**Beyond Custody guidance**

**Supporting Care Experienced young people in readiness for their release from custody**

**Vision :**

* Refocus on improving our Practice with Young People who are in Custody
* Regular visits, financial assistance and improved resettlement
* Reflect on the current issues in Practice
* Keeping uptodate with new in practice, laws etc
* Introduce good practice principals
* Improve links with Probation and Youth Offending

**Context:**

1. Evidence tells us that care leavers (18-25) face additional challenges after leaving prison, requiring support to find a stable home, income and their place in the community, in order for them to lead meaningful, positive futures
2. Young people who have spent time in care are more likely to have poorer outcomes than their non care experienced peers. As evidenced by the Children Schools and Families Select Committee Report on Looked After Children (2009) and the Centre for Social Justice Report ‘Couldn’t Care Less’. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics in December 2022 show that children in care are much more at risk of interacting with the criminal justice system by the age of 24 than their peers. Over half (52%) of the care experienced children had been convicted of a criminal offence by the academic year they turned 24. Further statistics identified 40% of these young people received a custodial sentence.
3. Evidence informs us that care leavers (18-25) face additional challenges after leaving prison, requiring support to find a stable home, income, and their place in the community, for them to lead meaningful, positive futures. It is estimated that between 37 per cent (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016) and 50 per cent (Prison Reform Trust, 2016) of children in custody have been in care at some point in their lives. Care leavers are more likely to breach licence conditions and are at a higher risk of reoffending.
4. Research has identified that provision for care leavers released from prison is often patchy and inconsistent. Building on the HMPPS “Resettlement and Pre Release Planning Guidance (October 2022) the HMPPS “Care Leavers Matter“ (March 2023) guidance includes extracts from care experienced people in the criminal justice system identifying what would help them. It identifies and promotes good practice between prisons, probation and local authorities, working collaboratively, to provide the support to care experienced young people/adult.
5. The purpose of developing this beyond custody framework for staff to implement is to continue to develop interagency working of Northamptonshire Childrens Trust (NCT) and The Probation Service to improve how we support to reduce involvement of the criminal justice system when dealing with trauma impacted behaviours of young care experienced young people/adults.

**Beyond Custody guidance, making a difference:**

* Plan effectively for release
* What does this look like? Meet with YOS, Housing, Probation
* Employment, Mentoring, Education
* Work with partner agencies to formulate plans for resettlement
* Ensure care leavers are aware of the support and how to access help
* Provide a joined up approach with Probation
* EU Settlement Status when in custody
* What is this likely to mean? Cannot apply, potentially facing deportation

Beyond Custody places at its core, the young person being fully involved and enabling the young person to shift their identity from pro criminal to pro social through both individualised personal support and personalised structural support.

Wherever possible, arrangements should be made for young people to visit prospective placements and employment or educational facilities and to meet relevant practitioners before their release.

There are facilities for a young person to be granted Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) or Mobility to allow outside visits to take place, subject to relevant agreements.

It is essential that there is clarity about who is responsible for each element of the young person's plan and the arrangements for communication and enforcement.

The local authority should record this plan and make copies available to the young person, the supervising YOT officer, Probation, IRO, the establishment, other agencies that will be involved with supporting the young person after release and the young person's family, if appropriate

* Ensuring young people have equality of opportunity
* Challenging discrimination
* Building and maintaining trusted relationships with our young people
* Being proactive and tenacious to achieve and do what is right for the young person
* Promoting desistance, including positive activities
* Linking in with other agencies who can offer a supportive network to our young people
* Being consistent, approachable, calm, interested and aware of our approach

