Dear Director of Children’s Services,

Services available to Looked After Children placed in Medway by other Local Authorities

There are a number of looked after children placed in Medway by other local authorities. Medway Council Children and Young People’s Service would like to notify you about the resources and facilities available to children and young people who may be placed in our local authority area.

Within this letter we set out the process to notify us when a Looked After child or young person is placed in Medway or when their placement arrangements change. We also include information about our Virtual School for Looked After Children, information about accessing universal services and contact details for our Children in Care Council.

Please disseminate this information to relevant professionals within your Children’s Social Care service. We hope that this information will help your professional staff to understand and access the diverse universal services that are available to children residing in Medway. It would be helpful if you also passed this letter on to any of your foster carers based in Medway so they are aware of the services available for children and young people in our area.
It would be useful to receive similar information and contact details about services and opportunities available to any of our looked after children we may have placed in your local authority area.

**Notifications**

All notifications of looked after children placed in Medway should be sent to pola@medway.gov.uk.cjsm.net.

Changes of address and notifications of looked after children leaving Medway should also be sent to this address so we can update our records. Please ensure that notifications highlight any particular risks or vulnerabilities to assist the professional network within Medway to respond effectively to any issues that may arise. If you need to contact Medway Children’s Social Care please call 01634 334466 or for emergencies outside office hours call 01233 652382

**Education**

All of our schools, academies and colleges work in partnership and have a collective responsibility to ensure that all of the local authority’s young people have access to the best possible learning opportunities so that they can achieve their full potential, with no child left behind.

For Looked After children moving into Medway, please contact our Student Services Operations Team as soon as possible to discuss the application process. They can be contacted on 01634 331155 8:30 – 5:15 Monday to Friday.

Each school in Medway has a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children to promote the educational achievement of looked after children who are on the school roll. Medway also has a Virtual School for Looked after Children which works to ensure that all looked after children and young people in Medway are supported, encouraged and challenged to aim high, to enjoy and to achieve.

The Virtual School maintains a register of all looked after children and young people aged 3 – 19 years placed within Medway including those who are placed in Medway by other local authorities.

The Virtual School Headteacher works collaboratively with respective colleagues in other local authorities and the Headteacher will support any school in Medway with queries relating to children on their roll who may be placed in Medway by another local authority.

For more information, please contact the Virtual School on 01634 338541 or 01634 338555.

**Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Where a looked after child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the Special Educational Needs Team will maintain the Statement on behalf of the placing authority. The team can be...
contacted on 01634 331123. Funding for the child’s educational placement will be recouped from the placing Local Authority by Medway Council SEN Team.

Any request for statutory assessment for a Looked After child from another Local Authority placed in Medway will be co-ordinated by the Medway SEN Team.

We also have a wide range of services available to provide help and support to children, their families and carers, schools and other professionals to ensure that all children and young people get the best education:

- The Early Support Team supports children aged up to 5
- The Autism Outreach Team provide support for pupils with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who attend mainstream schools
- The Educational Psychology Service carry out work related to the development, learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties of children and young people.

**Early Years, Childcare and Nursery Provision**

**Medway family information service**

The Family Information Service provides comprehensive, accurate, up to date information on childcare and other local services and support for parents of children and young people up to the age of 20, and up to 25 where the young person has special educational needs (SEN) or is disabled.

This is in line with the government’s statutory duty for local authorities to offer a range of information to families and ensure that the information is open to all parents and practitioners who might benefit from it.

Medway Family Information Service provides:

- A free service to families
- Operating hours between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 5pm on Fridays
- A telephone help-line operated by trained staff
- A drop-in facility available for customers to discuss their needs face-to-face with a childcare information adviser
- An FIS directory website that provides Medway’s local offer for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Different ways to get in touch
- A range of leaflets and posters explaining services, advertised in places likely to be used by customers, and through agencies and individuals likely to be in contact with potential customers

**Medway Family information service directory (FISD)**

The Family information service directory (FISD) is a website designed to help parents, practitioners, children and young people find and use a range of resources and activities in
Medway. The FISD provides a large selection of options and information to help you find the people you need:

- looking for childcare
- parenting and family support
- help with childcare costs
- special educational needs and disabilities
- support for practitioners
- working in childcare

For further information phone the Family Information Service on 01634 33 55 66.

The 0-25 Disability Service for Children, Young People and Adults

Disabled children and Young People

Disabled children and young receive services from the 0 to 25 Disability Team within Adult Services. This team will assess need and support children and young people with complex disabilities through a seamless approach from childhood into adult hood. Criteria are applied in respect of eligibility for children’s and adult services as appropriate. The team will promote the development of independence and choice, keeping the child and young person’s voice at the centre of all plans and decisions. This team will work with specialist child protection services to ensure protection of children and young people when necessary.

The service will embrace all the key elements of the recent legislative changes which include:

- Involvement of children, young people and parents
- More streamlined assessment process, an integrated assessment and a single Education, Health and Social Care Plan from birth to 25 (EHSCP), replacing Statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments, which reflects the child or young person’s aspirations for the future, as well as current needs.
- A published clear, transparent ‘local offer’ of services for all Children and Young People with SEN, so parents can understand what is available.
- New statutory protections for young people aged 16-25 in FE and a stronger focus on preparing for adulthood.
- Offer of a personal budget for families and young people with a Plan, extending choice and control over their support.

For information contact Kerry Rabey, Team Manager on 01634 338514

The Medway Youth Offending Team

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) work with young people aged 10-18 who have offended or are at risk of offending or antisocial behaviour. This can mean offering intervention
programmes with the young person and their parent /carer; supervising court orders; work whilst on bail or in custody; reports for court and youth offender panels.

Contact
   Angela Giles
Telephone
   01634 336225
   01634 336259
Email
   youthoffendingteam@medway.gov.uk

Address
   Medway Youth Offending Team
   Strood Youth Centre  Montfort Road
   Strood
   Rochester
   Kent
   ME2 3ET

Session Information
   8.30am - 5pm Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 4.45pm Friday

Medway Children in Care Council

We are a group of young people in and leaving the care of Medway Children’s Services. We sit on Medway’s Children in Care Council where we try to ensure that the services being offered are as good as they should be and Medway Council ask us how we think things can be improved.

When things are good we say so…when things can be improved we say that too. We have helped Medway Council make improvements to the Leisure Pass and getting consent forms signed and making Looked-After Children’s Reviews a better experience. We are working on improving our health assessments and ensuring the Council sticks to the pledge….don’t just say it….Do It!!!

We need to hear from as many children and young people in foster care and leaving care as possible so we can make sure we are asking the right questions and raising the right issues. Please, please do tell us what you think we can do for you and how the council can improve our experiences of the care system.

So don't miss out…have your shout…contact us on 01622 683815 or via medwaychallengers@ylf.org.uk or you can even write to us:

Children in Care Council, c/o Medway Challengers, 71 College Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6SX.

Here is a link to the Medway Children in Care Council:
http://www.school-portal.co.uk/GroupHomepage.asp?GroupId=979987

We hope this information proves to be a helpful resource to professional colleagues from outside the borough who are working with looked after children placed in Medway. We welcome any feedback you may have.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Peacock
Director of Children’s and Adult Services