes and Kier Sheffield (building maintenance company), representatives of which sit on the coordinating group along with representatives from Children and Young Peoples Directorate. The coordinating group are responsible for developing and implementing a combined package of support for the apprentices.

Contact: Mark Barrett (Permanence and Through Care Manager)  
Tel: 0114 203 9062  
Email: mark.barratt@sheffield.gov.uk

### **Southwark Council**

Southwark run an employability programme, a six-week course for Looked After Children and care leavers aged 16-21 referred by the Adolescent and Aftercare Team. The programme includes two weeks work experience, two half-day training sessions on confidence building and two half-day sessions on life coaching, delivered by external trainers. The Employability Programme was funded by NRF funding, but has recently been mainstreamed into the Children Looked After Business Unit.

The council also supports looked after children and young people and care leavers to access the council's apprenticeship programme. In 2007, seven looked after children and young people were accepted onto the apprenticeship programme, which can last for 12-18 months. The programme partners include Peckham Job Centre Plus, Work Directions, City Brokerage, Connexions, Red Kite and independent life coaches. During the placement, the apprentice receives the following support: an induction; an individual personal development plan; employability programme support; basic skills development (literacy, numeracy and IT skills); and mentoring and coaching, as appropriate.

Contact: John Howard  
Tel: 0207 525 1253  
Email: john.howard@southwark.gov.uk

### **Stoke on Trent Council**

Stoke on Trent have an employment policy for children in care and care leavers which outlines opportunities the council offers including giving Looked After Children priority for work experience in Years 9 and 11, providing care leavers with 26 weeks paid employment, and giving Looked After Children and care leavers priority for interviews by guaranteeing them an interview provided they meet the essential requirements of the person specification.

The policy states that each directorate will give at least one care leaver at any given time the opportunity to undertake a 26 week work placement which includes a placement supervisor and opportunities to access skill development. This is done by recruiting to a permanent vacancy on a temporary basis for six months or from existing budgets. Near the end of the placement the Looked After child or care leaver will be supported to undertake job seeking activity which includes support with applications, letters, writing a CV.

Contact: Caroline Coldock  
Tel: 01782 237791  
Email: caroline.coldock@stoke.gov.uk

### **Wakefield Council**

Wakefield have the Signpost Project, which is delivered by Barnardos. The project supports care leavers aged 16 to 21 years old through transition. Each young person is assigned a worker who deals with other agencies and individuals. The young people are supported to access education, training and employment, acquire and maintain their own accommodation and develop successful relationships and social skills. A Connexions Personal Advisor is seconded to work within the team.

Contact: Melvin Flower (Employability Support Worker)  
Tel: 01924 304539  
Email: melvin.flower@barnardos.org.uk

## Appendix 4 Employment Projects and Schemes for looked after children and young people and care leavers in the North West

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Blackburn with Darwen	Teenagers to work Scheme (currently suspended)	Work placements	Care Leavers aged 16-18	20 week placements in council or private sector	£100 per week plus accommodation costs	Sajida Sarwar 01254 094347 sajida.sarwar@blackburn.gov.uk
Blackpool	Public Sector Project	Work experience/ Apprenticeships/Jobs	Priority is given to LAC aged 16-19, young mothers and youth offenders but the project encompasses the entire NEET group.	Work experience of any duration up to 24 weeks with an agreed progression option with the employer. Apprenticeships with or without guarantee of progression. Jobs are casual, temporary, part time or permanent.	EMA and/or top-up allowance if a work placement. Apprenticeship wage if apprenticeship. Wages if a job	Esther Melwyn 01253 629244 07800685037 Esther.melwyn@blackpool.gov.uk
Bolton	Looked After Supported Employment (LASE)	Work experience with work-place mentor	LAC and care leavers aged 16-19	Part/full-time work experience opportunities for LAC within the council and some local businesses for up to six months.	Training allowance of £20 a day. If live independently - £14 a week travel and £5 a day towards living costs if housing benefit an issue.	Eileen Terry and Heather Clarke 01204 337326 or 07766726418 eileen.terry@bolton.gov.uk heather.clarke@bolton.gov.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Cheshire	Young apprenticeship scheme	Apprenticeships in: Accounting Administration Customer Service Using IT Health & Social Care	All young people aged 16+	One year apprenticeship on a temporary contract. Young people study for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in the appropriate occupational area and undertake key skills, e.g. communication and application of number. Young people also study for a technical certificate (which underpins the NVQ with the knowledge needed to do the job).	Weekly rate of : £81.98 (age 16) £87.10 (age 17+)	Jan Houghton 01244 972816 janice.houghton@cheshire.gov.uk
Cumbria	Pathways to Youth employment	Work placements and training	LAC and other young people aged 16-18	12 month work placement with the council or voluntary sector alongside NVQ level based training and council courses.	£80 per week plus travel expenses	Alan Culley 01228 607461 alan.culley@cumbriacc.gov.uk
Halton	In 2 Work	Work placements with support	Care Leavers aged 16+	2 week induction followed by up to 24 week work placement. Support provided by Employment Enterprise staff, social care staff and Connexions.	Paid minimum wage	Christine Taylor 0151 471 7535 christine.taylor@halton.gov.uk
Knowsley	Employability Project	Employability support	Care Leavers aged 16 to 19.	Aim to get NEET into EET by supporting them to access mainstream services or developing appropriate projects.	n/a	Debbie Mullen 0151 443 4232 debra.mullen@knowsley.gov.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Lancashire	Supported Apprenticeship Project	Level 2 Apprenticeships with support	Vulnerable NEETs aged 16-19 including LAC, youth offenders, teenage mothers and BME.	60 vulnerable NEET undertake placements with 60 local businesses and work towards a Level 2 NVQ. Partnership of Lancashire County Developments Limited and CXL. Employers receive a wage subsidy.	Paid minimum wage of £90.01 per week	Anne-Marie Parkinson 01772 536600 Anne-Marie.Parkinson@lancashire.gov.uk
Lancashire	Looking Ahead Career Employment Skills (LACES)	Work placements	LAC and care leavers in NEET aged 15-24	A six-month work placement within the council and the chance to work towards a minimum of 2 AQA awards.	Paid on council pay scale (£5.37 per hour in July 07)	Paul Robinson Lancashire Children's Rights Service 01772 256900 paul.robinson@childsoc.org.uk
Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen	Go-A-Head mentoring scheme	Mentoring	LAC aged 13-16 (mentees) and care leavers aged 16 and over (mentors)	12 care leavers at college or university have been trained to e-mentor LAC at secondary school for one hour a week between Feb and July 2008. All contact is via email and this is supervised.	Mentors (care leavers) are paid £6.35 per hour. Mentees receive £50 worth of vouchers at end of scheme.	Peter Francis 01772 537050 peter.francis@cyp.lancscc.gov.uk
Liverpool	Open Doors Programme (Funding ends 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2008)	Traineeships	Care leavers aged 16 - 19	Care leavers undertake work placements in the council and are enrolled on a qualification, such as an NVQ. Trainees are permitted access to job vacancies within the council. The scheme is funded by ESF.	Training Allowances for 16-17 year olds are currently £5.05 per hour and £5.35 per hour for 18-19 year olds.	Caroline Lodge 0151 233 3637 caroline.lodge@liverpool.gov.uk
Liverpool	LACES	Ring-fencing posts	Care leavers at Level 3.	Any suitably qualified care leaver meeting the person specification for a ring-fenced post will be appointed.	Various	Barbara Higgins barbara.higgins2@liverpool.gov.uk 0151 233 3901

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Manchester	Making It Work (Barnardo's Leaving Care Service employability programme)	Employability Project	NEET Care leavers aged 16-21	The project provides: basic skills support; pre and post employment; and support to access, engage and maintain engagement with mainstream learning providers. In 2007 Making It Work worked with 105 care leavers, of which 75 per cent were 16-19, 32 per cent were parents, 22 had a history of offending, 15 per cent were BME, 16 per cent were LDD and 15 had poor mental health.	n/a	Ruth Welford Hunte 0161 342 0812 ruth_welfordhunte@barnardos.org.uk
Manchester	Civilian Service Initiative Pilot	Training and volunteer work placements	Young people who are NEET and/or have left Care aged between 16 and 19	The programme provides training and volunteer work placements in the areas of Information Technology, Health/Nutrition, Construction and Media. The programme has engaged local businesses to deliver both classroom-based training and work placement mentoring through volunteering. To date 27 young people have been recruited, 11 of whom have been in the care system.	n/a	Jeff Mills 0161 4374288 jeff.mills@connexions-manchester.com

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Manchester	GM Power - learning through work	Work experience	Secondary school children in Years 10 and 11. In September 2008, 10 places will be set aside for LAC.	GM Power is the Greater Manchester KS4 Engagement programme running across 10 local authorities. Selection criteria consists of: Disaffection from formal schooling for academic or social reasons or both. Disengagement from formal schooling. A high level of interest in a specific occupational area. It is a strong work-focussed programme which offers one day a week release from school in Years 10 and 11 in a variety of work areas including: business administration, construction, childcare, catering, plumbing, hairdressing, motor vehicle, media and retail.	n/a	Bernadette Murray 0161 245 4710 bernadette-murray@manchester-solutions.co.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Oldham	After Care Employability Scheme (ACES)	Employment support	LAC and care leavers aged 16-24	LAC and care leavers are provided with support to seek, gain and maintain employment. The Employability Officer draws up an individual personal development plan establishing the young person's needs, wants and progression. They are given assistance with job searching, interview techniques, application forms. Advice and guidance is also offered into career routes and available opportunities in education, training and employment.	n/a	Steve Slater 0161 770 6285 steve.slater@oldham.gov.uk
Rochdale	NEET2EET	Course and work placements	Young care leavers in NEET aged???	Work placements within the council and a course covering various issues, such as time and lifestyle management, drugs and alcohol, and interview techniques.	£20 per week in vouchers.	Steve Garner 01706 710750 steve.garner@rochdale.gov.uk
Rochdale	Entry to Employment (E2E)	Pre-employment training and supported work placements	School leavers up to age 19	Pre-employment training including basic skills and the opportunity to undertake supported work placements.	Can claim Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week	Steve Garner 01706 710750 steve.garner@rochdale.gov.uk
Rochdale	Rathbones NSF (independent of council)	Training	Young people not in education, training or employment aged 16-19	Pre E2E for most hardest to reach young people.	Top up of £15 per week.	Steve Garner 01706 710750 steve.garner@rochdale.gov.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Rochdale	Fairbridge (independent of council)	Personal development and re-engagement activities.	Vulnerable young people aged 13-25 not in education, training or employment	Activity-based personal development programme, including some courses. Focus on life skills, basic skills, motivation and behaviour management.	Top up of £15 per week.	Steve Garner 01706 710750 steve.garner@rochdale.gov.uk
Rochdale	Princes Trust (independent of council)	Personal development and re-engagement activities.	All young people aged 16-24 not in education, training or employment	Young people undertake a one week residential, a community project, personal development, first aid certificates and literacy and numeracy courses.	Top up of £15 per week.	Steve Garner 01706 710750 steve.garner@rochdale.gov.uk
Salford	Youthbuild	Work placements within the construction industry with support.	Young people aged 16-24 with a history of offending behaviour. All young people hard to engage. 3 places are set aside for LAC	39 week placement in construction which involves: 5 weeks in house training 8 weeks placement 26 weeks with a construction employer. Young people are supported in the work situation by Youthbuild support staff.	£60 Training allowance for first 13 weeks.  Young people are paid about £6 per hour on the 26 weeks work experience.	Mike Kelly 0161 607 1888 michael.kelly@salford.gov.uk
Stockport (funded by LA but independent of it)	LAC and Young Care Leavers Team at Pure Innovations	Employment support	LAC and Care Leavers aged 16-20	Employment Officers at Pure Innovations encourage and support young people to access education, training or employment and offer support once engaged in the activity.	n/a	Sarah Sturmey 0161 474 5926 sarah.sturmey@pureinnovations.co.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Stockport	Corporate Parent Placements – younger LAC	Work experience	LAC in Years 10 and 11.	LAC identified at monthly multi-agency meetings as needing work-based alternative education are referred to the Compass Service (managed by Secondary Behaviour Support Service) who then organise and support work experience placements across council services. The duration of placements and number of hours in placement each week are flexible.	n/a	Carmel McKeogh 0161 474 3362 carmel.mckeogh@stockport.gov.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Stockport	Corporate Parent Placements – older LAC	Apprenticeship scheme (12 months)	LAC and care leavers aged 16-18	<p>At monthly multi-agency meetings LAC aged 16-19 without provision are referred to Pure Innovations who then enable them to access a 12 month apprenticeship at the council. Pure Innovations help the apprentices identify a course to undertake alongside the placement.</p> <p>The Parks and Recreation department has proved popular and now keep two posts open for LAC each year and try to find them permanent work for them whilst they are in placement. In addition, placements are offered in any area of Council employment if required. To date, LAC have been attracted to work in the Council's ICT department and in the Direct Service Department doing Painting and Decorating as well as parks and recreation</p>	Apprentices are paid 95 per cent of rate of post.	Carmel McKeogh 0161 474 3362 carmel.mckeogh@stockport.gov.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Stockport	Worklessness Initiative	6 month fixed term employment	Incapacity Benefit customers and lone parents	6 month fixed term posts are being created for Incapacity Benefit customers and lone parents (some LAC and care leavers will also fall into these categories). Any client recruited this way will automatically go onto the council's redeployment register once in post for 13 weeks. Looking to place 70 people.	unknown	Carmel McKeogh 0161 474 3362 carmel.mckeogh@stockport.gov.uk
Tameside	Traineeships	Foundation/Level 2 Traineeships	LAC and care leavers aged 16-17	12 month traineeships usually with private employers and some within council. Trainees spend one day a week at either Tameside college or E2E studying for a qualification.	Paid £100 per week	Christine Gerrard 0161 342 7630 christine.gerrard@tameside.gov.uk
Trafford	Work Solutions - Entry 2 Employment (E2E)	Pre-employment training and supported work placements	All young people aged 16-18 not in education, training or employment who are not ready for work, training or full time education.	Offers individualised packages of support which can cover basic and key skills, vocational development, and personal and social development to help prepare young people for employment or training. Young people also have the opportunity to undertake supported work placements.	Can claim Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week	Julie Heseltine (Work solutions) 0161 972 2990 julie.heseltine@work-solutions.org.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Warrington	Employability Scheme	Employability course and mentoring	LAC and care leavers aged 16-19	The scheme is a partnership between social care and corporate services (social regeneration) who fund the scheme. LAC and care leavers attend a 5 day course run by A4E which covers confidence building, communication skills, CV and letter writing, interview skills, etc. In addition, young people are mentored by ex-care leavers who support them on the course - this is coordinated by Toc H. LAC and care leavers will also be supported in an intensive job search by A4E and their details will also be fed into any jobs that are available via social regeneration.	£20 per week incentive whilst they are engaged on the scheme and £20 per day for each day on the 5 day course.	Terry Irvine 01925 444051 tirvine@warrington.gov.uk
Wigan	Employability scheme (currently struggling to fund the project. Will be using a small part of the Care Matters Grant to continue the project until a formal request is made to CYPSSMT)	Work placements with a work-place mentor	Care leavers aged 16 and 17.	Work placements in council departments. Placement support is provided by the After Care service.	At least the minimum wage	Tom O'Dwyer 01942 486123 t.o'dwyer@wigan.gov.uk

LA	Name of scheme	Type of scheme	Who is it for?	Description	Salary?	Main Contact
Wirral	Modern Apprenticeship in Administration	Apprenticeships	LAC and care leavers	Apprenticeship placements are ring-fenced for LAC. The scheme is run concurrently with the general apprenticeship scheme and is funded in the same way.	£80 per week. For 18 + this is supplemented from the Leaving Care Budget to assist with Housing costs and work expenses if assessed as necessary.	Dave Mackinnon 0151 637 6280 davidmackinnon@wirral.gov.uk