

Setting up a Staying Put Arrangement;

- ▶ **Practice point;** The change for the young person from foster child to adult member of the household, and for the carer from foster carer to “Staying Put” carer, (technically the young person’s landlord), should be carefully and sensitively planned in order to ensure that both the young person and the carer understand the nature of the arrangement.

Stage 1: Pre 16 review: A LAC review should take place when the young person is 15¾. It should assess the likely timescale required for the young person to move to independence, and be used as the framework for beginning to explore the following;

1) Would the young person would benefit from a "Staying Put" arrangement?

2) Is the young person and their foster carer/s in agreement to a "Staying Put" arrangement?

3) Does the young person understand the financial responsibilities associated with remaining in a "Staying Put" arrangement?

Stage 1: Pre 16 review:

- 4) Does the foster carer/s understand the changes to their payments?
- 5) What is the parallel plan for the young person should the "Staying Put" arrangement not be viable?
- 6) What are the preparation for independence tasks, goals and targets to be achieved during the last two years of foster care, and when the placement becomes a "Staying Put" arrangement?

Stage 2: The professionals mtg;

- ▶ A professionals meeting should take place immediately prior to the young person's 16th birthday. The "Staying Put" meeting should include the foster carer/s, supervising social worker, TCT social worker and leaving care social worker/personal adviser. The meeting should establish the viability of a "Staying Put" arrangement. The meeting should identify all the tasks that are required to extending the fostering arrangement into a "Staying Put" arrangement and apportion roles and responsibilities. The meeting should explore the impact on the foster carers' financial circumstances.
- ▶ Young people should not be included in the initial meeting and planning process, and should only be included after their foster carer/s have confirmed they are able to retain the young person (in principle) under a "Staying Put" arrangement when the young person reaches the age of 18.

Stage 3: Discuss with the young person:

- ▶ After confirming with the foster carer that they are in agreement with facilitating a Staying Put arrangement, the allocated social worker should discuss the option of a Staying Put arrangement with the young person and obtain their views wishes and feelings. If the young person is in agreement with pursuing a staying put arrangement a further meeting should be arranged to plan and progress the Staying Put arrangement.
- ▶ **Note:** The professionals meeting should be repeated when the young person reaches the age of $17\frac{1}{4}$, and should ensure that any final arrangements and requirements are in place by the young person's 18th birthday. The outcome of the meeting should be discussed at the young person's subsequent statutory review, and the decision ratified by the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Living Together agreements:

- ▶ Young people, 'Staying Put' carer(s), TCT Social workers leaving care personal advisers and supervising social workers should meet to convert the placement plan into a 'Living Together Agreement' prior to a young person's 18th birthday. The agreement should set out the expectations of all parties and clarify roles and responsibilities. **The agreement should be incorporated into the young person's pathway plan.**

Living together agreements: Some key questions for young people to consider;

- ▶ Can I have friends over during the day? Can I have friends to stay overnight?
- ▶ Can I smoke in the house?
- ▶ Does there need to be an agreement about the carer coming into my room?
- ▶ Do I (still) need to let the carer know where I am and who I am with?
- ▶ If I'm staying out overnight is there a time that I should call or text by to let my carer know?
- ▶ Have I got a key to the house? If not why not? And what needs to happen for it to be agreed?
- ▶ What happens when my carer goes on holiday? Can I stay at the address on my own? If not what other arrangements will there be?
- ▶ What am I expected to do around the house?
- ▶ What's the latest time I can use the washing machine or get something to eat? What if I've been working late or have an early start and need to get something to eat or sort my clothes out?

Moving on....

1) Planned Move-On

Where young people decide that they would like to leave the "Staying Put" arrangement, or the "Staying Put" carers decide that they would like the arrangement to come to an end, each party should give **at least 28 days' notice**. TTI will arrange for the young person to access suitable alternative accommodation.

2) Disruptions

Where a young person displays unacceptable behaviour or participates in activities that are deemed inappropriate, a disruption meeting will take place in line with the fostering disruption policy/pathway plan review policy. Any new or changed requirements or house rules will be set out in an up-dated Living Together Agreement.

3) Emergency and Unplanned Move-On and Evictions

Where a young person displays extreme behaviour, commits an offence against a person within the household they may be required to leave the "Staying Put" arrangement on the same day or within a short period of time. Wherever possible, a disruption/pathway plan review meeting will take place, and will set out where the young person will move to.

Non-Payment of Rent

Where young people do not pay their rent, either by not making the required payment or by not claiming housing benefit, they may be subject to an eviction process. In all situations where a young person owes four weeks rent a disruption/pathway planning meeting will be called. The disruption/pathway planning meeting will decide on the action required by the young person to address the rent arrears. Young people will be given every opportunity to repay any arrears and eviction will only take place as a last resort in situations of rent arrears.