

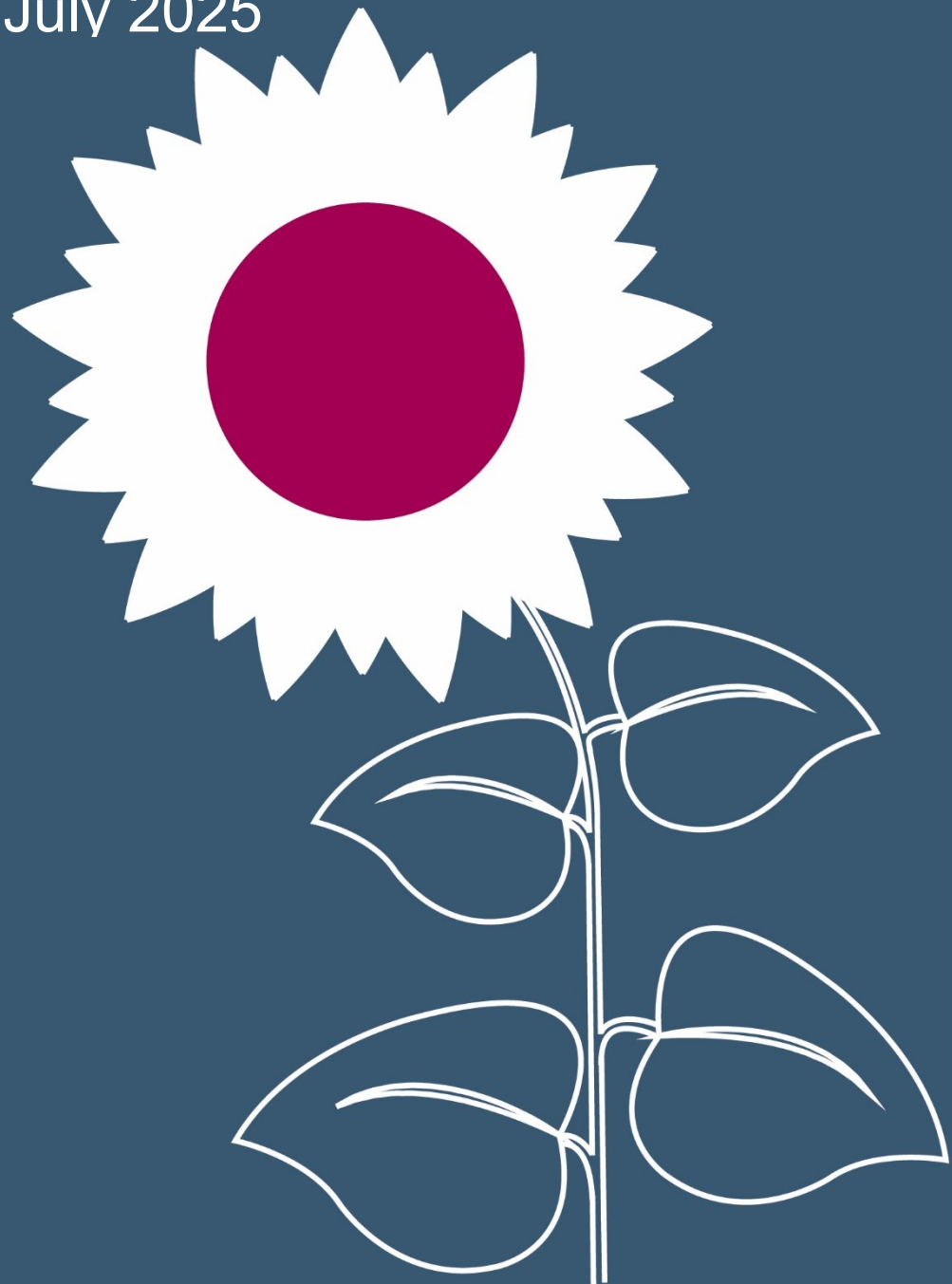


City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Preparing Young People to Live Independently

Tri X 5_4_8 July 2024

Review date July 2025



Information sheet

Service area	Children's Social Care
Date effective from	Dec 2013
Responsible officer(s)	Strategic Manager Children in Care
Date of review(s)	Dec 2014 March 2021 July 2022 July 2023 July 2024
Status: Mandatory (all named staff must adhere to guidance) Optional (procedures and practice can vary between teams)	Mandatory
Target audience	Residential staff
Date of committee/SMT decision	
Related document(s)	
Superseded document(s)	July 2023
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Leaving a place that has been home for a young person can be a very difficult time for all concerned as friendships and relationships will have been built up, and often the thought of losing those relationships can be difficult for both young people and carers.
- 1.2 We are all anxious at times in our life when things change and the routine we feel safe and secure in alters. Therefore it is particularly important that the young person who is moving into independent living is fully prepared for the highs and lows independence can bring.
- 1.3 The disengaging process and the discharge from the home should always take into account the emotional and practical aspects of moving on.

2 Principles of Policy

- 2.1 Young people depend on the adults in their lives to prepare them for adulthood and independent living. Carers must therefore undertake this task for looked after children throughout a young person's residence in care.
- 2.2 The preparation must be based on a comprehensive assessment of need, completed with the young person, and be delivered at the pace of the young person. Where possible the team around the young person and the young person should work with the house project, who complete a set program with the young people and are able to continue to support the young person when they leave the residential home.

3 Legislative Context

- 3.1 This residential policy must be read in conjunction with the **Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**, the **Children and Young Person's Act 2008** and Stoke on Trent's Leaving Care Policy and Procedures and Leaving Care Financial Policy and Procedures.

4 Enabling Young People to Move on Positively

- 4.1 All arrangements for the young person to move from the home should be carefully planned with the home, parents (where applicable), social worker, other professionals working with the young person and Changing Minds.

4.2 Where possible the young people will work with the house project (in -house) or other supported living agencies, this will take place post 16, usually when the young people are approx. 16 years and 6 months old, this will take place if it is deemed appropriate for the young person. The House project will meet with the young person prior to them being enrolled onto the course. The House Project will support the young person in getting ready to live in their own property. This is done through 1-1 work with the young people and through group sessions, where the young people are able to form supporting peer groups. The House Project have set plans for the young people to complete to help improve their knowledge before starting to look for properties for the young person in a preferred area. The young person will be able to view several properties (up to 3) before deciding where they want to live. The young person will then have input into how the budget on the property is spent and will be able to decorate this. Carers from the home will be able to support the young person to help them to make the property a home.

The House project will continue to support the young person when they leave the residential home, this will usually be around 17 years – 17 years and 6 months old, depending on the abilities and understanding of the young person.

4.3 All parties, including the young person's family, where appropriate, must be aware of plans relating to the transition from the children's home to semi-independence/independence. All parties must also be aware when specific tasks will happen and who will undertake these tasks.

4.4 Carers must work in partnership with the young person's social worker to ensure young people are:

- Emotionally and practically prepared to move on.
- Able to voice their views, wishes and opinions when plans are being made about the future.
- Able to visit their new home prior to being discharged.

4.5 In preparation for adult life carers, along with the house project and other agencies staff will support and encourage each young person in their development of skills in:

- Budgeting, and relevant information around monies, such as setting up direct debits, opening bank accounts, improve knowledge on different types of credit
- Legal rights
- Personal Hygiene
- Completing Forms
- First Aid and Home Safety

- Community living and accessing community services including social activities
- Responsibility of living in Rented Accommodation
- Healthy Eating/Shopping
- Further Education or Employment
- Clothes Care
- Where to go for Health Advice
- Where to go for Financial Help
- Building Self Esteem and Confidence
- Forming and Maintaining Appropriate Relationships
- Where appropriate, use of the training flat

4.6 Leaving home to into a new home on your own can be a time of mixed emotions for the young person. They will therefore need to be supported with consistent advice and encouragement from carers during this transition period. Carers will link in with Changing Minds around how to best support the young person during this transition period. Carers will make sure that they continue to liaise with the house project so that they are aware of how the young person is dealing with moving on and so that they are better able to support.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The completion of the discharge book is the responsibility of the staff on duty on the day the young person leaves the home.

5 Emergency Situations

- 5.1 Only in exceptional circumstances, would a young person be moved out of the home at short notice.
- 5.2 In the event of a young person having to leave at short notice, as much preparation and explanation as possible should be given by the carers and social worker.

6 Moving On

6.1 Disengaging can be difficult for the young person and residential child care workers. To ease this transition residential child care workers may stay in touch with the young person. Any contact, which is maintained with the young person, will:

- Be carefully planned and based on the individual needs of the young person
- Be in the best interest of the young person
- Be agreed by the social worker
- Be monitored by the Registered Manager
- Only occur while the carer is on duty unless in care planning meeting
- Be recorded on the child's file or by the social worker
- Be reviewed regularly by the young person, their social worker, the carer and the Registered Manager