Leaving Care Service Plan

A Provision for young people Leaving Care

This Service Plan provides the framework for the development and delivery of a service for young people who are in the transition from being in care to that of independence and becoming an adult. This is a crucial transition for any young person, but for care leavers even more so if they are to overcome their experiences in early life that led them to be in care and become a fully participating citizen within their community.
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Proposal for the Creation of a Leaving Care Service

Introduction

West Sussex County Council believes in strong, vibrant communities and that is why helping people to help themselves and each other is at the heart of everything we do. We will be there to help people over hurdles when they need it but, wherever possible, we want to move away from a dependency culture and encourage everyone to strive to achieve their aspirations. Never is this truer than for those young people for whom the Local Authority is the corporate parent; those young people who for whatever reason have had to be looked after and provided with accommodation by the County Council. We want to make sure every child growing up in West Sussex has the best possible start in life. We know how important a child’s experiences of life are and how the home environment he or she lives in and the family support he or she receives, have a huge influence on their outcomes in later life. We believe that by supporting children and their families in these valuable years we can promote positive, long-term impacts on their future health, wellbeing and achievements and encourage them to reach their full potential as adults.

When a young person reaches the age of 18 years old, they are no longer a ‘looked after child’, but are deemed as a ‘Care Leaver’.

The Leaving Care Act

The Leaving Care Act explains the entitlements as a looked after child and a care leaver. There are four main categories of young people mentioned in the Act:

- **Eligible Child:** A child aged 16-17 years who is looked after and has been for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 years old.

- **Relevant Child:** A 16-17 looked after child who has been in care, but has left care.

- **Former Relevant Child and/or pursuing further education or training:** A young person 18+ who previously was ‘eligible’ or ‘relevant’. It is the duty of the local authorities to support this young person, at least until 21 years old or up to the aged 25yrs if pursuing further education and/or training.

- **Qualifying Young Person:** any young person aged under 21 (under 24 if in education or training) who at any time after reaching the age of sixteen but while still a child was, but is no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

We are all corporate parents for children in care and for those who come under the Leaving Care Act

Being a good corporate parent means:

- Accepting responsibility for the council’s children and young people whom they look after
- Making their needs a priority
- Seeking the same outcomes for them as any good parent would want for their own children
It has been agreed that a service for those young people leaving care and subsequently those young people in care aged 16+, will be developed from within the existing Young People’s Service (YPS) formally known as the Youth Support and Development Service (YSDS).

The creation of a Leaving Care Service (LCS) will be developed around the key themes and requirements stated within the National Government’s ‘Care Leaver Strategy’ (Oct 2013) and the Ofsted Inspection framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (June 2014).

The LCS will be developed within the Young People’s Service (YPS) in conjunction with Social Care agreeing the scope and resourcing for the LCS from within existing resources of both Services. The YPS consists of the following service areas all of which all will be available to young people who are leaving care as part of a personalised package of support:

- Youth Interventions including targeted programmes supporting the social, emotional and well-being of young people who are in need, on the edge of care or live in areas of deprivation *(See Appendix 1)*
- Voice and engagement / Participation initiatives including County Council Youth Cabinet, Children in Care Council
- Intensive support interventions offering 1:1 support via a personal advisor for those young people who are in high need and/or are at risk of or are not in employment, training and/or education as well as those young people in care
- Specialist housing project for young people aged 16+
- Information, advice and guidance services offering a wide range of specialist and general support including mental health assessments in partnership with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- General projects and initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, the National Citizenship Scheme and other various accredited schemes
- Youth Justice Interventions working with young people who have offended and/or are at risk of offending

In developing the LCS, YPS & Social Care will work together in a way that utilises all available resources effectively and efficiently. Working with partners and other service providers both internally and externally to provide high quality services offering the interventions, support and guidance required enabling the best outcomes for the young person to be achieved. It will also be the objective to enable arbitrary and artificial boundaries, between the respective services that restrict or hamper service delivery, to be removed. Alongside this, it will be critical that innovation, creation and flexibility are enabled to ensure that key interventions can be adapted and remodelled quickly. As appropriate to the changing and diverse needs of those young people leaving care and as such enable a bespoke and targeted service meeting the individual needs of the young person.

‘Around 10,000 young people leave care in England each year aged between 16-18 years old. They leave home at a younger age and have more abrupt transitions to adulthood than their peers. Unlike their peers who normally remain in the family home, care leavers will often be living independently at age 18. Information from the Children Right’s Director’s surveys on care leavers and Children in Care Council (CICC) meetings show that many care leavers feel that they leave care too early and often feel isolated and lonely.’
‘Research and inspection reports show that the quality of support care leavers receive is patchy and that their journey through the first decade of adult life is often disrupted, unstable and troubled. They often struggle to cope and this can lead to social exclusion, long term unemployment or involvement in crime. For example, 34% of all care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at age 19 in 2013 compared to 15.5% of 18 year olds in the general population.’

‘Within a couple of weeks I can feel that I’m going to be on the streets and another number.’

‘Care leavers come into contact with a range of services including housing, health, employment, and education, yet they are often not recognised as a priority group for services. Improving how local authorities and other agencies support them is crucial to improving the lives of this vulnerable group of people. They need services which are integrated, easy to access, embedded within local communities, and which treat them with respect.’ – (National Care Leavers Strategy – Oct 2013)

Research clearly indicates that for those young people leaving care the prospects are poor, the outcomes in crucial areas such as employment, training, offending, mental health and so forth, fall significantly below the national averages and the likelihood for these young people to develop negative lifestyles and be at risk of exploitation is significantly high.

**Leaving Care Service: Aim and Outcomes**

The creation of a Leaving Care Service within the YPS will aim to achieve the following:

| Young people leaving care and preparing to leave care receive support and help to assist them in making a successful transition to adulthood. Plans for them to leave care are effective and address their individual needs. They are safe and feel safe, particularly where they live. Young people acquire the necessary level of skill and emotional resilience to successfully move towards independence. They are able to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing. They enjoy stable and enduring relationships with staff and carers who meet their needs. (Ofsted – Framework and Evaluation Schedule - Children in need of help...) |

The LCS will work towards achieving the best outcomes possible, holding the highest aspiration for all for young people leaving care, formed around their Pathway/Care plans.

*Pathway planning is effective and plans (including transition planning for looked after children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) address all young people’s needs and are updated as circumstances change. (Ofsted)*

All staff will have been trained on Pathway Plans and will be clear on the review of these and ensuring the young person has clear ownership of the document. All recording regarding any support given will be hosted on Frameworki.

Long-term support will be offered alongside short-term interventions giving longevity and security of support. The service will enable young people not only to be aspirational but give them the
confidence and ability to aspire and achieve throughout their lives, so making an exceptional
difference to the individual. The service will be built on the principal of both support to and
challenge of, young people leaving care using confidence and innovation to create the required
interventions that make a difference. The service within this will be solution focused and not be risk
adverse having the confidence to engage in new and untested service innovations learning from
both success and areas where success is not achieved.

*The experiences and progress of care leavers’ is likely to be judged outstanding if, there is evidence
that professional practice exceeds the standard of ‘good’ and results in sustained improvement to
the lives of children, young people and their families. The local authority is ambitious and
aspirational for its young people as they mature to adulthood. The authority is assertive and
proactive in keeping in touch with all young people who have left care and, as a result, young
people have a sense of security and connection with adults who they know well. Research-
formed practice, some of which will be innovative, continues to develop from a strong and
confident base, making an exceptional difference to the lives and experiences of children and
young people. (Ofsted)*

The LCS will offer a range of provision and support to those young people leaving care 16-18yrs,
providing wrap-around and holistic support. The purpose of which is to assist in the transition from
care into other independent arrangements with support offered up to the age of 21-25yrs as
appropriate. *(See Appendix 2)*

*Care leavers succeed in their transition to greater independence and adulthood at a time that is
right for them. Young people aged 16 and 17 are encouraged to remain looked after until their
18th birthday where (and this will usually be the case) this is in their best interest. (Ofsted)*

All care leavers will have an allocated member of staff who will perform the role of the Personal
Advisor. This role will perform the function of the Personal Advisor as detailed in the guidance
Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers. The LCS recognises that each care
leaver is an individual and therefore their needs will be specific and unique. The LCS will work to
ensure that if a young person needs are of an intensive nature, they will have support from an
Intensive Personal Advisor who will engage with the young person regularly to support them to
overcome the difficulties they are facing. Equally the LCS will have components within its Youth
Intervention Team and ‘FinditOut’ Service that can offer support for Care Leavers who have needs
that can be met in a different way. Therefore following a review of the pathway plan the LCS, in
consultation with the Young Person, will decide on the appropriate level of support and allocate
accordingly. The LCS will optimise all methods of media to make sure that Care Leavers are able to
access information on a whole range of subjects. A specific page on YourSpace, will be set up to host
the most relevant and appropriate information for young people leaving care as well as the
development of a mobile phone application and events etc.

*Equality*

For those young people who require additional support and consideration at even greater potential
risk and vulnerability for example BME, LGBT, SEND and unaccompanied asylum seekers. Specialist
provision and support will be offered bespoke to the individual’s needs and circumstances. This will
include cultural and leisure opportunities and exploration of identity and self-awareness working proactively to support these young people.

**Key Objectives:**

One of the fundamental objectives of the LCS will be to support the young person leaving care to develop a strong sense of themselves and identity. The development of positive self-image and understanding of their background and history will enable the formation of a positive sense of citizenship. This will enable the young person to hold a sense of belonging ownership of the community they live in and connection to society in general. It will also work to develop confidence and self-esteem within the young person so they have the ability to make informed choices moving forward and be able to voice their opinions and thoughts on key issues that affect them.

Specifically the LCS will be built around achieving positive outcomes in the following key areas of interest:

- **Education Employment and Training**
- **Financial capabilities**
- **Health – physical and mental**
- **Housing**
- **Justice System – reducing offending/re-offending and the risk of being exploited**
- **On-going support to develop resilience and self-confidence**

The Service offered will focus on the above areas providing a cohesive and consistent package of support, information, advice & guidance with assistance as appropriate, working to achieve a seamless transition for young people leaving care into adulthood. The interventions offered will be formed around the holistic needs of the individuals to ensure success and provide a mechanism to support their integration into the community where they feel they belong.

The key impact the Service aims to make will be to develop the young person’s skills and abilities to enable them to progress and successfully move towards independence. Whilst at the same time help build their resilience and their ability to cope, supporting their emotional well-being, in developing positive and strong relationships. It is also recognised there is the need for support in the long-term as emotional difficulties, including mental health issues can arise once the young person is in a stable and supportive environment. A key aspect of the LCS therefore will be to assist with the access and transition to adult services including adult mental health services.

The voice of the young person will be central to the development of services as well as the ability to access and utilise advocacy services where appropriate.

A key aspect of the LCS will be to ensure the entitlements and rights of the young people leaving care are upheld and delivered and that the young people are aware of and understand their rights and entitlements, with information provided in an accessible way. A Leaving Care Guide has been developed to assist young people to understand their entitlements and rights.

*Care leavers are provided with information (including through the care leaver’s pledge) about their legal entitlements such as access to their records, assistance to find employment (including work*
These entitlements are broadly as follows:

- A care plan is required that states what the needs of the young person are now, what will be done to meet those needs and what plans the young person has for the future. This must include the views of the young person.
- The young person must be given a copy, and full explanation, of your assessment and pathway plan.
- As a young person leaving the care of West Sussex County Council you are entitled to the following:
  - An Independent Living Grant of £2800, broken down into the following key areas:
    - Education – Access to items that support education. This may include things like specialist equipment, books, computers etc.
    - Health – Access to services or equipment to support health and well-being. For example specialist dental treatment, glasses, transport etc.
    - Setting up Home – to buy the essential things required to make a home, for instance furniture, bedding, fridge, cooker etc.
  - The local authority must provide with help with the costs of being in education or training up until the age of 21 (or 25 if still in education), including a bursary of £1,200 if aged 16-19yrs and in full time education.
  - The local authority must provide help with the costs of getting and keeping a job (up until the age of 21 if in education, employment or training).
  - If in higher education, the local authority must provide you with vacation accommodation (or money towards it).

**Key Areas of Interest:**

The following key areas of interest will be the focus of the LCS and as such form the basis of interventions for the young people, set against the pathway/care plans. The involvement and voice of the young person will be central to deciding the support and interventions offered and what ongoing support will be required. Monitoring and the evaluation of outcomes and impact will also be central to ensuring the LCS achieves the best for all young people it serves.

What follows is a synopsis of the expected outcomes for each of the key area of interest taken from the Governments ‘Care Leavers Strategy’ and the judgements made by Ofsted in the associated areas as determined under the inspection Framework.

1. **Education, Employment and Training**

- Local authorities, through their financial support and policies, encouraging and supporting all care leavers to remain engaged in education, take up training opportunities and undertake activities aimed at improving employability;
- Care leavers experience improved access to further and higher education as well as better support whilst at a Further Education College or university.
• A further reduction in the number of care leavers who are NEET, through improved support by mainstream and specialist services.
• An increase in care leavers attending further and higher education

Care leavers have access to appropriate education and employment opportunities, including work experience and apprenticeships. They are encouraged and supported to continue their education and training, including those aged 21 to 24 years. Care leavers are progressing well and achieving their full potential through life choices, either in their attainment in further and higher education or in their chosen career/occupation. (Ofsted)

All care Leavers will be invited on a regular basis to their local FindItOut Provision. The purpose of FindItOut is to provide an impartial high quality Information Advice and Guidance service to Young People aged 13-25 years, in a confidential, safe, young person-friendly multi-agency setting which is located in areas of high population and Need. The service will also work in conjunction with a range of partners to deliver its service in locations that maximise the engagement of young people i.e. colleges, café’s and rural locations. The service will predominantly operate a face to face service, but will also deliver the optimum amount via social networks and associated platforms. The FindItOut service will also provide both physical linkage and area based linkage for the range of providers who are providing services for young people. This can be by co-location or virtual linkage and could include need to include the adult practitioners and services in here as LCS is for 18 plus CAMHs, Substance Misuse, Police, CSE practitioners etc. The FindItOut service will offer bespoke sessions to young people leaving care to ensure their needs are met and they are assimilated appropriately within their local area. The personal Advisor will enable the young person to overcome any barriers that are preventing them accessing employment, education or training. Supporting them to achieve good outcomes in Education, Employment or Training is a core corporate function and target of the YPS.

A specialist ‘Maximize’ programme will provide linkage for care leavers to housing options teams and also specialist local authority Careers advisors. As part of the ‘Maximize’ programme young people can meet staff in locations that are accessible, conducive for development and offer access to a wider range of services all who will be available to support the implementation of the Pathway plan. All available resources will be utilised to ensure that young people leaving care have access to these resources. Apprenticeships will also be offered directly within the Service where appropriate. It will be key in preventing young people from becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) that they are supported and advised to gain access to the opportunities they need to enable them to take the first steps on their chosen career paths.

Financial capabilities

• Care leavers receiving financial support and guidance from their local authority and benefits agency, so that they are able to manage their income and reduce the risks of falling into debt;

Care leavers develop the skills and confidence they need to maximise their chances of successful maturity to adulthood, including parenthood. This includes learning to budget’ (Ofsted)
A financial package will be offered to all young people leaving care formed from their entitlements, which will include any savings that have been accrued on behalf of the young person by the County Council, under either the Child trust Fund or Junior ISA schemes. In addition to this, support will be offered to enable the gaining of additional financial entitlements associated to their situation and future plans. Specific programmes will also be offered to help the young people understand how to budget and manage their finances including that of opening and managing bank accounts, income and debt management, consumer rights, income generation and general financial management.

Health – physical and mental

- Young people leaving care have timely access to mainstream and specialist health services, which meet their physical and mental health needs.

_Care leavers have access to and understand their full health history and are provided with all key documents they need to begin their lives as young adults, for example national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports. The health needs of care leavers are clearly assessed, prioritised and met. Child and adolescent mental health services, adult mental health provision, therapeutic help and services for learning or physically disabled young people and adults are available when they are needed._ (Ofsted)

The LCS will offer access to and support understanding of the health histories of those young people leaving care. Support and access will also be given to mental and physical health services through the development of a health passport, currently being developed under the Multi-Agency for Children Looked After, Implementation Group (MACLAIG), in association with the Health Authority.

Programmes and support will also be developed to help young people access and transition to adult health and mental health services which are currently under discussion. A close working and partnership working will be further developed with CAMHS and adult services given the high risk and propensity of exploitation and abuse to have had or may occur. It is also the case that past trauma suffered which resulted in the young person being placed into care could also re-emerge once the young person is settled and secure. It is often the case when the young person has stability, support and security this is the time when they are in a position to be able to cope with and deal with past trauma. Equally collaborations will occur with specialised teams for disability to ensure the additional physical and mental needs of this particular sub-group are identified and met via optimised services being developed that cater for the additional need requirements.

Access to and encouragement of leisure and cultural pursuits will also be supported which will in turn enable young people to develop new and emergent skills and interest that best serve their own interests and the development of confidence and self-esteem via achievement, no matter how small. This is seen as key in developing resilience and coping mechanisms against key mental health problems i.e. depression.

Housing

- Young people leaving care live in safe and suitable accommodation that meets their individual needs.
- Programmes to reduce homelessness address the specific needs of care leavers.
They can remain in placements beyond their 18th birthday or, where more appropriate, live in permanent and affordable accommodation that meets their needs and those of their children, where relevant. Care leavers are safe and feel safe, particularly where they are living, and are helped to understand how their life choices will affect their safety and well-being. Care leavers are helped to find housing solutions that best meet their needs. Risks of tenancy breakdown are identified and alternative plans are in place. Accommodation for care leavers is appropriate for each young person to safely develop their independence skills. Houses of multiple occupancy are only used when it is a young person’s preferred option and it can demonstrably be shown to be in their best interests. (Ofsted)

Full support and assistance in coping with living independently will be offered through a series of initiatives that could include such initiatives as rent guarantee schemes, training houses, landlord and tenant mediation and so-forth, giving the best possible chance to a young person’s independent living arrangements succeeding first time.

As part of the Leaving Care Service the Personal Advisor will have access to the expertise of the Youth Homeless Prevention Team. The YHPT will support any assessments in relation to housing and will work with District and borough Housing Options team to support transitional arrangements, with the purpose of locating in an appropriate geographical area which is best placed to support and sustain the housing option. This will include full consideration of the young person’s choice of area they may wish to locate to and the reason for this. It is noted that safeguarding and risk of exploitation will be carefully considered equally and worked through with the young person. Children’s Social Care would work with the Young People’s Service to help young people to repair, where appropriate their relationships with family and friends, to increase the resource and resilience in the family to provide support to the young person in addition to the County Council. Young people would only be placed where they were safe and sustainable.

The Personal Advisor, Housing Personal Advisor officer will engage with young people prior to any crisis developing and will support the young person to overcome any difficulties. This team will work with the young person to access appropriate funding on their journey to independence.

Team managers will conduct a needs assessment on the client group to ascertain if certain courses or programmes are appropriate e.g. Independent living skills, cooking on a budget etc. The team leader will then coordinate accessible bespoke or generic courses in the local area for the young person.

**Justice System – reducing offending/re-offending and the risk of being exploited**

- Intervention and partnership working to reduce crime and the risk of young people being exploited specifically address the needs of care leavers.
- Clear transitions to adult services aimed to be seamless and supportive

Any risks associated with offending, drug or alcohol misuse, going missing or with sexual exploitation are known by adults who have a responsibility for them and effective plans are in place to reduce the risk of or actual harm to them. Care leavers are supported to take responsibility for their behaviour.
Specific focus will be placed within this area especially in respect of the risk of sexual exploitation, the forming of inappropriate relationships and/or abusive relationships, given the attachment issues young people in and leaving care may be prone to. Care packages will be developed specifically in line with supporting this type of issue in conjunction with the adult and young people’s mental health services.

In respect of the offending and other harmful behaviours the YPS includes the Youth Offending Service and as such this will also be a key focus. Protocols and initiatives are already in place with social care departments, Police, Adult Services and residential care to reduce the incident and over-representation of young people in care within the criminal justice system.

On-going support to develop resilience and self-confidence

- Care leavers receive high quality on-going support from their local authorities so that they do not feel lonely and isolated;

- Care leavers leave care at a time when they are ready

Care leavers are positive about themselves. Their achievements are celebrated and the local authority shows they are positive and proud of their care leavers. Care leavers develop the skills and confidence they need to maximise their chances of successful maturity to adulthood, including parenthood. This includes learning to budget, to live independently and to manage safe relationships and behaviour. Care leavers form and maintain relationships with carers and staff from the local authority and develop supportive relationships within the community, including where appropriate contact with family and friends. They are confident that the local authority will act as a reasonable parent in supporting their transition into adulthood and providing practical, emotional and financial support until they are at least 21 and, where necessary, until they are 25. This will include the availability of a trusted and known adult (for example, the allocated personal adviser or their social worker) to support them.

The LCS will work on the principle that each young person leaving care will have a nominated key worker/s which will support and develop an individualised programme of interventions supporting the Pathway/Care Plan objectives including the long-term aspirations and motivations of the individual. The package of interventions could include 1:1, small or large group work, specialist and/or community based programmes and activities. The support offered to help the young person engage with these opportunities will be coordinated with carers, significant adults, family and/or friends as appropriate so enabling positive relationships to be maintained and or developed with a view that supportive relationships will be developed within the community for the young person so helping the development of long-term support. Where the nominated key worker has to change for whatever reason i.e. to support further or more specialised interventions, or staff leaving, the transition to and introduction of a new key worker will be carefully managed and where possible begin well in advance of the actual handover. This will be done with the aim of fully supporting the young person through this change, and help to build the resilience of the young person to any future changes.

It is clearly evidenced in research that young people who leave care are particularly vulnerable to becoming parents, 25% of young women leaving care are pregnant or already are mothers, and nearly half become mothers by the age of 24. Equally young people leaving care are at particular risk
of being exploited, sexually and otherwise. Young people will be able to access specialist support and guidance to assist in reducing this risk and ensure that all of the correct services are in place, which can help prevent unwanted and inappropriate pregnancies and reduce the risk of exploitation.

The aim of the LCS will be for the young person to have developed a strong and positive sense of self with confidence and self-esteem being raised. This will enable the young person to become a fully engaged and responsible citizen and member of the community making a positive contribution to society in whatever form that takes.

Output, Outcome and Impact Measurement Setting

A new Monitoring of Outcomes Form (MOF) has been designed and created to enable the measurement and impact of the provision for young people leaving care, which will sit within Framework. From the data collected within this form, which is completed following every interaction with a young person by their Personal Advisor, it will be possible to not only assess and evaluate the compliance to statutory duties but track assess the progression towards independence, the outcomes achieved and the impact made via the delivery of a tailored package of interventions.

The information within the above will be utilised to assess the following outcome and impact measures:

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<th>Key Interest Area</th>
<th>Outcomes and Impact Measures</th>
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<td><strong>Overarching Areas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pathway Plan</td>
<td>• 100% of Pathway Plans are in date and relevant to the young person’s needs with a review date set</td>
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<td>Missing from Care</td>
<td>• Reduced incidents of young people reported missing from Care</td>
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<td>Voice of the young person</td>
<td>• Clear evidence of the voice of the young person in all decisions that are taken which effect the young person and where the voice of the young person has changed and/or altered a service intervention/policy/process</td>
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<td><strong>Education, Employment and Training</strong></td>
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<td>• Gained / re-engaged in Employment, Education and/or Training</td>
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<td>• Qualifications/accreditations gained</td>
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<td>• Improved life-chances</td>
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<td>• PEP’s are in place for all young people aged 16/17yrs in education</td>
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<td><strong>Financial capabilities</strong></td>
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<td>• Better ability to budget and manage finances</td>
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<td>• reduced debt</td>
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<td>• increased ability to seek financial information, advice and guidance</td>
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<td>• substance misuse</td>
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<td>• Sexual Exploitation</td>
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<td>• Unwanted Pregnancies</td>
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### Leading healthy lifestyle
- Increased/engagement in positive physical and cultural activities
- Increased access to other health services with standard health checks taken up on a regular basis i.e. dentists, opticians, well-being clinics etc.
- Health passports are in place for all young people
- Positive increase in general well-being

### Housing
- Young people are placed in safe and suitable accommodation with no young people aged 16/17yrs in Bed and Breakfast accommodation on a long term basis
- Tenancy Agreement in place
- Rent arrears improved/paid,
- increased feeling of being safe
- increased security of accommodation, reduced risk of placement/tenancy breakdown
- greater living skills developed
- increased ability to cope with living independently

### Justice System – reducing offending/re-offending and the risk of being exploited
- Reduced risk of offending
- reduced risk of exploitation

### On-going support to develop resilience and self-confidence
- increased sense of self/identity
- greater understanding of own cultural history
- increased understanding of family/own history
- increased building of supportive/positive relationships

**NB:** Baseline figures will be established for each of the above measurements with progressive targets set within the yearly business planning process of the YPS to enable the required impact and outcomes to be achieved.

### Monitoring and Evaluation of Outcomes and Impact

The LCS will be fully monitored, evaluated and quality assured utilising both existing and new processes which look to monitor quality of service delivered, compliance to statutory duties, outcomes and impacts achieved. In all of these elements the voice of the young person will be captured and developed from within the existing Children Looked After Participation Strategy. Impact measurement will be created to ensure the developments made both personal and social are captured in a robust way. It will be critical that evidence is gained of the progression made throughout the transition to adulthood set against the interventions received.

Evidence will also be collected to show the difference the voice of young care leavers has made in developing and changing the services that they receive, including the actions taken as a direct result of their comment/input. A lot of this work is already in progress through the work of the existing Children in Care Council, the evidence of which is posted on the County Council’s young person website YourSpace.
A significant aspect of the above will be to both deepen knowledge and understanding of the type of services that are most effective for young people leaving care. The impact and outcomes achieved for young people are clearly articulated and evidenced and to enable the robust monitoring of the strategy and operational delivery of the Service. This will ensure the LCS will remain relevant and effective in the short, medium and long term. It will also enable the identification of gaps in services and/or provision for young people and help identify what is required to fill those gaps.

Assessment will be continuous with analysis of effectiveness completed in line with the existing evaluation and monitoring processes of the YPS’s, which is inclusive of a monthly monitoring report for all service areas. An annual report and review will be completed, alongside a half year analysis and assessment of impact and outcomes. Impact measurements will be taken in the short, medium and long term.

**Stages of Implementation:**

The implementation of the new Leaving Care Service began on the w/b 27th October, coinciding and coordinated with the developments and review of Social Care.

Following the initial implementation the LCS the service will be expanded to include all young people aged 16+ years who hold care status. This expansion will enable services to be developed that not only support those who are leaving care, but will support those in preparations for leaving care in the future. This will especially assist in the development of resilience and emotional well-being given the potential additional difficulties these young people may experience due to the background they hold.

From this position the service will continue to be developed in detail, through a process of continual learning, evaluation and monitoring e.g. continuous improvement. The learning achieved will help continue services to be developed bespoke to the individual young people but address needs that are common to all.

**Next Steps:**

- Agree the case load numbers and allocation of staff that will be transferred from Social Care to the LCS.
- Ensure all staff are trained in and have access to Frameworki
- Review and agree levels and transfer of budgets from Social Care to YPS (YSDS) with respect to entitlements -
- Agree the recording of case notes within Frameworki, quality assurance mechanisms and evaluation processes.
- Review training needs of the youth workers/ intensive personal advisors and other associated staff with regard to raising their knowledge of working with Care Leavers, statutory duties and entitlements.
- Develop packages to deliver the curriculum and ensure the right outcomes for the young people are achieved
• Prepare and develop specific materials for the LCS including information booklets, website information and so forth.

• Oct 27th hand over of cases began

Carl Burton – Principal Manager Young People’s Service

Associated Documents:

The Care Leavers Strategy - *(National Publication)*

Ofsted Framework and Evaluation schedule Children in need of help and protection – Children looked After, Care Leavers – LSCB - *(National Publication)*

Enough is Enough - A report on child protection and mental health services for children and young people - *(National Publication)*

Children Looked After – Participation Strategy - *(Internal Document)*

Entitlements Inquiry – Report and Recommendations – All-Parliamentary Group for Children Looked After and Care Leavers - *(National Publication)*
Appendix 1

Leaving Care Service: Youth Interventions Offer (first wave)

Introduction:

With respect to the creation of the Leaving Care Service (LCS) the following statement has been produced to provide information about how Youth Interventions will be able to support this initiative.

Youth Interventions (YI) already offers a range of personalised and targeted interventions to appropriate young people across the county at a tier 2 level of need, which includes group work with specific focus on building resilience, problem solving and aims to develop young people’s overall social, emotional and well-being skills and capabilities; small case work intervention involving 1-2-1 intervention or small group intervention with the view to provide additional support, mentoring and extra help for young people to enable them to become independent young adults or being able to deal and cope with issues such as bullying and building resilience. YI provide support groups for specific vulnerable young people who are either young carers, have special educational needs or are either going to be or are teen parents; finally we also provide the ability to be responsive to young people’s needs within communities at a time of trouble via our outreach and mobile intervention programme enabling the service to ‘go to’ where young people need help and support and develop personalised interventions to deal with the issues for example anti-social behaviour; NEET to EET work etc.

Leaving Care Service (18-21 yrs) - Youth Interventions offer:
The expectation of the support that Youth Interventions will specifically be providing would be linked to developing a clear pathway for Care Leavers in becoming independent young adults following WSCC Corporate Parenting strategy and implementation plan

Being a good corporate parent means:
• Accepting responsibility for the council’s looked after children and young people
• Making their needs a priority
• Seeking the same outcomes for them as any good parent would want for their own children

Following this belief, Youth Interventions will provide a range of individual support via specific caseworker interventions - fundamentally focusing on parental specific guidance; as well as a wide series of advice/guidance through small group work session/support groups; on-line support or 1-2-1 help and support covering the following specific themes:

• **Education, Employment & Training** – *working with the young person to actively engage in education/employment or training – enabling each young person to access and retain access to appropriate provision and the support that goes with this; further/higher education/ apprenticeships, supporting young people to make good choices, help get the best qualifications/training and advice on careers; help with opportunities for work experience/volunteering etc.*

• **Financial capabilities** – *budgeting of their money; earning money; independent living, travel costs, finding somewhere to live; paying bills; house hold shopping; insurance etc.*
- **Health and well-being** – keeping healthy; accessing universal service – GP/health professionals; emergencies; healthy living – mental and physical; access appropriate social groups, positive activities, joining clubs, library cards etc.

- **Housing/ independent living** – finding somewhere to live, budgeting; renting commitment; looking after the home/selves, cooking skills, basic home skills (changing light bulb) etc.

- **Resilience and self-confidence** – guiding and supporting young person through the challenges of young adulthood; coping with the pressures of life – parental advice and guidance to enable independent living; staying safe; plan their future with them; developing independence; managing relationships; celebrating achievements; help to stay in contact with family; advice on best place to get support when leaving care;

- **Positive citizenship** (reducing offending/re-offending/risk of exploitation) – being a positive citizen; getting their voice heard (CICC); communities/neighbor relationships; manage risk taking behaviour; consequences of behaviour/actions etc. offer NCS experience to appropriately aged care Leavers as part of their pathway plan.

Youth Interventions will have a menu of modules/IAG briefings/links to on-line modules etc. to support the delivery of the suggested curriculum; this will need to be in place between October-December - timeline to be agreed.

**What will the 1-2-1 support look like?**

Youth workers will support up to a case load of 3 Care Leavers each; these young people will be able to access tier 2 services – if their needs are more demanding/ complex they will be offered a more intensive service from the IST PA’s.

To allow other work to continue to be developed within YI, this offer will involve 14 youth workers initially; each of the identified youth workers will be expected to focus on each of their cases for an average of 3 hours a week – this time commitment will vary according to the individual young person, but the average time commitment will be offered at 3 hours per week as a starter for ten; with this in mind the staff resource commitment and number of Care Leavers Youth Interventions would be able to offer support to will be as follows:

- 3 young people per 14 youth workers = 42 Care leavers
- 3 young people 3 hours per week = 9 hours per week per youth worker
- 14 youth workers 9 hours a week = 126 hours per week dedicated to working with Care Leavers.

*N.B. The time spent with each young person would be determined by their actual needs; meaning that youth workers will take into consideration the time commitment required to support and manage the young person towards independence and will need to discuss cases with team managers for confirmation and agreement of time commitment.*

**Expectations:**

**What we will be doing to support Care leavers:**

We will act as an enabler for the young person, doing everything we can to create opportunities for care leavers.
We want care leavers to:

- Feel cared about, valued and happy
- Be confident and learn how to make safe, trusting relationships
- Have a positive image of themselves and their background

We will do this by:

- Talking to the young person before making decisions about life and listen to what they have to say
- Providing service that meet the needs of young people from different backgrounds
- Encouraging care leavers to get help from professionals when needed
- Ensuring there is someone there for the young person to talk to, who will listen and take them seriously, especially if they are having problems
- Making sure care leavers have their say and get their voice heard
- Making sure the people working with the young person do the best they can and provide clear information about what care leavers expect from them as workers.

In essence: Youth Interventions will have a three phase personalised approach to working with care leavers; each youth worker will meet and evaluate each individual’s needs and will make a decision, together, whether the support provided will be ‘Supported to Thrive; Skills4life or Sorted but Supported’; each phase has a specific emphasis for youth workers to consider and work with the young people to manage their journey to independence.
Possible Issues/Concerns:

- **Readiness of the youth workers** to respond quickly to the demands of this work stream – 
  **Solution:** interim actions will be put into place to ensure the youth workers will be able to pick up their 3 case loads and provide suitable support – longer term training needs will need to be established quickly and implemented as a priority.

- **Impact on other work streams:** unsure of the impact of the 126 hours per week that Youth Interventions will be focusing on this area of work – **Solution:** Planning ahead will be crucial with a robust monitoring of staff hours and close scrutiny of what will be delivered and may need to stop...

- **Smooth transition:** short timeline for the implementation of the service... **Solution:** phased approach – ensure all staff can manage the caseloads; priority will be to focus on the needs of the individual and develop relationship quickly with young person – the second phase will be to introduce the adapted curriculum throughout the year... ensure communication is clear and effective at all times..
  ‘Framework I’ training will be available and logins to the system organised

- **Supervision/pathway plans:** new ways of working/ statuary responsibilities.... **Solution:** ensure the Youth Interventions TM’s are fully briefed as to what case management supervision requires; ensure the WSCC Children’s services supervision policy is implemented
quickly and effectively; pathway plans are effectively managed and staff are fully briefed as to their responsibilities with regard to these; in the short term the statutory requirements will be managed by the social work team and in the long term full training and commitment to staff to take on this role will be ensured.

- **Clear stepping up/down process is in place – moving on plan:** Youth workers job is to ‘get the young person to where they want to be’ support the planning and implementation of their personal journey to independence – it is critical that youth workers do not ‘do’ it for them – we need to build resilience and work **WITH** the young person to help them reach their full potential and destination – youth workers will be teachers/coaches/mentors/parental support/role model/supporters and guides to provide a smooth transition from care to independence...
Appendix 2

The type of help a young person leaving care can expect to receive by category:

*D – *Dependent on support agreed in the Assessment for Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Former Relevant</th>
<th>Former Relevant in training or Education</th>
<th>Qualifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The full cost of your accommodation and living costs to be paid for by the local authority</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Assessment for Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Personal Adviser</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway Plan &amp; 6 monthly reviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An education pathway plan (EPP) and six monthly reviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice and Support</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory visits one every 6 weeks if you have just come into care and once every 3 months if you have been in care for a year or longer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Reviews chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) every 6 months until you are 18</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An initial health assessment by a qualified medical practitioner, then a review health</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>assessment every 12 months until you are 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visits from your personal adviser within 7 days of you moving to a new property and then two every months</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with education, training and employment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support with equipment and costs for education and training</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Independent Living Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A higher education bursary of £2000 if in higher education (University)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation accommodation costs if in higher education or residential further education.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to local health, dental and optician services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>