

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Corporate Parenting Panel – 15 February 2022

**Report Title**

Leisure Cards for LAC and Leaving Care

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

Children and Young People who sit on our LAC Council have asked for free access to Leisure Facilities in the borough and have asked this be considered for all looked after and care experienced adults up to the age of 25. The LAC Council have also asked they be assured that the passes allow them to attend without an adult. LAC Council had raised this with Corporate Parenting Panel prior to COVID and has been a key priority for them over the past. This report provides an update of the progress of the working groups around Leisure Cards for LAC and Leaving Care.

**Recommendations**

1. The panel is asked to receive this report as an update on current progress.

**List of Appendices Included**

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**  
No

## Leisure Cards for LAC and Leaving Care

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### 1. **Background**

The Looked After Children's Council (LACC) have requested that the corporate parenting panel considers their request to have access to leisure activities to support their physical and emotional wellbeing. This has been a long standing request and a task and finish group has been working on proposals about how this could be supported.

### 2. **Key Issues**

2.1 The report reflects the work undertaken by the task and finish group, the current offer to fostering families, young people and care leavers and the proposals being considered. There is also a timeline for further update.

2.2 Local Leisure Centres are provided by an arm's length organisation called Places for People LTD and are contracted to provide leisure services.

2.3 Any extension of offer to children and young people as requested by LAC Council will require costing out against each one of the requests from LAC Council and be determined as to what preferred option can be achieved. The current offer available to foster carers and looked after young people in their care is:

2.3.1 **Rothercard** users get a discount to access the Leisure Centres, and this can see the monthly membership rate reduced from £35 to £29pm. A **Rothercard** is available to residents of Rotherham if they are:

- Young people aged 16 to 19 years in full time education
- Looked after children/young people
- Anyone aged over 60
- Refugees/asylum seekers dependent on asylum seeker support payments
- Adults on a low income (accessing benefits)

2.3.2 If adult foster carers access a membership via Rothercard, as part of the membership up to 4 children 16 years and under within a family can go in free to the facilities if they are accompanied by an adult.

2.3.3 Under 8's must be accompanied by an adult, however children over 8 can use the centre the pool independently without a parent and they can use this free of charge (if their adult carer qualifies via the above).

2.4 Leisure Services with People for Places LTD are working through the options to fully explore how RMBC can support the request from LAC

Council. This is because the detail of the contract suggests RMBC would have to pay upfront costs to People for Places to support free access to leisure.

- 2.5 Within this discussion there are some complicating factors which will need to be considered as to how we support access to children and young people with their families and carers access the centres. This includes:
  - 2.5.1 Making sure we consider all the living arrangements for children and young people who are described as looked after or care experienced.
  - 2.5.2 Thinking about whether these different living arrangements mean we vary the offer based on need, expectation, wishes and feelings.
  - 2.5.3 Ensuring we capture the views and ideas from more young adults over 18 and especially those in the over 21 years cohort.
- 2.6 The Children in Care Service and Regeneration & Environment Service, who support the leisure offer in Rotherham, are committed to developing the offer for young people post 18 but have agreed the detail of understanding how much it may cost in advance means some additional thought is required to understand what the likely demand could be for this age group.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The below options are currently being considered by a group of officers:
  - Offer free leisure access to all to young people and RMBC pay subject to invoice after use. RMBC would have to understand the total possible cost if all young people take up the offer.
  - That support is offered if agreed through the Pathway Planning process and if considered something which would benefit – we would seek to pay for those individuals as part of our local offer.
  - Seek discounted rates for group bookings when made through the Leaving Care service.
  - Discounted rates for young people to access any team activities.
  - Discounted rates for children and young people to take part in any teaching.
- 3.2 There is a working group supporting decision making and next steps. Leisure Services with Places for People LTD are working through the pricing structure for RMBC to consider.
- 3.3 This will then be made available for decisions by the end of March 2022.
- 3.4 In the meantime, the LAC Service will be able to confirm offers which are already available and publish them in foster carer newsletters and information sent to our residential homes by the end of February 2022.

3.5 In addition, access to gym passes and leisure centres continue to be discussed on an individual basis with young people as their care plans and pathway plans are developed and if this is seen as an area which the young person wants or needs to pursue, this will be included and supported.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 This work has been undertaken in response to young peoples' voice and developed with Regeneration and Environment colleagues.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 This will be agreed once the proposals are confirmed and a timeline for this has been given as the end of March 2022.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 This is an update report only at this stage and further consultation with finance will be needed in the future.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

#### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no direct human resource implications to this report.

#### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 The proposals being explored work to support better health and emotional wellbeing outcomes for looked after children and those leaving care in Rotherham.

#### **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

#### **11. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 There are no direct implications within this report.

#### **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 There are no direct implications in this report.

#### **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 The proposals need further development at this stage, but a risk if not progressed is that an opportunity would be missed to improve the health and wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers in Rotherham.

**14. Accountable Officer(s)**

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