

Sunderland City Council

NEXT STEPS

REVIEWING PATHWAY PLANS POLICY

Children's Services



SUNDERLAND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

VERSION TWO

Sunderland Policy and Procedure for Reviewing Care and Pathway Plans for Eligible, Relevant, Former Relevant and Qualifying Children

Eligible Children

Children looked after aged 16 & 17 who are deemed 'Eligible' must have a care plan and a separate pathway plan which is based on the leaving care assessment of need.¹

Eligible children have a named social worker, a personal adviser (who can be the same person as the social worker) and a named independent reviewing officer.

The independent reviewing officer is responsible for chairing the pathway plan review meetings for all Eligible children.

A review of a young person's care plan and separate pathway plan should take place as proscribed within the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2015.²

- First review – within 20 days of becoming looked after
- Second review – within three months of the first review
- Subsequent reviews at intervals of not more than six months

In addition, reviews should take place in advance of a significant change in the care plan or pathway plan, unless this is not reasonably practical. A review should also take place if requested by the young person or social worker/personal adviser.

A review should always take place before a move to an unregulated placement i.e. placements deemed 'Other Arrangements' and/or before a young person ceases to be looked after.

See Chapter 4 & 5 pages 113 to 132 Volume 2, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2015.

All Eligible children should also have a:

- Placement Plan;
- Personal Education Plan;
- Health Plan.

¹ Regulation 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 - Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010

² Regulation 32, 33, 34 - Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010

Relevant Children

Relevant children aged 16 & 17 must have a pathway plan that is based on a leaving care assessment of need.³

Relevant children aged 16 & 17 should have a named leaving care personal adviser.

A review of the pathway plan should take place in accordance with regulation 7 and giving consideration to factors set out in chapter 3, particularly pages 27 and 28 of the (Volume 3) Planning Transition to Adulthood Guidance 2010 (revised 2015).

Reviews should take place:

- When requested by the young person;
- Where the local authority or the leaving care personal adviser deem it necessary;
- Where a significant change of circumstances is due to take place, or has taken place;
- Where a young person moves to an unregulated placement 'Other Arrangements'/'Suitable Accommodation';
- After a change in accommodation (usually within 28 days);
- At intervals of not more than six months;
- Where accommodation is provided under section 23B or section 24B after 28 days of a move to the accommodation;
 - On completing this review, determine at what intervals the subsequent reviews should take place, not exceeding every three months.

The independent reviewing officer is responsible for chairing the pathway plan review meetings for all Relevant children.

Former Relevant Children

Former Relevant children (Section 23C(1)) aged 18 to 21 or until the completion of the education or training programme being undertaken on their 21st birthday.

Former Relevant children (Section 23CA(1)) aged 21 to 25 who request assistance to resume or commence education or training or until the completion of the education or training programme being undertaken on their 25th birthday.

Former Relevant children aged 18 to 21 and those aged 21 to 25 year old must have a pathway plan that is based on an assessment of need.⁴

Former Relevant children aged 18 to 21 and those aged 21 to 25 year should have a named leaving care personal adviser.

A review of the pathway plan should take place in accordance with regulation 7 and giving consideration to factors set out on pages 35 and 36 of the (Volume 3) Planning Transition to Adulthood Guidance 2010 (revised 2015).

Reviews should take place:

- When requested by the young person;
- Where the local authority or the leaving care personal adviser deem it necessary;
- Where a significant change of circumstances is due to take place, or has taken place;
- At intervals of not more than six months;

³ Regulation 5, 6, 7 - Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance including the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010

⁴ Regulation 5, 6, 7 - Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance including the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010

- Where accommodation is provided under section 23B or section 24B after 28 days of a move to the accommodation;
 - On completing this review, determine at what intervals the subsequent reviews should take place, not exceeding every three months.

The independent reviewing officer is responsible for chairing the first pathway plan review following the young person's 18th birthday (Former Relevant) children. All subsequent review meetings for Former Relevant children will be chaired by the Leaving Care Team Manager or the Senior Practitioner (Next Steps).

Qualifying Children and Young People Over 16

Qualifying Young People aged 16 to 21, or until the completion of the education or training programme being undertaken on their 21st birthday (up to the age of 25).

Where a young person has no parent to turn to for help, or where the parent does not have the capacity to provide assistance, it is to be expected that they will turn to the local authority for help. In these circumstances and following an assessment of need the local authority may provide support to the same level as that provided to other care leavers.

Where a leaving care assessment of need has taken place for a 16 & 17 year old Qualifying young person and the Leaving Care Team (Next Steps) are providing leaving care support, a named leaving care personal adviser will be allocated and a pathway plan will be developed. The review of the pathway plan will take place in line with the policy on reviewing pathway plans for Relevant children. When the assessed need and subsequent tasks contained in the pathway plan have been completed, the case will be 'stepped down' to a duty case, following a pathway plan review.

Where a leaving care assessment of need has taken place for an 18 to 21 year old Qualifying young person and the Leaving Care Team (Next Steps) are providing leaving care support, a named leaving care personal adviser will be allocated and a pathway plan will be developed. The review of the pathway plan will take place in line with the policy on reviewing pathway plans for Former Relevant children. When the assessed need and subsequent tasks contained in the pathway plan have been completed, the case will be 'stepped down' to a duty case following a pathway plan review.

See Pathway Plan Reviewing Responsibilities Flow Chart

Interim Policy and Procedure

To be agreed by Sunderland Children's Services - interim and temporary procedure for reviewing pathway plans of 'Former Relevant Children' whilst the above permanent policy is implemented.

Former Relevant Children

Where young people are provided with accommodation by the local authority under Section 23C, Section 23CA or Section 24B the review of the pathway plan should be chaired by the Leaving Care Team Manager or Senior Practitioner (Next Steps) to ensure the accommodation meets the safeguarding requirements of the young person and that financial resources are allocated appropriately.

Other situations where pathway plans should be reviewed by the Leaving Care Team Manager or Senior Practitioner (Next Steps):

- Any care leaver where it is assessed that a risk or safeguarding issue is present and that the situation requires a formal pathway plan review meeting;
- Care leavers who are also parents and where there is a safeguarding concern about their child/children;
- Care leavers at risk of tenancy breakdown and homelessness;
- Care leavers where there are concerns about their physical, emotional and mental well-being;
- Care leavers with learning difficulties and disabilities;
- Care leavers deemed at risk of entering custody;
- Care leavers who are failed asylum seekers and deemed 'end of line cases' and who require a human rights assessment (London Borough of Barking and Dagenham [2010] EWCA Civ 1101 - Case Law);
- Care leavers where there is a disagreement between the local authority and the young person or any professionals about the assessed needs of the young person;
- The final pathway plan review prior to the leaving care service ceasing (at 21 or when education or training ceases, if, after the age of 21).

Where young people are deemed to be 'risk free' and settled, following an assessment of their needs and a risk assessment, the pathway plan will be reviewed by the young person's personal adviser. The outcome of the review will be analysed within the supervision process between the leaving care personal adviser and their social work qualified line manager (Social Worker, Senior Practitioner or the Leaving Care Team Manager (Next Steps)). Any changes to the pathway plan identified within the supervision process such as future tasks, actions and goals will be incorporated into the pathway plan. The finalised version of the pathway plan should be agreed and signed off by the young person, leaving care personal adviser and the leaving care personal adviser's line manager as the representative of the local authority.

Other situations where pathway plans can be reviewed by the leaving care personal adviser and their line manager as part of the supervision process:

- Care leavers who are settled;
- Care leavers who remain in regular contact with their personal adviser;
- Care leavers who always contact their leaving care personal adviser to request assistance or support in advance of difficulties or problems arise;
- Care leavers who are not in receipt of financial services or significant support.