

# Good Practice in Leaving Care:

Developing Good Practice

# Leaving Care: our aims

- Sections 105 to 115 of the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) place duties on a local authority to provide support for children and young persons who it has 'looked after' when they cease to be looked after (care leavers). The support provided is intended to be equivalent to that which a child who has not been looked after might reasonably expect from his or her parents.

# Who should receive support.

- In order to receive support from a local authority as a care leaver, the young person must have been looked after for a period of 13 weeks between the age of 14 and 16 (Regulation 47 of the [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#))

# Category 1

A category 1:

A young person is a child aged 16 or 17 who is being looked after by a local authority and who has been looked after by a local authority (in Wales or England) which began after he or she reached This definition restates the definition of an eligible child in paragraph 19B(2) of Schedule 2 to the [Children Act 1989](#).

# Category 2

- A category 2
- young person is a child aged 16 or 17, who is no longer looked after by a local authority (in Wales or England) but who immediately before ceasing to be looked after was a category 1 young person. The definition of a category 2 young person replicates that of a relevant child in section 23A of the Children Act 1989.

# Category 3

- A category 3
- young person is a young person who is aged 18 or over, and who used to be a category 2 young person and would continue to be so if he or she were under the age of 18; or who was being looked after by a local authority when he or she reached the age of 18, and, immediately before ceasing to be looked after, was a category 1 young person. The definition of a category 3 young person restates that of a former relevant child in section 23C of the Children Act 1989.

# Category 4

- A category 4 :
- young person is a category 3 young person who is under 25 (or a lower age specified in regulations) and for whom the duties under sections 105, 106, 107(3) and (10) and 110 have ceased to apply, and who has also informed the local authority that he or she is pursuing or wishes to pursue education or training. The definition of a category 4 young person captures those young persons for whom provision is made within section 23CA of the Children Act 1989 (persons who qualify for further assistance to pursue education or training). Such young persons will be able to obtain advice and assistance by virtue of “reconnecting” with a local authority for the purposes of seeking to pursue education or training.

# Category 5

- A category 5:
- young person is a young person who is between 16 but not yet 21 in respect of whom a special guardianship order is in force (or if the person is 18 or over, an order was in force when he or she reached 18). A category 5 young person will be entitled to the same support from a local authority as that provided for a person qualifying for advice and assistance under section 24A of the Children Act 1989 (on the basis that he or she is a person who qualifies for advice and assistance by virtue of section 24(1A) of the Children Act 1989).



# Category 6

- A category 6 :
- young person is a young person who has not yet attained the age of 21; is residing in Wales; and who, whilst not currently being looked after, accommodated or fostered, has been looked after, accommodated or fostered for a period when they were between the ages of 16 and 18. This category does not include anyone capable of being captured by the definition of a category 5 young person. A category 6 young person will be entitled to the same support from a local authority as that provided to persons qualifying for advice and assistance under section 24A by virtue of section 24(1B) of the Children Act 1989.

# Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Welsh Government intentions:

- Ensuring that young people leaving residential care get equivalent levels of support to those leaving foster care.
- Making sure that no young person has to leave their accommodation on their 18th birthday when this is in the middle of an important year of studies such as A-levels.
- Securing the right to a Personal Adviser for all care leavers up to the age of 25.
- Guaranteeing financial support for care leavers going into higher education.
- Publishing clear information on care leavers' entitlements through the tax and benefits systems.
- Finding new ways to reduce poverty amongst care leavers. (1 in 4 care leavers are benefit sanctioned)

# The challenges facing care leavers 1

500 young people leave care each year.

- 43% are not in training, education or employment at the age of 19 years. (Wales figures)
- 43 per cent of care leavers felt the main professional supporting them had been unhelpful in helping them think about future housing needs. (UK figures)
- 40 per cent of care leavers say that not having enough savings for a deposit was a barrier to accessing accommodation. (UK figures)

# The challenges facing care leavers 2

- A worrying 57 per cent of care leavers felt unsafe in the area where they first lived after leaving care. (UK figures)
  - More than one in four young care leavers have sofa surfed and 14 per cent have slept rough. (UK figures)
  - Looked after children/care experienced children in Wales are:
    - \*3 x more likely to be cautioned or convicted of an offence
    - \*4 x more likely to have a mental health disorder
    - \*5 x less likely to achieve 5 good grades at GCSE (A-C)
    - \*8 x more likely to be excluded from school
- \*Source: Inquiry into Care Experienced children in Wales 2017.

# When I am ready

- “When I am ready” – post-18 living arrangements
- “When I am Ready” is the name given to the scheme through which local authorities will fulfil their statutory duty to facilitate post-18 living arrangements. (Known as Staying Put in England)
- Under section 108 of the 2014 Act, local authorities have duties towards young people in foster care who wish to continue living with their foster parents beyond the age of 18.

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# Personal Advisers (the staff that support our young people who are leaving care)

The ambitions of the Welsh Government for an enhanced offer for care experienced young people in terms of emotional well being, employment, education, training, housing and health require enough staff to effectively support young people. The extended offer to young people up to 25 years requires additional staff numbers in order to deliver on these ambitions.

# Training for Personal Advisers

Upskilling the workforce to be responsive to the needs of the future, a priority is ensuring the personal advisors sits within the right service area to promote a seamless service where staff are trained in:

- Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being
- Employment and training opportunities for young people
- Knowledge of higher education options
- Welfare benefits
- Housing options

# What we need to do:

## Pathway Plans:

The Pathway Plan is a Care Plan, detailing the services and support needed by young people aged 16 to 21 years. "The Pathway Plan should be pivotal to the process whereby young people map out their future, articulating their aspirations and identifying interim goals along the way to realising their ambitions."



# Pathway Plans

- Pathway Plans should be an engaging tool used as a working document with young people aimed at addressing their emotional well-being, education, employment, training, housing and health needs.
- Plans should include and address cultural and ethnicity needs
- Plans should be developed by the age of 16 years at the latest and be reviewed and amended every six months as a minimum.
- Plans should be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reviewed and Time bound**.
- All plans should be signed off by a qualified social worker.
- We are seeking to make plans user friendly and fit for purpose.

# Physical and Mental Health

- Areas of development being considered are forming strategic partnership with health to extend the offer from CAMHS services to young people in care in view of their disproportionate representation in mental health figures and also considering part co-location with these staff. In addition work needs to take place in improving our relationships with the independent sector.
- building on this maybe to develop a 'health passport' for children who are looked after with a minimum requirement for all young people to have this when they leave care at the age of 18 years. The use of a health passport enables an ability to capture the young Person health history as often these can be 'lost' as a result of placement moves. As a consequence many young people do not have crucial information about whether their family has, for example, a history of heart issues or diabetes etc. This is a critical tool that needs to be developed with health partners.

# Housing

Cardiff has much to be proud of in the development of the Young Person's Gateway and the links between Housing and Children's Services. This is a service that other Local Authorities would envy. Undoubtedly, however, there is obviously much more to do... extending of or housing provision for young people with clear step down and transitional arrangements

# Employment

Many Local Authorities have developed effective relationships with Job Centres and training providers and some of this exists already in Cardiff. Further development maybe in specialist employment Personal Advisers as well as development of step into work apprentice services.

the development of employment opportunities can be achieved in the fostering of relationships with local businesses that would be prepared to offer apprenticeships who would not exclude those young people not in possession of 5 A-C GCSEs including Maths and English. (This is often difficult for young people leaving care who may have had a more troubled education history).