

Leaving Care Service

Guidance regarding care experience young people who tell us they no longer want help and support

July 2022

Introduction

In Buckinghamshire Council we value a relationship based approach to all of the support that we offer to our young people leaving care. The building of a relationship between the personal advisor and the young people they support commences from the age of 16 years and continues until they are 25 years old where they want this or 21 years old where they are doing well and feel that they no longer want the support from a personal advisor. Our proactive approach to relationship building means that we have a low percentage of young people who tell us they do not want our help and support. However, for the small number who do, we have set out the Local Authority’s approach.

Steps to engage

All of our personal advisors will ensure a proactive and tenacious approach to the engagement of our young people. Where a young person tells us they do not want our help and support, their personal advisor will adjust their approach and ways of working to encourage them to work alongside their personal advisor. This will always be balanced with listening to their wishes.

Personal Advisors will think about how they can work with these young people in a different way to ensure that they are able to access the support that is on offer. However, we recognise that there is a group of young people who do not want our help. We therefore adopt some flexibility in our approach to ensure that there is a ‘light touch’ approach. This may include offering the following:

* Pathway Plan they are engaged with
* Regular telephone contact
* Regular email communication
* Regular letters
* Birthday Cards
* Christmas Cards

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to work alongside a third party who would support the young person with the pathway plan and support for independence. This would mean that the young person is being supported with their plans for independence. The allocated personal advisor would be responsible for maintaining contact with the third party to keep up to date with the young person’s progress (with their consent) and maintain the pathway plan. In essence the third party would act as a conduit between the young person and the Leaving Care Team. Where appropriate the young person should choose who this person is.

Young Person no longer feels they need help

*“It will of course be important that the responsible authority respects the privacy of a young adult and their right to decline support. However, the responsible authority will remain under a duty to attempt to remain in contact with a young person in the same way that a reasonable parent might try to resume contact with an estranged adult child.”*

Volume 3 of the Children Act-Transitions to Adulthood

Where a young person is clear that the do not want help and support from the Leaving Care Team despite our varied, flexible approach to engagement, we will respect their wishes whilst ensuring that they are aware that the door is always open to them if the decide that want or need our help and support.

Where the decision is made for the personal advisor to take a step back the following steps will be taken to ensure that the young person has all the relevant information they need:

* Offer of a visit
* Provided with the Local Authority offer
* Provided with contact details for Money Matters and Citizen’s Advice Bureau
* Provided with a letter stating that the service is taking a step back in accordance with the young person’s wishes but the door is always open; this will include contact details for their personal advisor, managers and the main office number and address

Pathway Planning and Case Note Recording

As part of the process of respecting their right to tell us they no longer want help and support the personal advisor will record all of their attempts to engage with the young person. These cases will be discussed in reflective supervision with a manager to ensure that we have been flexible in our approach to engage the young person. This will be captured via case notes within the Local Authority’s recording data base Liquid Logic (LCS).

At the point of taking a step back from involvement with the Leaving Care Team, the supervising manager will outline the attempts made, the fact that the young person is telling us they do not want our support and the decision to take a step back from the service. They will also evidence in the case recordings what information has been shared with the young person.

Statutorily we still have a responsibility for ensuring that young people have a pathway plan until they reach the age of 21 years. Where a young person tells us they do not want the support of the Leaving Care team the allocated personal advisor will continue to compile the pathway plan. The contents of this pathway plan will outline the following:

* What attempts have been made to engage the young person
* The Voice of the young person and their wish to decline services
* The offer has been shared with the young person and when
* Evidence of their Care Leaver status and entitlements
* Offer of Advocacy
* What the personal advisor knows of their plans for the future
* The door is always open should they wish to return for support

Keeping in Touch responsibilities also remain in place and to ensure our young people are appropriately safeguarded, we will attempt to make face to face contact every three months. This visit will be offered via a letter/text/email/WhatsApp message with a time and date to meet encouraging the young person to get in touch. They will then be able to opt out, thus encouraging them to make contact whilst respecting their wishes. This will continue until they are over the age of 21 years to remind them of their rights and that they can access the service at any time. The personal advisor will be responsible for appropriately recording this on LCS as a case note.

Where young people actively continue to tell us that they no longer want a Keeping in Touch visit, this should be reflected in management oversight to outline the young person’s wishes and that they acknowledge the steps taken by the personal advisor. This ensures a balanced approach to respecting the young person whilst ensuring that their safety and wellbeing is being considered and where possible addressed.