|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A self help guide for the process of: |  |  |

Young people in care transitioning to leaving care.

Pathway assessment is required to be completed by 15 years and 9 months.

Pathway plan need to be completed by 16 years and 3 months.

Care leaver Classifications need updating as and when from the point the first pathway plan is created and as and when circumstances change. i.e. change in EET

-(the classification 'care leaver in touch' option; 'returned home to live with parents' is for '**qualifying**' care leavers only - this is for monitoring purposes for this cohort of young people via carefirst.

All other CIC and care leavers who may have returned to live with parents needs to be amended on the 'type of accommodation' options within classifications.

**Classifications on carefirst 6;**

Section 31 care orders ;

**'Eligible'** from 16th birthday until 18th birthday

(unless care order discharged after 16th birthday and prior to 18th birthday; then they will be ‘**Relevant**’ as under 18 years of age).

Section 20 children in care; **'eligible'** on 16th birthday.

Become **'relevant'** if leave care before aged 18.

**(Only applies to section 20 post 16 year olds)** Become **'qualifying'** if return to live with person with parental responsibility before aged 18 after being there for a period of 6 months. (The 6 month period has to be reached before 18 years of age – if they turn 18 and have not yet been home for 6 months then their classification will remain and then change as normal to **‘former relevant’** upon 18th birthday and they retain full care leaving status and entitlements as outlined within the guidance).

Within this 6 month period of living at home they are **‘Relevant’** and entitled to care leaver maintenance monies and setting up home grant. **THIS ALL CEASES AFTER 6 MONTH PERIOD**. Family need to be advised of this.

* if planned return home CIC reviews and pathway review will need to reflect this
* If unplanned return home-move then the pathway plan needs updating as this is a significant change in circumstance. Pathway plan can then be updated in 6 months time at the point the young person becomes **'qualifying'** and can then close to children's social care.
* If unplanned move and there are concerns that the young person and family will require on-going support or intervention it may be appropriate to complete a SAP to assess whether the young person/family meets the level of supports for child in need, CAF support etc for when ‘**qualifying**’ status is created and CICCL team cease to be involved.

Young people (section 20) aged 16 and 17 who have a **'qualifying'** care leaver status are not entitled to care leaving money entitlement and it is an advice only service. However if their circumstances change they can contact children's social care and if they ask for a higher level of support, or accommodation has broken down at home - an assessment of their situation may result in them returning into care - or they can receive support as a **'relevant'** care leaver.

**‘Qualifying’** care leavers are however, entitled to assistance with financial support for EET purposes if assessed that the training is appropriate and the request is needed. This includes monies for higher education (university) and vacation accommodation costs in-between term time.

When 6 month period is reached and after discussions with young person and family agreeing for case to close to Children’s social care – the case will be closed but the ‘**Qualifying**’ classifications need to remain open as this is for care leaving monitoring purposes.

On 18th birthday all young people’s classification change to **'former relevant' (except ‘qualifying’ care leavers as this classification remains in place until 21 years of age or a possible change in circumstance)**

Young people who come into care aged 16 & 17 years via the ‘**southwark’** protocol – via Child In Need Teams.

During the 13 weeks after they come into the care of the local authority they are classed as a child in care and therefore will need a care first classification of ‘**eligible’** for this period**.** Following this timescale – dependant upon the young person’s circumstances a discussion can be held between the social worker and a manager to determine whether the young person will remain as an ‘**Eligible**’ child in care or a ‘**relevant**’ care leaver. Usually this is dependant upon accommodation situations and legal order being either remaining on a Section 20 or a Care order being secured.

All young people who come into care under the Southwark protocol have to have their classifications and pathway assessment and plan completed before the end of the 13 week timescale.

Once young people have reached the 13 week timescale they then retain child in care/care leaver status as any other child in care would.

If they young person returns home or to someone with parental responsibility before the 13 weeks period is reached then they change to a ‘**Qualifying**’ care leaver.

In other circumstances if a Section 31 Full Care Order is discharged after the 16th birthday then these young people require a **‘Relevant’** care leaver classification and are also entitled to care leaving entitlements.

If the care order has been discharged due to returning to live at home with parents, then the 6 month rule also applies and after this period of time the young people will change to ‘**Qualifying’** and receive only advice and support entitlements.

Halton’s homelessness strategy – with reference to Southwark within:

<http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/housing/Homelessness%20Strategy.pdf>

The pathway plan review document is the young person’s document and many agencies such as housing or Young offending services (as an example) may ask to have a copy of the document, - permission is needed from the young person to be able to share their document.

If a young person does not want someone at their pathway plan/review meeting that is their choice - even if it is a professional. Information can be gathered separately by the SW/PA.

**Requirements before reaching 18 and/or transitioning to a care leaver personal advisor;**

* Aged 17 – checks to be made with Halton Housing Trust to make links for a trainer flat or if a property pool Plus application needs to be made – if independent living is part of the young person’s pathway planning.

As an under 18 task this needs completing as a priority task by SW.

* full up to date U.K. Passport
* Valid bank Account
* Birth certificate
* If transferring from CIN team it would be helpful for a full transfer summary to be completed as there will be no knowledge of the case/history.

PA's will Attend the last pathway plan/CIC review (if invited by SW) before 18th birthday as this is good practice to introduce/become aware of situation/ develop relationships with young people.

All children in care are entitled to a personal advisor from aged 16 years plus. Full case transfer to a care leaver personal advisor is at the point of leaving care for those young people on a section 20, and aged 18 for young people on a full care order. (Current practice within Halton).

Up until this time the social worker can dual fulfil the role - however the leaving care PA’s can meet with young people and offer advice and support where capacity allows.

Accommodation moves for 18year olds should aim to be a joined up approach between allocated social Worker and personal Advisor to ensure all needs are met in relation to transition to independence and accommodation move is achieved. If it is identified that individual young people will require a high level of daily support as assessed through their cic review/pathway plan for a planned move, then additional services may need to be looked at such as floating support for the transition for them in setting up/moving into their own accommodation – this is due to the limitations on availability of Personal Advisors as a daily role and to pre-empt workload management.

Personal advisors to be made aware where possible in advance of receiving a transition to independence young person, so that capacity to support is not an issue at the point of case transfer.

**Generally a more joined up approach to transitioning young people in care into leaving care and becoming more aware**

**Of the transition to adulthood leaving care guidance 2010;**

<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/21936/1/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf>

Other relevant reads;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397649/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf> (also includes links for other references to agencies supporting young people transitioning to leaving care p123)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/535899/Care-Leaver-Strategy.pdf>

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/02/27/young-person-leaves-care-forget-trauma-brought/>

Research widely acknowledges that good transition to leaving care is evident when started a long time before the young person reaches 18 and at a point where transferred to a Care Leaver Personal Advisor.

Good transition is also the wish of CIC and care leavers within Halton - as consulted with through the children in care council and consultation events.

Hopefully this has been helpful and can be used as a point of reference if needed to.

**Halton care leaving team**

Ratcliffe.L (updated 2018)