A Guide to Trafford Council’s

Staying Put Programme

January 2020

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**Definition of Staying Put**

From the age of 18 years old young people are no longer in care or ‘looked after’ and therefore fostering arrangements and legislation relating to children placed with their former foster carers no longer applies. In circumstances where a former relevant child remains with their foster carer after the age of 18 years this should therefore be deemed as a **‘Staying Put’ Arrangement**.

The benefits of Staying Put arrangements for a young person are primarily about extending a familial relationship where the young person continues to experience security and stability. Young people who are in foster care should be able to benefit from Staying Put arrangements regardless of whether they are in education, employment or training before turning 18 years old. Where both the young person and foster carer agree to a Staying Put arrangement and where such an arrangement is assessed as being appropriate then all young people and foster carers will be supported to ensure that the Staying Put arrangement is pursued.

Staying Put arrangement represent an extremely positive post care option for care leavers and the importance of Staying Put arrangements for care leavers will be embedded into training, assessment and supervision processes of all long term foster carers.

**Planning for Staying Put Placements**

Social workers should start discussions with the young person and foster carers regarding the option of Staying Put as early as possible. There is no requirement on the length of time that a young person is placed with their foster carers before they are 18 years old for entitlement to a Staying Put arrangement. Where a Staying Put arrangement is agreed as the plan for the child then this plan should be –

- Integrated into the child’s Pathway Plan

- Ratified by an Independent Review and the reviewing process should be used as a method of tracking the progress of this plan

**The Young Person’s Pathway Plan**

The Pathway Plan will describe the details of the Staying Put arrangement and will identify how the arrangement will support the young person to develop –

 Independence skills

 Relationship skills

 Financial and budgeting skills

 Self-care skills

 Engagement skills relating to engagement with training and employment

The Pathway Plan will reference how young people can access their leaving care grant. It is recognised that the bulk of the grant would not be made available until the young person moves on to live independently. However, some items can be purchased from the leaving care grant whilst the young person is in the staying put arrangement, which they can take with them once they move from the Staying Put residence.

**Eligibility and Duration of the Staying Put Arrangement**

There is no requirement on the length of time that a young person is placed with their foster carers before they are 18 years old for entitlement to a Staying Put arrangement. In order to be eligible for a Staying Put arrangement the young person will need to be a former relevant child and the arrangement will need to be consistent with the young person’s welfare. The arrangement can continue up until at least 21 years old and up to 24 years if the young person is undertaking a programme of training or education.

**Financial Support to Staying Put Carers**

In –house Trafford Foster carers ONLY ( for IFA Carers please discuss with the SP Service)

Financial support for Staying Put carers was reviewed in June 2019. From 1st April 2019 in-house foster carers who convert to be Staying Put carers will receive the same weekly allowance that they received as in -house foster carers for the first 6 months of the Staying Put arrangement.

In cases where the foster carers fostering rate is below £243.47 the carers will be uplifted to £243.47.

After the 6 month period Staying Put carers will be provided with a weekly Staying Put allowance of £243.47. However, whilst a proportion of the funding will be provided by the Local Authority some of the payment will be made up from –

- Any housing benefit entitlement the young person is able to claim

- Any contribution that the young person is required to make from personal funds or income

The receipt of funds for Staying Put arrangement may have implications for any benefits a provider receives and for tax payments. The Department for Education alongside HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions produced guidance on the tax and benefits aspects of staying put arrangements. The guidance is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-put-arrangements-for-care-leavers- aged-18-years-and-above](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-put-arrangements-for-care-leavers-aged-18-years-and-above)

The allocated supported lodgings coordinator will signpost carers to agencies who can provide expert advice about matters relating to the implications of tax and benefits of providing a Staying Put arrangement.

The overall principle of payment to Staying Put carers will be a no detriment principle and if a Staying Put care experiences either a loss of benefit or an increase in tax contributions as a result of entering into a staying put arrangement, then a compensatory adjustment payment will be made by Trafford. This is to ensure that carers receive a total weekly allowance that is equal to the Staying Put allowance. Young people will be expected to make a contribution to their ‘keep’ and rent and this contribution will be deducted from the final payment made to staying put carers.

Young people who are eligible to claim benefits must do so to ensure they are receiving the monies they are entitled to.

**The Formula for Assessing Payments to Staying Put Carers.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Basic Care payment | £ |
| Deduct the contribution of young person for rent and keep  (This will be £19.48 per week if the young person is claiming benefits and will be up to a maximum of £50 if the young person is working. The contribution that the young person will be expected to make will be assessed by the supported lodgings coordinator ) | £ |
| Add any compensatory payment for loss of benefits | £ |
| Add compensatory payment for income loss due to Tax  adjustment | £ |
|  |  |
| Total payment to provider |  |

**Young People Attending University or Living Away**

Living away from the foster carer’s home for temporary periods of time, such as attending higher education courses, should not preclude young people from remaining

in a Staying Put arrangement. It is recognised that supporting Staying Put arrangements

enables the continuation of familial relationships which gives the young person the security and stability they require whilst they are focusing on their education.

**Payments to Carers of Staying Put Arrangements Where the Young Person are**

**Resident at University or Other Residential Study Establishment.**

In such circumstance carers will be paid a pro-rata payment of the full £243.47

weekly allowance for each 24hour period that the young person resides at the provider’s home. In addition to this payment the provider will receive a £150 per term retainer payment.

**Payments to Staying Put Carers in Exceptional Circumstances**

In cases where young people have high levels of need or additional complexity the Local Authority will pay additional payments.

The Procedure for requesting temporary additional financial support for Supported Lodgings and Staying Put providers in exceptional circumstances must be followed.

Such payments would only be made when the following criteria apply:

* The Supported lodgings or Staying Put carer is required, due to the needs of the young person, to deliver support in placement over and above that which is usually expected of a SLP or SP provider.
* The young person’s needs require exceptional levels of supervision and support over and above that which providers are usually expected to deliver
* In circumstances where by the high level of support is predicted to be enduring and required over a longitudinal period of time
* Where the provider is required to complete specialised professional and accredited training over and above that which providers are usually required to undertake.

Additional financial support can only be agreed for a period of up to three months and the additional funding arrangement should be reviewed by the allocated worker on a monthly basis. This review will assess the progress of the young person and whether the additional support has been effective for the young person.

The period of adjustment payments can only be made for up to a maximum of one year.

**The Process of Converting a Foster Placement to a Staying Put Placement and**

**The Role of Trafford’s Staying Put Team.**

The social worker will provide a request report to the Head of Service (Children in Care)

using Appendix 1 (Request to Convert a Foster Placement to a Staying Put Placement.

**Dispute Resolution Process**

If the Strategic Lead declines to agree a conversion of a Foster Placement to a Staying Put arrangement she will write to both the young person and the foster carer explaining why the decision has been made.

Where there is a disagreement between the Strategic Lead and either the child and/or the prospective staying put provider about the decision, the Strategic Lead will make it clear in his communication that either party can appeal against the decision to the Director - Early Help and Children's Social Care

The young person in making such an appeal can enlist the help of Trafford’s Children’s

Rights Service.

Both the young person and the foster carer have the right to pursue a formal complaint about these matters. The letter from the Strategic Lead will explain the complaints process.

**The Role of the Trafford’s Staying Put Co-coordinator**

Once the Staying Put arrangement has been agreed by the Strategic Lead the Service Manager Placements will allocate a Staying Put Coordinator.

The Staying Put Co-coordinator will play a key role in –

 Supporting the carer of Staying Put placements and the young people who remain in Staying Put Placements

 Providing guidance and advice about the expectations placed on carers

 Supporting carers to support young people to develop independent skills

 Providing support on safe care and the management of behaviour

 Completing the assessment of financial support that is provided to the carer

 Providing regular supervision to the carers

 Renewing DBS checks which carers will be required to renew every 3 years

**The Staying Put Carer Agreement**

Prior to commencement of the placement the co-ordinator will meet with the carer and draw up the Staying Put Agreement.

The agreement will make clear –

 The expectations that are placed on Staying Put carers

 The level of financial support they will receive

 The support that will be provided by the co-ordinator

 The supervision and review process

The Provider Agreement will be signed by both the Provider and the Staying Put Co- ordinator.

**The Living Together Arrangements**

Prior to the commencement of the placement the allocated Staying Put Co-ordinator will convene a meeting with the carer, young person and personal adviser to develop a Living Together Agreement.

All looked after children have a Placement Plan that sets out the day to day arrangements governing the placement and which is incorporated into the care plan. The requirement to have a placement plan ceases when a child reaches 18 years of age. The purpose of the Living Together Agreement is to-

 Let the young person know what support to expect from their Staying Put carer

 To make clear any expectations that will be placed on the young person whilst they live in a Staying Put arrangement

 To identify areas of support which will assist young people to prepare for living independently at a time when they are ready to move on to live independently.

The responsibility for drawing up the agreement will be with the Staying Put Co- ordinator.

The Living Together Agreement should cover –

1. Preparation for independence tasks including the completion of the Independent

Living Skills book.

2. Finance, including management of bank accounts, loans and mobile phone contracts

3. Income and benefits entitlement inclusive of 6th Form bursary

4. The financial contribution that the young person will be expected to make to the household.

5. House routines and expectations of the young person in respect of chores, tasks and routines.

6. Friends and partners visiting

7. Staying away for nights/weekends and informing carers

8. Education, training and employment

9. Health arrangements

10. Issues relating to younger foster children in the placement e.g. safeguarding, role modelling, time keeping

11. Specific issues to do with the needs of the young person

12. The management of any risk taking behaviour

The Living Together arrangements are completed on the Living Together Form and signed as agreed by the carer and young person

Where the Living Together Agreement indicates that there are significant levels of presenting risk taking behaviour a separate risk assessment management plan should be completed in consultation with the provider, young person, the allocated personal advisor and where necessary other agencies.

**Ending of Staying Put Arrangements**

It is anticipated that the provision of Staying Put arrangements will assist young people to move on to reside in fully independent living placements in a timely and planned way. However, where there is a risk of a placement ending in an unplanned way e.g. in crisis, a Planning Meeting should be convened which will be chaired by the Aftercare Team Manager. The Planning Meeting should attempt to identify actions which enable the placement to be sustained until a planned move to suitable alternative accommodation can be arranged.

**Children with Disabilities**

For children with disabilities the provision of a Staying Put Placement can offer a very suitable 18 plus arrangement. Planning for Staying Put can be considered at an early age at the child’s transition review, which takes place at 9 years old.

Staying Put can also be referenced in the notice of allocation to adult services, which should be completed at 16 and half years old.

At 18 years old the young person is eligible to a Fair Care Assessment and a Staying

Put arrangement may form an integral part of the Fair Access to Care Plan.

**Useful Contacts**

Trafford Staying Put Programme Co- ordinators

Maureen Ajayi 0161 912 3521

Jackie Lythgoe 0161 912 2077

Address:

Ground Floor

Trafford Town Hall

Talbot Road Stretford Manchester M32 0TH

Service Manager- Placements

Sally Rimmer

Tel: 912 3977

Service Manager Transitions

Neville Armstrong

Tel: 912 3520

Transitions Team Manager

Denis Owen

Tel: 912 3506

Emergency Duty team

Out of hours Social Work support

912 2020

**Appendix 1**

**Request to Convert a Foster Placement to a Staying Put Arrangement**

**Details of current Foster Carer**

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Type of foster carer e.g. Agency, In- House, Friends and Family-

If Agency foster care -Has Children’s Commissioning been notified that the placement will transfer to Trafford Staying Put and not remain with IFA? Yes/No Date notified………….

**Details of the Young Person**

Name:

D.O.B:

Mobile telephone number:

Email address:

Why is the conversion to Staying Put in the best interests of the child?

Does the Young Person wish to remain in the placement as a Staying Put

Arrangement?

Does the young person wish to remain with their current foster carer ?

Yes/No

Does the Foster Carer wish to convert to a Staying Put

Yes/ No

Support and Financial requests

|  |
| --- |
| (this section must clearly set out the child’s support needs and details of Staying Put financial requests including date to end any payment above the standard rate) |

Does the Fostering Supervising Social Worker agree with the proposed conversion?

Yes/No

If the Supervising Social Worker does not agree with the conversion, explain why?

Details of the Statutory Review that endorsed the decision for the Staying Put

Arrangement to be pursued –

Date of Review: ………………………………

Name of IRO: …………………………………

Name of Social Worker submitting the request: ……………………………………

Date: …………………….

Name of Professional Making this Request…………………………………………..

Date……………………………………………………………………………………….

**The Decision of the Strategic Lead**

Staying Put Arrangement Agreed – Yes/No

Rate agreed at £ ………………per week

Name of Strategic Lead: …………………………………

Signature of Strategic Lead: ……………………………………………………………...

Date: …………………………