Guidance on the Roles and Responsibilities for Professionals Supporting Young People Leaving Care

**Introduction**

The following guidance sets out a broad framework regarding the roles, responsibilities and tasks of leaving care personal advisers, social workers, carers and independent reviewing officers who are working with ‘Eligible’, ‘Relevant’, ‘Former Relevant’ and ‘Qualifying’ care leavers. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010 (revised 2015) and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Regulations and Guidance 2010 (revised 2015), particularly Chapter 3 and Appendix A.

All eligible, relevant and former relevant children (care leavers) are required to have a named personal adviser. All 16- & 17-year olds who are eligible or relevant will also have a named and qualified social worker. The social worker is responsible for co-ordinating the completion of the Leaving Care Assessment of Needs (pathway plan part 1) which will commence at 15 years and 9 months and completed in conjunction with the personal adviser at 16 years and 3 months.

The completion of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need (pathway plan part 1) will initiate the Pathway Plan (pathway plan part 2) and will also be completed at the time the young person is 16 years and 3 months.

**Note:** Children aged 14 & 15 who were accommodated under section 20 or section 21, who are detained in a young offenders’ institute or an NHS institution and complete 13 weeks as a child looked after becoming relevant children (care leavers) on reaching the age of 16. They therefore require a named leaving care personal adviser and the completion of a Leaving Care Assessment of Need and Pathway Plan. Children who are subject to Care Orders (section 31) remain children looked after when detained and on remand or on receiving a custodial sentence.

The completion of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need should be undertaken most importantly with the young person and in partnership with all parties involved in the young person’s life (parents, carers, teachers, health professionals, personal adviser, youth justice, IRO and advocates). The young person’s allocated social worker will be responsible for co-ordinating and leading the Leaving Care Assessment of Need and Pathway Plan.

The Leaving Care Assessment of Need should be agreed by the child’s social worker, personal adviser and their respective managers and authorised by the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure impartial scrutiny and oversight is provided.

The review of the Pathway Plan for an eligible care leaver, takes place on a 6 monthly basis or when any significant events take place.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Leaving Care Personal Advisers**

The section below applies to leaving care personal advisers that have a range of qualifications and experience. A personal adviser is not social work qualified and therefore do not hold social work case responsibility for 16 and 17-year olds, however work jointly with social workers and other parties during this period. A personal adviser then takes on case responsibility once the young person reaches the age of 18. Leaving care personal advisers are allocated (once the child reaches age 16) to jointly support an individual young person and ensure they are supported and prepared to make a successful transition from care to independence.

Until the young person reaches the age of 18, the social worker remains the primary case worker and case co-ordinator; with the leaving care personal adviser being the secondary worker who uses the period until the young person’s 18th birthday to get to know them, their situation and support their leaving care needs. From the young person’s 18th birthday the leaving care personal adviser assumes full case responsibility.

**Roles, Responsibilities and Task**

Prior to taking case responsibility for former relevant care leavers reaching the age 18, leaving care personal advisers have a role with all 16- & 17-year olds to ensure the child/young person is prepared for leaving care and independence. This is likely to be achieved through training or knowledge sharing with workers and carers supporting children looked after and helping them to understanding the preparation for independence process. This process includes: leaving care tasks, timescales, support services that are available to meet care leavers needs; in addition to supporting the young person directly through the Leaving Care Assessment of Need and Pathway Planning process. Leaving care personal advisers have a breadth of specialist knowledge relating to leaving care services and have a role to disperse this expert knowledge to those supporting young people aged between 16 and18 years old.

The following list of roles, responsibilities and tasks that leaving care personal advisers should undertake must not be taken as a definitive list but provides a broad set of expectations. Given that each young person is an individual with a unique set of needs and skills, leaving care personal advisers must be flexible in their approach and role.

* In conjunction with the young person’s social worker and the team manager contribute to the leaving care assessment of needs.
* Preparation of the pathway plan (with input from the young person’s social worker and carer. The personal adviser will take sole responsibility of the pathway plan once the young person reaches age 18).
* In conjunction with the team manager and social worker review the young person’s pathway plan.
* Co-ordination and/or delivery of a range of services to ensure that the young person is prepared for semi-independent and independent living. Moreover, ensure that the young person is supported in these settings.
* To ensure that the young person has a range of identity and other documents that help them to access universal services, i.e. registering for housing, welfare benefits, health services, education and training services.
* To support the young person to access services which are identified as being required to improve their well-being and individual outcomes. This will range from: identifying and highlighting individual services, making appointments with or on behalf of the young person, taking young people to appointments and supporting them through appointments/meetings.
* Assisting the young person to identify and access support services including specialist services that can broaden their support networks. Where it is assessed that the young person will have ongoing support needs, personal advisers should identify services that can continue when the leaving care responsibilities end at 25.
* Personal advisers should take responsibility for liaison with all parties involved in the young person’s support/network, i.e., family, foster carers/staying put carers, keyworkers, housing officers, health professionals, education and training professionals and any other relevant individual or agency. This will depend on the needs of the individual young person and may also vary over time.
* Ensure each young person has an accommodation pathway. This may involve helping them to access ‘Staying Put’, supported accommodation, independent accommodation (from the housing department, housing associations or other registered providers), private sector accommodation or arrangements where the young person lives with family or friends.
* Provide practical support, for example, helping a young person to complete forms, access benefits and other services. The approach should always be one of transferable learning, i.e. completing the required task with the young person, but with the aim of enabling the young person to complete the task at a future point without assistance. This approach will need to be tailored to each young person, some will only need assistance with a task once, and others may require longer term and/or ongoing assistance.
* Ensure that on reaching the age of 21/25 years the young person has a portfolio of documents/certificates and information about their care and family background with a detailed chronology of significant events and dates:
* A comprehensive health history and family health history, including a record of immunisations, significant illnesses/accidents, allergies etc. The information should include information about the young person’s family health issues and any hereditary illnesses or health risks;
* Comprehensive information about the young person’s general family history.
* Comprehensive information about the young person’s care and leaving care history which includes details of all placements, placement addresses, details and dates.
* Information about why the young person became looked after.
* A detailed eco-map, genogram or information about significant family and important people and their contact information and details.
* To provide a consistent and positive role model for the young person leaving care, i.e. ensure the young person knows how to contact their personal adviser and when their next appointment or meeting is. Also, to be on time for appointments/meetings, ensure completion of all agreed tasks, or an explanation as to why tasks have been delayed/not completed or changed.
* To provide emotional support to a young person by encouraging, positively challenging and pro-actively keeping in touch with them. This should include being aware of significant events for the young person and contacting them before/after these events to encourage, support and ‘listen’. For example, personal, phone or text contact before exams or interviews can often be very supportive and will indicate an interest in the young person. Additionally, a phone call after a driving test or difficult anniversary indicates an interest in the young person’s situation.
* Attend meetings appointments (both inside and outside of office hours).
* Arrange leaving care financial support in accordance with the leaving care finance policy in a timely and proactive manner.
* Keep in regular contact.
* Be aware of any risk issues and work to manage identified risks. This may include: risk to other professionals/agencies, substance misuse, sexual exploitation, gang issues, radicalisation issues, offending issues, self-harming, ‘missing’ episodes, exploitation by family and friends. Where risk is identified ensure a risk assessment is recorded and regularly updated.
* Ensure accurate and timely records are kept of all contacts with the young person and the different professionals/agencies involved with the young person.
* Ensure managers are informed and kept up-to date with any significant issues related to the young person that may pose a risk to them, others or the reputation of the local authority/partner agencies.
* To act in a professional manner always.

Leaving Care Assessment of Need and Case Transfer - Task Checklist

The aim of this checklist is to highlight all the tasks that should be addressed at the point a young person becomes looked after and/or when the Leaving Care Assessment of Need is undertaken. The information highlighted in this checklist should also be recorded on the child’s case file/care plan/pathway plan.

**Becoming Looked After/Leaving Care Assessment of Need Tasks (Tick to Confirm)**

Has a copy of the young person’s birth certificate been obtained?

Has the young person’s passport been obtained?

Has the young person’s National Health Number been obtained?

Has the young person’s National Insurance Number been obtained? (16 and17 year olds).

Has the young person’s education certificates or educational information been obtained?

Change of young person’s name documents / parent’s birth certificates (if relevant or required)?

Has the young person’s immigration documents been obtained (if relevant)?

Has the young person’s health information and health background been obtained?

Has the young person’s family history been obtained?

Has the parent’s child benefit and any benefit claim for the child been cancelled or transferred to an appointee?

If Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment is being claimed for the young person, has this been transferred to a Benefit Appointee or Corporate Appointee? (If the young person is placed in foster carer, both DLA (PIP) Care and Mobility can be claimed, if they are placed in residential care only Mobility can be claimed). The young person’s DLA/PIP award letter should set out the National Insurance Number.

Does the young person meet the threshold for an adult services referral? (Are you concerned that the young person will not be able to function independently because of an impairment, disability or neurological difficulty?). This will be assessed within the young person’s first Leaving Care Assessment of Need and the assessment will be sent with the referral.

Does the young person have a bank account or savings account? Do they have a Junior ISA? (Both need to be recorded on the Leaving Care Assessment of Need).

Has consideration been given to making a Criminal Injuries Compensation Award application? Has an award being made, how will it be managed?

Is there a record of all family members and their contact details?

Is there a record of all the young person’s contact details? (address, telephone number, email).

Is there a record of parents/persons with parental responsibility?

Completed by: …………………………………….. Date: ……………………………

**Leaving Care Assessment of Need and Annual Financial Audit**

*This should be completed as part of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need and at least annually or following a change of circumstances.*

Name of Young Person:

Date of Birth:

Legal Status:

Date of Audit:

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| **Does the child/young person currently have any FINANCIAL ASSETS?** | **Amount** | | **What are the arrangements for the management of the assets?**  **Have funds been confirmed?**  **Are there any specific issues?** | | |
| Savings (short-term) *held in their name or by others on their behalf* | £ | |  | | |
| Savings (long-term):  *Junior ISA;*  *Child Trust Fund;*  *St Helens interest-bearing account;* | £ | |  | | |
| Criminal Injuries Compensation Award *(\*see below)* | £ | |  | | |
| Other (specify)  *(e.g. trust funds; inheritance; accrued benefits etc.)* | £ | |  | | |
| TOTAL | £ | |  | | |
| *Savings over £6,000 are likely to lead to reduced means-tested benefits. Savings over £16,000 are likely to result in zero eligibility for means-tested benefits. In both cases, what are the oversight arrangements?* | | | | | |
| **Has a Criminal Injuries Compensation Award APPLICATION been considered?**  Yes/No | | **Does the child/young person currently claim any BENEFITS?** | |  | **Amount per week:** |
| If **Yes**, what was the outcome?  *Was it successful?*  *Was a payment made, and if so, where is it held?* | | Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or  Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (\*care/mobility) | | Yes/No | £ |
| If **No**, does the child/young person meet the threshold criteria? *Give reasons why they do not meet the criteria. Is there evidence on file to suggest that a CICA application was considered at the point of becoming a CLA?* | | Employment Support Allowance (ESA)  (Universal Credit) | | Yes/No | £ |
| Will an application be made? Yes/No | | Income Support (IS)  (Universal Credit) | | Yes/No | £ |
| What is the timescale/when should the  application be submitted? | | Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)  (Universal Credit) | | Yes/No | £ |
|  | | Housing benefit (HB)  (Universal Credit) | | Yes/No | £ |
| Other (specify) | | Yes/No | £ |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **CAPACITY** |  | **Comments** |
| **Age 16 or older:**  **Has a mental ‘Capacity’ assessment been carried out?**  **Do they have ‘Capacity’ to manage/make decisions about their finances?** | Yes/No  Yes/No |  |
| **Under the age of 16:**  **Are they likely to lack ‘Capacity’ to manage/make decisions about their finances on reaching the age of 16?** | Yes/No |  |
| **Has the child/young person been given information about the Leaving Care Finance Policy and Entitlements?** | Yes/No |  |
| **Has the child/young person been given information about the Education Allowances and Benefit Entitlements?** | Yes/No |  |

**Roles and Responsibilities - Age 16 and 17 years**

The following list provides general guidance on who should take primary responsibility for a range of activities and tasks. These expectations should be used as a guide rather than a definitive list; which person should and is best placed to undertake any given activity or task, should also be based on the knowledge and skills base of each party, who has capacity and who the young person would like to support them with a given activity/task. The IRO will provide oversight and scrutiny to ensure roles and responsibilities are being fulfilled and the young person’s pathway plan is progressing.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Social Worker** | **Leaving Care Personal Adviser** | **Foster Carer/Keyworker** |
| Ensuring the young person has a national insurance number. |  |  |
| Organising family contact and supervised contact. | Identifying a network of leaving care and family support contacts post 18 (identification of positive/  negative contacts). Supporting the young person to manage risk from negative contacts.  A network of support post 18. | Identifying positive and negative support contacts and family contacts.  Identifying a network of support post 18 - visits to community support organisations.  Direct work with the young person to help them manage risk from any negative support contacts. |
| Completion of the young person’s Personal Education Plan - education and training planning up to 18.  Assess and plan where the young person will attend education/employment/training post 18. | Support the young person and professionals to identify future education, training and employment opportunities and post 18 education and training. | Support the young person by attending post 16 open evenings and events and feed into the pathway plan with any advice. |
| Placement options up to 18. Staying Put planning and plans for independent living before the young person is 18 for their post 18 plan. | Staying put planning/review and post 18 accommodation/  housing pathways. | Exploration of staying put, accommodation and housing opportunities. Support the young person to research post 18 accommodation options. |
| Ensure the young person has all their identity documents.  Ensure the young person has key information about their time in care and pre-care experience through documented direct work/life story work. | Preparing documents and information the young person will need as they move from care to independence:  Finance and benefits  Accommodation planning  Setting up home allowance.  Key support contacts. | Supporting the personal adviser and young person to register for key services and supporting the obtaining of information and key documents. |
| The Pathway plan and pathway planning tasks. | Providing expertise and knowledge to the allocated social worker, young person and professionals about pathway planning. | Ensuring care plan and pathway plan tasks are followed up and completed. |
| Ensuring the young person is registered with health services. Attending high level health appointments. | Supporting the young person to attend health related appointments from the young person’s 18th birthday. | Attending heath related appointments and supporting the young person to take on responsibility for health needs. |
| Identifying Setting Up Home Items that are required. | Purchasing Setting Up Home Items with the young person. | Purchasing Setting Up Home Items with the young person and personal adviser. |
| Supporting placement moves at age 16 -17 years. If the young person transitions to independent living before their 18th birthday the social worker will support the young person to move and assist them with understanding their tenancy agreement. | Assisting with the move to supported and/or independent accommodation. Registration for services, particularly at point of move. Supporting the young person to understand their tenancy agreement. | Assisting with the move to supported and/or independent accommodation. Support to register for services. |
| Oversight of risk -16 -17:  CSE  Missing  Radicalisation  Financial exploitation | Supporting tasks to lower risk and mitigate risk -16 - 17  Oversight of risk from 18  CSE  Missing  Radicalisation  Financial exploitation | Supporting tasks to lower risk and mitigate risk 16 - 21/25  CSE  Missing  Radicalisation  Financial exploitation |
| Age 16-18 - completion of the case summary, chronology and genogram on a 3 monthly period or when there are any significant events. | Post 18- completion of the case summary, chronology and genogram on a 3-monthly period or when there are any significant events. |  |