**Practice Matters – Pathway Plans (PWPs)**

**October 2021**

**What is a Pathway Plan?**

A pathway plan must be prepared for all eligible children and continued for all relevant and former relevant children. It must remain a “live document”, setting out the different services and how they will be provided to respond to the full range of the young person’s needs. (Volume 3: Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers**).** Whilst the Pathway Plan should be consistently considered to evidence progress, the document on Mosaic should not be formally started until you are ready to review the document in it’s entirety.

**What is the Purpose of a Pathway Plan?**

* Pathway plans are an integral part of the support to care leavers, providing a record of the young person’s journey as they transition from a child in care to a care leaver
* It is a focused assessment that should provide reflection and analysis of the needs of the young person in relation to both the previous six months and currently, with a robust action plan focussing on supporting the young person’s aspirations for the following six months
* The PWP provides an opportunity for the young person to think purposefully about their lives, breaking down each area of need and weighing up the positives and challenges they face with each issue. It gives them the opportunity to set goals and how to achieve them

**Key Focus Areas of the Pathway Plan**

* Preparing the young person to deal with the challenges of living independently
* Identifying barriers to accessing education, employment and training
* Identifying barriers to accessing the physical and emotional health support they need including the need to evidence completion and receipt of a young person’s health history summary/health passport before they leave care.
* Identifying the support needed for the young person to achieve stability, safety and security
* Identifying barriers to achieving financial stability
* Supporting family and personal relationships through a Think Family approach

**Practice Guidance: (See also ‘My Little Book of Pathway Planning’)**

* The first PWP must be completed by age 16 and 3 months. It is the responsibility of the children’s social worker until the young person reaches 18 years of age although with input from all agencies involved.. It will then become the responsibility of the leaving care worker until the young person turns 21 years of age
* It must be reviewed every six months thereafter and capture the picture and progress throughout the period, or reviewed earlier if there is a significant change in circumstances. The Pathway Plan is not considered completed until it is signed off by a manager,
* The plan must be completed with the young person and with them being supported to use their own words where possible.
* The PWP should be written in the style of being addressed TO the young person.
* It should include feedback from involved agencies and family members, including setting specific actions for any other involved person where required
* The Leaving Care Worker should support the young person to think about where they would like to be by their 21st birthday in terms of their independence, and what they need to do and what support they need to get there
* Although completed, the PWP should be used as a “live” working document and be used with the young person on visits as a measure of how much progress they are making in terms of independence. This should be evidence in visits in-between Pathway Plan completion.
* All actions should be outcome focused with SMART planning, including clear timescales
* By the age of 20 years and six months the PWP should reflect how independent-ready the young person is in order to identify any potential further work and support needs post 21
* The young person **MUST** have their own copy of their pathway plan. This should be shared with the young person once it has been endorsed by the manager.