CARE LEAVERS’ POLICY AND PROCEDURES
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POLICY

Surrey’s Children’s Service is committed to improving life chances for young people living in and leaving care as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and our responsibilities as Corporate Parents. We aim to ensure that young people who have been in care are not isolated and are equipped to participate socially and economically as citizens.

The Care Leavers’ Service therefore focuses on delivering services to ensure that:
- Young people are kept in touch with whilst they are in care and as they leave care;
- Supported through their Care Plan/Pathway Plan as they move into adulthood with appropriate levels of support.
- Young people have access to appropriate education, training, and employment;
- And have access to a range of suitable accommodation that provides a safe place to live.

1. The Care Leavers’ Service is an integrated service for all entitled looked after young people and those who have left care, including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

2. The following legal framework explains the legislative framework for our services for these young people, and details which young people are entitled to leaving care services.

3. The procedures then describe how the Care Leavers’ Service carries out its duties and responsibilities for these young people.

4. The policy is a living document so will be reviewed and updated regularly to integrated legislative and procedural changes, as well as standards of (good) working practice which will arise and be shared across the service.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Surrey’s Children’s Service seek to ensure that existing and prospective employees and service users are not unfairly discriminated against, either directly or indirectly on the grounds of: race, sex disability, gender, national and ethnic origin, marital status, family
responsibility, sexual orientation, age, religion, or religious belief; profound philosophical belief, or against persons with a criminal record who do not pose a risk to care leavers.

The Care Leavers’ Service is committed to ensuring that all staff undertake regular equality and diversity training, and monitors staff performance to encourage and enable staff at all levels to take responsibility for the practical application of this policy. It ensures that service delivery takes place within an equal opportunities framework informed by the Equality Act 2010 and actively seeks to reduce discrimination against those with ‘protected characteristics’.

**LEGISLATION**

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 update May 2014 provides the key legislation for local authorities to meet the requirements of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 and replaces the regulations set out in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 amending the Children Act 1989, which came into force in 2001.

Additional relevant legislation includes:

- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Working together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2013 update)
- DH/DfES Guidance on the Education of Children and young people in Public Care
- DTLR Guidance on the Allocation of Housing Accommodation and Homelessness.
- Every Child Matters.

*Any Future legislation that comes into force relevant to care leavers*

**THE CHILDREN ACT 1989**

The Children Act 1989 introduced new requirements on local authorities to plan for looked after children so that they have the support they need as they make their transition to the responsibilities of adulthood. The underlying principles of the 1989 Act remain as the general legal framework:
Consulting with, informing and taking into account the views of young people.

Giving due consideration to young people’s race, culture, religion and linguistic background.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people being looked after, and;

Recognising corporate and inter-agency responsibility.

Significant chapters of Volume 3: Chapter 9 and Volume 4: Chapter 7 of the Children Act.

1989 Guidance and Regulations are still relevant and have been updated and incorporated into the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

CHILDREN LEAVING CARE – The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 introduced new requirements on local authorities to plan for looked after children so that they have the support they need as they make their transition to the responsibilities of adulthood and “to improve the life chances of young people living in, and leaving care”

The main aims of the Act are:

- To delay leaving care until young people are prepared for adulthood and ready to leave.
- To improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care
- To provide better personal support for young people after leaving care, and:
- To improve financial arrangements for care leavers.

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008

The Act amended the 1989 Act so that:

- Looked after children must not move from accommodation regulated under the Care Standards Act 2000 to other arrangements without a statutory review of their care plan chaired by their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

- Local authorities must pay a Higher Education Bursary to certain former relevant young people. (see Vol 3 Transitions to Adulthood Guidance and Regulations updated May 14 Chapter 5)

- Care Leavers under the age of 25 who wish to take up a programme of education or training will have an entitlement to resume support from a Personal Adviser (PA) appointed by the local authority previously responsible for providing their leaving care support.

Definitions of categories of children entitled to care leaving support

ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

Defined in 19B of Schedule 2 1989 Act and regulation 40 of the Care Planning Regulations as a child who is:
Looked After aged 16 or 17, and has been looked after by the local authority for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after he reached 14 and ended after he reached 16.

Short break accommodation – a child or young person provided with ‘short breaks’ accommodation under section 20(4) will not usually meet the criteria for eligibility to care leaving services. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or social worker would need to confirm that the young person is an ‘Eligible’ young person to meet the criteria for leaving care at the point of referral.

The Local Authority must:

Prepare an assessment of the needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate for the local authority to provide him (both whilst in care and after leaving care)

Prepare a Pathway Plan

Review the Pathway Plan

Appoint a Personal Adviser (PA) to carry out the functions of the personal adviser – this may be carried out by the personal adviser working as a member of the social work or a specialist leaving care team *Vol 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review.

Within Surrey the social worker will remain the key lead until the young person transfers to the Care Leavers’ Service at 18 years. In situations and where it is deemed appropriate (through the Assistant Service Manager workflow /allocation meetings) a personal adviser may be allocated anytime after the 16th birthday to ensure there is a smooth transition to the Care Leavers’ Service at 18 years.

RELEVANT CHILDREN

Defined in section 23A(2) of the 1989 Act as a child who is:

Not looked after, aged 16 or 17, and;

1. was, before he last ceased to be looked after, an eligible child

Regulation 3 of the Care Leavers Regulations prescribes a further category of relevant child who is:

a. Not looked after;
b. Aged 16 or 17; and

At the time he attained the age of 16 was detained (i.e. detained in a remand centre, a young offenders institution or a secure training centre, or any other centre pursuant to a Court order), or in a hospital, and immediately before he was detained or in hospital he had been looked after by a local authority for a period or periods amounting in all to at least 13 weeks which began after he reached the age of 14.
If a child has moved to live for a continuous period of six months or more with:

- a parent
- or someone who is not his parent but who as parental responsibility for him
- or where he is in care and there was a residence order in force immediately before the care order was made,

then they will no longer be considered as a relevant child.

Where the above living arrangements break down and the child/young person ceases to live with the person concerned, the child is to be treated as a relevant child/young person.

The Local Authority must:

- Take reasonable steps to stay in touch
- Prepare an assessment of needs to determine the advice, assistance and support required (unless this was completed when he was an Eligible' child/young person)
- Prepare a Pathway Plan
- Review the Pathway Plan
- Appoint a Personal Adviser (PA)
- Safeguard and promote the young person’s welfare by maintaining him with or maintaining him in suitable accommodation and providing assistance in order to meet his needs in relation to education, training or employment as provided in the Pathway Plan.

FORMER RELEVANT CHILDREN

Defined in section 23C(1) of the 1989 Act as a young person who is:

Aged 18 to 21 or, where the child’s Pathway Plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond his 21st birthday, they continue for so long as he pursues that programme, and either been an Eligible or Relevant young person. (also note next section below relating to education or training)

The Local Authority must:

- Take reasonable steps to stay in touch
- Continue to provide a Personal Adviser
- Review the Pathway Plan
• To the extent that her/his welfare requires it, provide financial assistance by contributing to expenses incurred by the person in living near the place where s/he is employed; will be, or seeking employment or financial assistance to enable him to pursue education or training.

• If pursuing higher education provide a higher education bursary.

• Where young people are unable to return to their former placements a stable alternative accommodation during the vacations.

FORMER RELEVANT PURSUING FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING – (INCLUDES RETURNERS)

**Defined in section 23CA(1) as a former relevant child who is:**

• Aged under 25 years

• Leaving Care duties previously applied

• Has informed the local authority that he wants to pursue or is pursing a programme of education or training

The Local Authority must:

• Appoint a Personal Adviser

• Carry out an assessment of the needs of the young person to determine what assistance (if any) would be appropriate to be provided.

• Prepare a Pathway Plan

• To the extent that her/his educational or training needs requires it, provide financial assistance.

PERSON QUALIFYING FOR ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

**Defined in section 24 of the 1989 Act as a person who is :**

• Aged 16 years but is under 21

• With respect to who a special guardianship order is in force (or was in force when they reached 18) and was looked after immediately before the making of that order or

• At any time after reaching the age of 16 but while he was still a child was, but is on longer looked after, accommodated or fostered.
The Local Authority must:

Consider whether the person needs help of a kind the local authority can:

- Advise and befriend and give assistance
- Give financial assistance – this may be in kind, or in exceptional circumstances, in cash
- To the extent that his/her welfare and his education or training needs require it, contribute to expenses incurred by the person in living near the place where he/she is, or will be, receiving education or training; or making a grant to enable him/her to meet expenses connected with his education or training.
- Or where the person is in full-time further or higher education and under 25 and qualifies for advice and assistance, or would have done if he was under 21 assistance in relation to securing vacation accommodation.

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP

Children looked after by the local authority immediately before the making of a special guardianship order (SGO) will qualify for advice and assistance under the 1989 Act (see above) Section 24 (1A) 1989 Act provides that the young person must:

- Have reached 16 but not 21 years
- If less than 18 have a SGO in force
- If 18 or above have had a SGO in force up to that age
- Have been looked after immediately before the making of the SGO

ACCESS TO ADVOCACY

The local authority advises all children and young people of the access to advocacy and how to make a complaint. The responsibility to provide information, guidance and advice is carried out by the social worker/independent review officer and personal adviser.

THE RESPONSIBLE LOCAL AUTHORITY

1. Eligible Children are the responsibility of the Local Authority looking after them.

2. Relevant, Former Relevant and Qualifying children are the responsibility of the Local Authority that last looked after them.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority as a corporate parent to ensure that:

1. Residential homes, foster placements, specialist lodgings placement and external providers of placements for young people looked after by Surrey Children’s Service,
establish a culture amongst staff which facilitates preparation for adulthood at the earliest opportunity that is consistent with the needs of individual young people.

2. The procedure for the accommodation of children/young people reflects the duties and provision of the:

- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000,
- Volume 3 Transitions to Adulthood Guidance and Regulations updated May 2014
- The Staying Put Policy.

3. The policy should reflect the importance of preparation of young people their transition to adult life.

4. Workers and carers are trained and supported to undertake their responsibilities in preparing young people for adult life.

5. The National Inter-agency Protocol is in place, monitored and updated as required.

NATIONAL INTER-AUTHORITY PROTOCOL

Aim of the Protocol

The Children (Leaving Care) Act established the principle that a Local Authority should retain responsibility for its own care leavers.

The National Inter-Authority Protocol is predicated on that principle and affirms that wherever reasonably possible the Responsible Authority should continue to ensure the direct provision of services to those care leavers for whom the Authority holds responsibility.

Definitions

1. The Protocol relates to all young people who qualify for a service as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

2. The Responsible Authority (s.23A of the Children Leaving Care Act) is the one that last looked after the young person. The Protocol seeks to support Authorities to work in partnership and find pragmatic solutions to address the needs of care leavers who do not live within the boundaries of their Responsible Authority i.e. Surrey Care Leavers living in other Local Authorities. The National Protocol in no way dilutes the core duties that the Responsible Authority retains with regards to its own care leavers.

3. With the Protocol the 'Host Authority' or the 'Receiving Authority' refers to the Local Authority within whose boundaries the care leaver is living where that is different from the Responsible Authority; i.e. Surrey Care Leavers who are Relevant, Former Relevant or Qualifying care leavers, living outside Surrey borders.

PROCEDURE
PATHWAY PLANNING AND PERSONAL ADVISERS

As corporate parents, the local authority will provide support to care leavers in the same way that reasonable parents provide support to their own children/young people.

The participation of care leavers is fundamental to effective pathway planning. Young people must be central to the discussions and plans about their futures, based on their hopes and aspirations. It will be exceptional for decisions to be made without their full participation.

The responsibility of the local authority is to prepare the pathway plan and support care leavers as they make their transition to adulthood regardless of any other services being provided, for example, if the young person is disabled, in custody, or because they are being looked after as an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC)

CARE PLANNING AND PATHWAY PLANS

Transition to adulthood for looked after children/young people should be integral throughout the care planning and pathway planning process and should not just start from the age of 16 years. Preparing young people to be able to fully understand the meaning of leaving care is fundamental to their future. The Care Leavers’ Service is an extension of time as they go through the transition phase into adulthood, and during this period they continue to receive the support they are entitled to (see categories and definitions above) as a care leaver.

The 1989 Act requires that a pathway plan must be prepared for all Eligible and continues for all Relevant and Former Relevant young people. The pathway plan is based on the care plan and will set out the actions that must be taken up by the local authority, the young person, parents and carers plus a number of other agencies supporting the needs of the individual.

The pathway plan will be a ‘live’ document and will be reviewed regularly based on assessment of individual need.

The young persons’ views, wishes and feelings will be evident throughout the pathway plan.

The key areas will be:

Health and development to support the young person access positive activities, taking into consideration environmental factors as well as physical, emotional and mental health needs. The planning will ensure the young person develops the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for themselves.

Education, training and employment – Care leavers will have a clear plan with a focus on future career options that is realistic and achievable and takes into account the young person’s aspiration, skills and educational potential.
The plan will, with the young person’s agreement, include contact with family, carers and other professionals to encourage the young person in the planning for their future.

The young person’s skills and ability in financial capabilities and money management capacity will be included together with strategies in how to develop these areas as needed.

The pathway assessment and pathway plan process will involve an evidence based analysis of the young person’s continuing needs and will include both short and long term goals.

Parallel or triple planning will need to be in place for all young people where there are alternative options open to the young person.

For example Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) have both a leaving care status and an immigration status in addition to their placement and accommodation, education, health, financial, religious and cultural needs. The alternative options available to them will need to reflect the different immigration status and how these needs change over time. Planning may initially have to be based around short term achievable goals whilst entitlement to remain in the UK is being determined. Pathway planning for the majority of UASC who do not have permanent immigration status should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective, which over time should be refined as the young person’s immigration status is resolved. Planning may be based on:

- A transitional plan during the period of uncertainty and without permanent immigration status. This includes refused asylum but granted Discretionary Leave (DL). This is normally for three years or until the age of 17.5 years, whichever comes first. This means adequate care and reception arrangements are not in place in the country of origin (ie a return cannot be effected safely) UASC in this group may apply for an extension to this Leave after three years or on reaching 17.5.

- Longer term perspective planning in the United Kingdom should the young person be granted long term permission to stay – for example Refugee Status / Leave to Remain for five years. Although it is not guaranteed that further leave to remain will be granted at the end of the five year period it is a strong likelihood and pathway planning should primarily focus on longer term residence in the UK in the same way as for any other care leaver.

- A return to their country of origin – because the young person decides to leave the UK or is required to do so at the end of the immigration consideration process – refused asylum / all rights exhausted (ARE)

Financial support for all care leavers should reflect their needs as looked after children/young people (Eligible) and their immigration status for UASC. The finance policy (a separate policy is available direct from The Care Leavers’ Service and is subject to a yearly review) highlights the entitlements and how if applicable for UASC the immigration status may impact on current and future entitlements.

Pathway Plans must be clear in relation to the funding arrangements for education and training and how, for UASC, the young person’s immigration status may limit opportunities.
Pathway plans must consider the implications if an extension of leave is refused or an appeal is dismissed. In such circumstances the person may become ineligible for further support and assistance because of the effect of Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Disabled young people will have the same access to care leaving services as recorded in the Pathway Plan. The adult services team will remain as the case holder with the Care Leavers’ Service, for the majority of young people, only take on the role of ‘advocate’ to ensure the young person receives their full entitlement to services (this includes adult services and other relevant agencies) to meet the young persons’ needs.

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING OUT OF AREA

All care leavers living out of county will receive a full Care Leavers’ Service (as their status requires) and should have equal access to local services

ACCESS TO WELFARE BENEFITS

The financial support provided by the Care Leavers’ Service will not replace funding a young person is entitled to from the welfare benefit provisions and any other relevant funding sources, but is in place to enhance the young persons’ welfare. All young people from 18 years are responsible for claiming all the benefits they are entitled to. The finance available from the Care Leavers’ Service is subject to the requirements outlined in the finance policy and evidence that benefits from the welfare and other public funds has been fully explored is required. A monthly finance panel is in place to manage financial requests to funding from the Care Leavers’ Service. In exceptional situations funding may be agreed outside of the panel process by the Service Manager.

TRANSFER TO THE CARE LEAVERS’ SERVICE

- All young people entitled to the Care Leavers’ Service (CLS) will be transferred when they leave care at 18yrs of age for Former Relevant young people.

- The workflow/allocations meeting held between the looked after children teams and the Care Leavers’ Service area teams is the process for setting up an allocated personal adviser to co-work with the social worker before the transfer at 18 years.

- Relevant young people will transfer to the Care Leavers’ Service at the point they leave care.

THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will complete the last statutory review when it is clear the personal adviser is in place and the pathway plan supports the young persons needs and the young person is prepared and ready to transfer from the Children’s Team to the Care Leavers’ Service at 18 years.
CASE RESPONSIBILITY

1. Case holding responsibility remains with the social worker in the Children’s Team, this will for the majority of young people be the looked after children’s team, until the transfer is completed when the young person ceases to be looked after, usually at 18 years. This will be sooner if the young person becomes a Relevant care leaver. For Relevant young people the transfer will take place as soon as the young person leaves care. It will be the responsibility of the social worker to arrange the transfer.

2. For Eligible young people, the Children’s Service Team will maintain responsibility for decision-making and financial support up to the young person’s 18th birthday.

3. Case holding responsibility for Relevant & Former Relevant young people will be the responsibility of the Care Leavers’ Service (CLS)

LCS RECORDING

LCS is the electronic records system of Surrey County Council (SCC).

1. It is the responsibility of the young person’s case holder to input data on to ICS to start the transfer process in accordance with the ICS process.

2. Following the transfer of the case holding responsibility to the Care Leavers’ Service the allocated PA must ensure that the records are up-to-date on ICS in keeping with the Leaving Care Module on the ICS database. This includes entering the current address and activity (for education, employment and training). Data relating to key performance reporting must be inputted or updated as required.

THE TRANSFER PROCESS FROM CHILDREN'S SERVICE TEAM TO CLS

The role of the Personal Adviser for Eligible young people

The allocated personal adviser will:

Contact the current worker for the young person in the appropriate Children’s Service team to request an introductory transfer meeting prior to the young person’s 18th birthday. Where possible and appropriate, this may take place at the same time as the statutory review, but will need the agreement of the young person. It may be in the best interests of the young person to arrange a meeting outside the statutory review process, to give the young person time to get to know their new worker and start to build a working relationship before the transfer finally takes place.

Before a young person is transferred to the Care Leaver's Service the allocated personal advisor must request and receive confirmation of the young person's personal savings.
The personal adviser will read the relevant background information and current pathway plan when the allocation is made.

The personal adviser will meet with the social worker and have access to the following information before the transfer is finalised.

**TRANSFER CHECKLIST**

1. Basic information including family history
2. Care Plan
3. Health and medical records
4. Up-to-date chronology
5. Personal Education Plan (PEP)
6. Statement of Special Educational Needs if relevant
7. Record of Educational Attainment
8. Placement Plan
9. Relevant planning meeting minutes
10. Pathway Assessment
11. Pathway Plan
12. Looked After Child Review minutes
13. Risk Assessment
14. Child Protection Conference minutes if relevant
15. Court Orders if relevant
16. Up-to-date case summary and case notes on LCS
17. Information Sharing Agreement
18. Confirmation of young person’s personal savings
19. National Insurance Number
20. Birth Certificate as appropriate
21. Copy of Housing Registration Form and Matrix
22. Drug and Alcohol Screening if completed

Any outstanding tasks identified by the personal adviser will be made known to their line manager.

**TRANSFER PLANNING MEETING**

The meeting must be set up by the child’s Social Worker prior to the final transfer. Consideration must be given to the following people being invited to attend this meeting:

- The young person
- Parent/carer(s) as appropriate
- Leaving Care Personal Adviser
- Child’s Social Worker
- Placement provider, as appropriate.

The meeting must:
1. Be child centre focused and seek the views and wishes of the young person in relation to their immediate and medium term plans.

2. Review the pathway plan and identify key issues which will assist the future pathway planning process and who should be involved.

3. Establish the current situation for the young person in relation to any special needs, their education, employment and training; health needs, current placement, and any immediate accommodation issues.

4. Identify any current or past risks in relation to the young person, their history, their family and environment, their behaviour, health; or relationships.

5. Establish the immigration status for UASC.

6. Agree the transfer date (this will be as near to the 18th birthday as practical). If there are any exceptional circumstances that require co-working for an agreed length of time these will not exceed 2 weeks.

7. At the point of transfer the case holding responsibility transfers to the new allocated worker in the Care Leavers' Service.

**PATHWAY ASSESSMENT (PART 1 – PATHWAY PLAN)**

1. A *Pathway Assessment* must be completed by Surrey’s teams for young people age 16 and 17yrs.

2. The timescale for completing a Pathway Assessment is to be complete by the time the young person is aged sixteen years and three months.

   For young people who become looked after at the age of 16 and 17 years, they will become eligible for care leaving services after they have been looked after for 90 days. They will then also require their pathway plan to be completed at this stage so a pathway assessment must be completed during the 90 days so that the plan will be ready as they become eligible.

3. The pathway assessment will be recorded on LCS by the social worker.

   For unaccompanied asylum seeking care leavers the assessment will address needs arising from their immigration status.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PATHWAY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING**

1. The Pathway Assessment and Plan must take into account the young person’s aspirations for the future, their understanding of their current situation and their past experiences.
2. The Pathway Assessment process must be underpinned by the young person’s current Care Plan.

3. Information gathered during the assessment process must be analysed and take into account the young person’s strengths, risks and areas for development.

4. Assessment is an on-going process.

5. Information sharing – Social Workers must explain the benefits and additional opportunities to the young person when agreeing to allow their information to be shared with other agencies – most notably – Housing Departments.

Good Practice Box

Assessment

Guidance on Identifying Needs, Analysis and Evaluation

Introduction

- The purpose of Assessment is to guide decision-making, planning and action. Assessment is an on-going process and at each stage new information needs to be evaluated – given context and meaning.

- Assessment is therefore both an activity: a process for understanding, and a tool for action.

Identifying Needs

1. The primary purpose of information gathering is to assist in identifying the needs of a young person. Needs may be emotional, behavioural, health, educational and/or social.

2. The way in which a young person’s needs are met are partially dependent on their family/carer’s ability to meet or provide for those needs. Hence a young person’s needs cannot be seen in isolation, but should be seen in the context of the immediate family; under family and social environment.

3. It is important to identify needs before considering what services maybe required, for example, the young person may:

   - Be demonstrating challenging or risky behaviours
   - Appear to be at risk of exploitation
   - Be presenting unrealistic views about budgeting.

Analysis

Specify the strengths and areas of concern drawing on information gathered in the
assessment covering the young person’s developmental needs, the type of accommodation the young person has/needs; the extent of their support network, and the young person’s aspirations.

- Establish what this means for the young person now;
- What is the likely impact in the future if nothing changes?

The Resilience/Vulnerability Matrix provides a framework for plotting which factors make a young person more resilient against those that increase the young person's vulnerability.

Step 1: List the factors which increase the young person’s resilience. Examples of resilience factors are good attachment, good self-esteem, social ability, high I.Q, problem solving skills and an experience of positive parenting.

Step 2: List the factors which increase vulnerability. Examples of vulnerability factors are poor attachment, a history of abuse, young age, early childhood trauma, and inconsistent and/or neglectful care.

Step 3: Plot the environmental factors that are protective. Examples of protective environmental factors are (at least) one supportive adult, good school experience, leisure activities and community networks.

Step 4: Plot the factors which are adverse. Examples of adverse factors are illness, loss, separation and family breakdown, domestic violence, parental mental health and/or substance misuse.

Step 5: Use the Matrix to provide a visual representation of these factors to aid (on-going) decision-making. The resilient young person in a protective environment is clearly in the best position. Where there is a mixture of positive and negative factors, think how the positive ones can be enhanced or strengthened; and/or the negative ones reduced to improve the young person’s resilience.

Evaluation

The following questions should then be considered when evaluating the information and observations gained in the Assessment.

- Are the circumstances surrounding the reasons for Assessment now fully understood?
- Are there significant risk factors?
- What are the necessary changes for the future development of the young person?
- Have any changes been observed during the Assessment?
- Are there disagreements between any members of the family and professionals about the changes needed?
What are the barriers to change? How can these be overcome, and to what extent?

Can the necessary changes be achieved and maintained over time? What resources are needed to effect and maintain change?

PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR UNDERTAKING ASSESSMENTS

The Pathway Assessment must be completed 12 weeks after the young person’s 16th birthday.

The young person’s Social Worker should:
1. Provide information to all involved in the Pathway Assessment and Planning process.
2. Negotiate with the young person and their carers to determine how and when the Pathway Assessment will be undertaken.
3. Consider how and special needs that the young person may have will be met.
4. Enter into a discussion with the young person about their past and present situation that will inform the Pathway Plan.
5. Identify strengths, capacity and aspirations for the future.
6. Identify areas for development.
7. Identify hazards and risks.
8. Agree who needs to be involved the in the information gathering.
9. Give consideration to each of the headings in the Pathway Assessment and ensure that these are addressed in full.
10. Consider differences of opinions from any of the parties and record these.
11. Evaluate and agree with the young person areas to be incorporated into the Pathway Plan.
12. Ensure that the completed Pathway Assessment is signed off by their line manager On ICS before it is circulated.
13. Ensure that the Pathway Assessment is signed off by the young person, the parent or carer (if appropriate); the Social Worker, and their line manager via LCS.
14. Give copies to all the parties involved (as appropriate)
15. Ensure that details of the assessment are fully recorded on LCS.
16. For unaccompanied asylum seeking care leavers the assessment will address needs arising from their immigration status.

PATHWAY PLANS (Part 2) FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 16 AND 17 YEARS

1. The Pathway Plan for those young people looked after will be deemed the statutory Care Plan.

2. The Initial Pathway Plan must be completed no later than 12 weeks after the young person’s 16th birthday.

3. The purpose of the Pathway Plan is to provide the young person with an opportunity to negotiate directly with key agencies and individuals in order to meet their individual needs towards independent living.

The young person’s Social Worker must:

4. Ensure that the Pathway Plan is informed by the recommendations of the Pathway Assessment.

5. Support the young person in creating a Pathway Plan.

6. The Pathway Plan must clearly identify other key agencies and individuals whose support is required for the implementation of the plan.

For unaccompanied asylum seeking care leavers the assessment will address needs arising from their immigration status.

In developing a Pathway Plan, the following people/agencies must be considered:

- Carers/Parents
- Friends and/or relatives
- Housing
- Education
- Health
- Leisure Services
- Employer
- Independent Advocate
- Translation Services in line with the SCC policy
- Home Office in relation to UASC

It is the responsibility of the Children’s Services Social Worker to complete the final Pathway Plan.

The plan should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
1. All parties involved must sign the Pathway Plan.

2. Prior to distribution the Pathway Plan must be signed by the Social Worker’s line manager.

3. Once signed off by the relevant Children’s Team Assistant Service Manager/Manager via ICS the Pathway Plan will be deemed complete.

4. The Social Worker must ensure that the young person and other key parties involved in the delivery of the plan receive a copy of the plan relating to their agreed actions.

5. A copy of the plan must be sent to the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

STATUTORY PATHWAY PLANS REVIEWS FOR ELIGIBLE AND RELEVANT YOUNG PEOPLE UPTO THEIR 18TH BIRTHDAY

The purpose of the Pathway Plan review is:

1. To check progress of the plan.

2. To identify any barriers to achieving the agreed goals.

3. To make changes to the plan where appropriate.

Statutory reviews of Pathway Plans for all Eligible young people must take place at least every six months. An earlier one can be called, if:

- The young person requests one;
- The Social Worker requests one;
- There is a significant change to the original plan.

The Independent Review Officer will chair the reviews for all looked after children until the young person is 18 years

1. Ensure that the statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to the young person are being carried out by the case holding Children’s Team.

2. Ensure that they young person is central to the review process.

3. Assist the young person to chair the review, or to chair the review themselves.

4. Record the decisions of the review and distribute to relevant parties.

The young person’s Social Worker must:
Consult with the young person 6 weeks prior to the review to agree where the review should be held and who should be invited. Invitations to the following people/agencies should be considered:

- Carers/Parents
- Friends and/or relatives
- Housing
- Health
- Leisure Services
- Employer
- Independent Advocate

1. Complete the required documents and forward these to the Independent Review Unit – this will trigger invitations being sent to the relevant people and agencies. This must be done 6 weeks prior to the review being held.

2. Complete a Pathway Plan Review form, discuss it with the young person and send this to the Independent Reviewing Officer at least one week prior to the date of the review.

3. Make any necessary amendments to the Pathway Plan directly after the review and circulate the relevant sections of the updated Plan to those responsible for its implementation.

4. The Pathway Plan for Former Relevant Young People must continue to be reviewed by the PA at least 6 monthly intervals up until the age of 21yrs, or up to the 25th birthday until an agreed course of study has been completed.

5. A similar process to that applied to Eligible and Relevant Young People must be followed for Former Relevant young people, however the Independent Review Unit will cease to be involved and the Personal Adviser will take on the role of chair for reviewing the Pathway Plan meetings. All updated Pathway Plans for over 18 year young people will be finalised by the Assistant Service Manager/Service Manager in the Care Leavers’ Service.

6. If a young person declines to be involved in the review process, the PA must complete the review process without them. The updated Plan must reflect the Personal Adviser’s strategy for assisting the young person to re-engage with the process; and where necessary, involving partner agencies or other key people in the young person’s support network.

The role of the Personal Adviser is to:

Discuss with the young person how they would prefer the Pathway Plan Review to be conducted, including who should chair the meeting and who should be invited.

7. Request, if necessary, that an Assistant Service Manager (other than own line manager) chair the meeting.
8. Record the decisions (of the review meeting) and update the Plan accordingly, distributing copies of relevant sections as above.

9. Ensure that the final copy is signed off by their line manager via LCS prior to distribution.

**RISK MANAGEMENT – The Care Leavers’ Service**

1. For Eligible 16 – 17 year olds allocated to Social Workers in the Children’s Teams, risk is managed within the supervisory line management structure of that service.

2. All managers are responsible for the risk management oversight of all young people in and leaving care, who are eligible for Care Leavers’ Service.

3. Staff must be familiar with relevant SCC procedures relating to safeguarding children and young people; and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

4. Both the allocated worker and the management team must manage risk from the point at which the Care Leavers’ Service takes case holding responsibility.

**Risk Management is applicable in the following circumstances:**

5. Child protection concerns or need for immediate action/referral

6. Vulnerable care leavers who post a risk to themselves or to others

7. Care leavers who are pregnant; and/or are parents/carers, or subject to a child protection plan.

8. Networks which may pose a risk to a young person.

9. Situations which may pose a risk to others including a member of the Care Leavers’ Service.

10. Situations that require communication between teams and organisations to ensure risk is well managed.

In any of these circumstances the worker must complete a risk assessment and ensure it is signed off by their line manager. The line manager, the Service Manager will monitor and escalate the risk in line with the current risk monitoring systems in place.

**GOOD PRACTICE - RISK MANAGEMENT**

Personal Advisers are expected to work closely with all agencies and other teams involved with a young person using the Care Leavers’ Service.

This becomes even more critical when managing potential risk. It is essential that any potential or actual risk be shared with other relevant professionals or partner agencies. The
young person must be consulted with in terms of risk management plans and subsequent reviews.

SAFEGUARDING

This section should be read in conjunction with Surrey Safeguarding Board Procedures for Adults.

1. Any child protection concerns that come to the attention of a member of the Children’s Team or CLS must be discussed immediately with their line manager, or the duty manager.

2. Where there is actual physical harm or risk of physical harm the child/young person must be immediately referred to the MASH Where the child/young person requires immediate medical attention, the child must be taken to Accident & Emergency (A&E).

3. Where there are more accumulated and chronic concerns about harm/neglect information must be shared with the MASH in the form of a detailed chronology & referral.

4. Advice must be sought from MASH as to whether the parent/carer should be informed of the referral.

5. When concerns do not reach threshold for a child protection intervention, the RIAS will work with the CLS Personal Adviser to look at how the multi-agency partners collaborate further to support the young person/child and reduce the risk of further harm (TAC/TAF). This will take place in terms of meetings and an agreed plan which will be monitored in terms of its effectiveness in safeguarding the young person.

6. Care Leavers’ Service personal advisers are expected to participate fully in all child protection activities in accordance with the SSCB procedures by attending child protection conferences, reviews and core groups; and contribute to decisions around child protection plans and the formulation of child protection plans and their implementation.

VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO POSE A RISK TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS

Social Workers/Personal Advisers are responsible for assessing the risk that any young person in and leaving care may either pose to themselves or to others.

1. In the case of 16 -17 yr olds who are still in care, risk is managed within the context of the case holding team: Looked After Children’s Team (LAC Team), Child Protection & Proceedings Team (C.P&P Team); Children with Disabilities Team (CWD Team), and in some instances, for ‘Relevant’ young people the Care Leavers’ Team.

2. For young people who become ‘Former Relevant’ at the age of 18yrs, risk assessment & management automatically becomes the responsibility of the Care Leavers’ Service.
however, in the 3 months prior to the young person’s 18th birthday the risks are conjointly managed by the Social Worker Personal Adviser and the TM (CLS).

The following risk factors must be given due consideration when undertaking assessment, planning and significant change, transfer and closure:

1. **Violence** – physical assault, use of weapons, verbal abuse, threats of violence, damage to property, racist or homophobic attack; domestic violence and violent extremist views of any kind.

2. **Self harm** – threats of suicide, expression of suicidal ideation, or actual suicide attempts; cutting, drugs & substance misuse, and eating disorders.

3. **Mental health** – psychotic episodes, diagnosed mental illness, personality disorder, behaviour which may indicate mental ill-health, mild to severe anxiety and/or depression.

4. **Sexual exploitation** – young people who may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation by others through prostitution, trafficking, or other inappropriate sexual behaviour.

5. Patterns of absconding behaviour

6. Borderline learning difficulties

7. Criminal activity

8. Homelessness

9. Contact with family members from whom the young person was removed, or by whom they were harmed in the past.

10. Any past history of being sexually abused

11. Any past or current concerns regarding the young person sexually abusing and/or exploiting others.

12. In the event of an emergency see immediate medical or Police assistance

13. Inform their manager of the potential or actual risk and agree actions with timescales

14. Liaise with other teams or services as appropriate

15. Seek specialist medical attention as needed.

The Care Leavers’ Service – Service Manager must alert the appropriate Surrey Children’s Services senior manager in the following circumstances:

1. When a young person leaving care is missing
2. Where assessed risk is deemed to be high and there is actual harm or imminent danger of serious self harm or harm to others that might endanger life or limb.

3. The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) must be notified by e-mail for any immediate crisis that needs to be managed out-of-hours or at the weekends with a suggested contingency plan; or, will be alerted to any potential crisis with a suggested plan of action.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN AND LEAVING CARE WHO ARE PARENTS OR CARERS

1. If a young person is already a parent or becomes pregnant, or CLS is notified that the young person is about to become a parent, the young person’s PA would identify the risks and protective factors during supervision.

2. They will then decide whether it is necessary to undertake a parenting assessment with the young person to further explore and quantify the nature of the potential/actual risks to the child. If so, the PA would do the assessment and a further decision would then be made based on the outcome, as to whether there are issues and concerns warranting referral to MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

3. Consideration must be given on a case by case basis as to how the other parent (if known) who is neither in care or leaving care, can be party to the assessment. Where the known parent is expecting to be fully involved in parenting the child and or cohabiting with the mother/father both parents must be involved in the assessment.

4. MASH will assess and TRIAGE the case and take action proportionate to the concerns and time line for the EDD. If there is serious significant risk of harm to the unborn child, then a section 47 investigation will be initiated which may lead to a pr-birth child protection conference in some instances.

5. The expectant parent(s) and the CLS PA must attend the safeguarding meetings and any subsequent meetings. Assessment of risk will be on-going and monitored by the CLS TM.

6. If the assessment of family and the threshold has not been met for a service, advice will be given on local services and relevant community-based agencies.

7. During these meetings careful consideration must be given to what additional support/services may be required for the young person, and if any restrictions should be put in place regarding their placement/contact arrangements.

8. In the event of care proceedings being necessary for the baby/child it is the responsibility of the Child Protection Team to initiate the Public Law Outline (PLO) process.
9. The Social Worker/Personal Adviser must be invited to attend any legal planning meeting that takes place and must provide full information and an up-to-date chronology. The Social Worker/Personal Adviser may be required to provide a witness statement in s.33 Care Proceedings and attend Court.

10. All staff must remind themselves that the safety and welfare of any baby/child is paramount and will in such circumstances supersede their responsibility to a young person who is in; or leaving care, and is the parent of the baby/child and is not able as a young parent to meet the needs of that baby or child.

11. Where a second or subsequent (confirmed) pregnancy arises for the young person; where the unborn child’s older sibling is subject to care proceedings, a new referral must be made to MASH and the Social Worker for the older sibling notified. Procedures will then follow to look at the unborn siblings needs within the context of a pre-birth conference.

**NETWORKS THAT MAY POSE A RISK TO A YOUNG PERSON**

Any young person in or leaving care may be involved in a range of networks which may pose a risk to them. This may include one of the following:

1. Extended family involved in criminal activity

2. Family members who historically have posed a risk to the young person or not met their care needs

3. Peer group networks involved in criminal activity

4. Peer group networks involved in inappropriate sexual activity or exposed to sexual exploitation

5. Networks involved in organised sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

6. This risk must be discussed with the line manager to decide what action should be taken. For adult care leavers this may include the use of Adult Safeguarding Procedures. For Eligible or Relevant young people up to the age of 18yrs this may require child protection procedures.

7. In such circumstances careful consideration must be given to what additional support/services may be required for the young person, and if any restrictions should be put in place regarding their placement/contact arrangements.

8. This must be in the context of close inter-agency working involving those agencies known to the young person and their cares as appropriate.

**SITUATIONS WHICH MAY POSE A RISK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF**
Occasionally young people using CLS will pose a risk to a member of staff. This could be violence, aggression, threats of violence; exposure to violent peers, or the young person’s family members; damage to worker property, or verbal abuse.

When working with young people presenting such issues, the Personal Adviser must consider the following:

1. Take into account the young person’s history and family history – *the greatest predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour as an indicator of potential violence.*
2. Note any previous risk assessment
3. Discuss the current situation with their line manager
5. Complete a risk management action plan, to be signed off by their line manager and circulated to other members of the team, including administrative staff, as appropriate.
6. A review date must be set at the point of completing the risk assessment plan.
7. Complete the warning system available on ICS in order to alert other staff of the nature of the risk.
8. Consult with, and alert other professionals from other agencies involved in the case.
9. Alert the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) as needed.
10. The Police must be contacted when necessary and consideration given to a formal complaint are made.

**YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC)**

**Definition & Status – Implications for eligibility & Service**

1. An unaccompanied asylum seeking child is a person under 18 (or who, in the absence of documentary evidence establishing age, appears to be under that age), who is applying for asylum on his or her own right and has no relative or guardian in the United Kingdom.
2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children making the transition from care to adulthood have both a leaving care and an immigration status in addition to their placement, accommodation, education, health, financial, religious and cultural needs. Planning the transition to adulthood for this group is a complex process that needs to address all levels of need whilst maintaining the wider asylum and immigration legislative context.
3. Those unaccompanied children (UASC) from abroad who are in the care of SCC are entitled to the same level of leaving care provisions as any other relevant or former relevant young person. However, the application of any provision detailed within this
policy must be undertaken after giving suitable regard to the immigration status of the young person.

4. Unaccompanied migrant children (UASC) that come into care receive the full range of support and care that all looked after children are entitled to, including access to health, education and appropriate and safe accommodation. After becoming 18 years old, many will be treated as care leavers and will continue to be entitled to a range of support from the local authority, including provision of accommodation, support with education and the provision of a personal adviser until the young person has entitlement to remain in the UK up to the age of 21.

5. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Care Leavers (UASC) wishing to continue in education after their 21st birthday will need to provide evidence from the Home Office of their entitlement to remain in the UK confirming that this extends to the end date of the course.

6. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking in Human Beings defines trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force...for the purpose of exploitation.” This can include trafficking into the UK from overseas or trafficking within the UK, for example, for the purposes of sexual exploitation. A child who has been trafficked is the victim of a crime and vulnerable from their experiences and can need carefully planned support to keep them safe and help them re-build their lives.

UASCs (0-18yrs) fall into the following categories:

1. Young people who have Discretionary Leave to Remain (DLR), Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR), and those who have applied to the Home Office for an extension to either of these categories.

2. Young people granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

3. Young people awaiting initial decisions on their immigration status.

4. Young people who have been refused Asylum will be subject to a Human Rights Assessment at age 18 yrs to determine if they remain eligible for Care Leavers’ Service support.

5. The four area Looked After Children Teams must support young people 16 and 17 year Eligible young people who fall into these categories. Transfer to the Care Leavers’ Service will be subject to the same transfer process noted above.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND BORDERLINE CASES – TRANSITIONAL PROTOCOL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

1. The school is responsible for convening the year 9 Transition Plan Review and producing a transition plan.
2. The child’s Social Worker is responsible for informing the lead for transition of all looked after children with a ‘registered’ disability at the time of the year 9 Review.

3. The lead for transition must liaise with relevant Social Workers, the CLS Service Manager, and the Adult Social Care Manager to agree with the appropriate service provider post 16 and to ensure that all statutory assessments are completed.

4. For young people who are deemed ‘borderline’ (i.e. it is not certain that they will meet Adult Social Care eligibility criteria) a meeting must be convened by the lead for transition by the time that the young person reaches 17.5 years of age.

5. The purpose of the meeting is to have an open and frank discussion and to negotiate which service will take responsibility for the young person.

6. The meeting must be at management level and must include representation from CLS and the Children’s Service.

7. Young people with a registered disability who will meet Adult and Community Care eligibility criteria, where it has been agreed that they will transfer to the Adult Social Care Team on their 18th birthday, will remain with the relevant Children’s Service Team until they reach 18 years when they will be transferred to the Adult Social Care Team.

8. Children with Disability Teams (CWD) will lead on transition planning.

NATIONAL INTER AUTHORITY PROCEDURE

1. When a care leaver makes a planned move to an address within another Local Authority and input is being sought from the receiving authority, the Care Leaving Service Manager in the ‘responsible authority’ must contact the local manager in the ‘receiving authority’ and:

2. Provide them with a Pathway Plan and any other information that is required;

3. Negotiate the support services that are needed.

4. The ‘receiving authority’ must then provide a response to this request within 4 working weeks. In the meantime the young person’s support will continue to be provided by the ‘responsible authority’.

5. Detailed arrangement as to the services to be provided to the young person must be the subject to a review of their Pathway Plan, which must be convened in the receiving area by the Service Manager in the ‘responsible authority’.

The Service Manager in the responsible authority must:

6. Provide the receiving authority with as much information as possible – immediately – including a copy of the most recent Pathway Plan.
7. Agree a process to refund any immediate reasonable costs incurred by the receiving authority.

8. In the event that the young person intends to remain within the receiving authority, agree to meeting to review the Pathway Plan within 4 working weeks.

9. Lead managers must maintain accurate records which detail the young people for whom their authority is responsible but who are resident elsewhere, as well as of those young people for whom their authority is acting as a receiving authority.

10. As a minimum, those records must include details of age, race, gender, and disability as well as the location of the care leaver, the nature of the move (planned or unplanned) and the duration of the residence. Authorities must also record cases of dispute.

11. However, in these circumstances, resources may dictate that the Duty system is able to provide information and limited telephone support. The originating authority retains responsibility for financial and other support for Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young people and the team will charge originating authorities for services provided.

CONTACT – KEEPING IN TOUCH

1. One of the central themes of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is that the Local Authority should fulfil its duty as a corporate parent by keeping in touch with care leavers until their 21st birthday (or beyond to the end of an agreed programme of education or training).

   This should happen through:

2. Statutory visits (every 6 weeks) by the allocated Social Worker to looked after young people aged 16-17 years old.

3. For young people 18+ the minimum requirement is to be in contact is not less than every 2 months. In reality this is likely to be more frequent depending on the needs of the young person at any given time. There is also the recognition that for some young people less frequent contact is agreed with the individual and this will be recorded in the Pathway Plan.

4. Regular contact must be maintained with the young person by their Social Worker/Personal Adviser from the time of writing the Pathway Plan. However, contact must be maintained at an appropriate level to ensure that the Pathway Plan is implemented in a timely and effective way.

5. Thereafter, the level of contact must be determined through discussion at the review of the Pathway Plan. It must never fall below the stipulated contacts for the looked after 16 & 17 yr olds and young people who are 18+, unless this is clearly recorded as the young person’s wishes.
6. Where this is the case, the specific wishes of the young person must be ascertained and recorded on the case file, and efforts made to negotiate an acceptable minimum level of contact for the young person. This might for example, involve the sending of ‘a contract letter’, birthday, Christmas cards and Service newsletters.

7. Particular attention must be paid to keeping in touch with relevant young people, those who have left care at 16 or 17yrs. Such young people will have left care because it is in accordance with their own wishes and they may therefore resist ongoing contact with the team.

8. Never the less, contact should be maintained wherever possible. Relevant young people will rely on the Local Authority for rent and maintenance payments (where they are unable to make their own arrangements) and this may enable a point of contact.

9. In circumstances where they lose touch, the relevant team must immediately take reasonable steps to re-establish contact on behalf of the Local Authority, and continue doing so until they have succeeded in making contact.

10. Similar requirements apply to Former Relevant young people (those care leavers aged 18+). A proactive approach to maintaining contact must be maintained at all times.

11. Where it is not possible to establish an understanding, the Social Worker/Personal Adviser will have to balance the risk of alienating the young person with the need to maintain contact with them.

CASE CLOSURE AND ENDING THE SERVICE

1. The service, as outlined above, will be provided to Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young people until their 21st birthday; or, until completion of an agreed program of education or training.

2. Where a Former Relevant young person previously entitled to the Care Leavers’ Service wishes to take up additional education or training beyond the age of 21 yrs (but before the 25th birthday), then they must have an assessment of need and following this, the appropriate advice, guidance and support will be agreed. This may mean the young person does not require an ongoing service and may be closed or if the need is assessed to re-open a personal adviser will be allocated and the pathway plan will be completed.

3. Where a young person is a ‘qualifying child’ (s24B(5) of the 1989 Children Act) the local authority will assist in relation to the young person securing vacation accommodation where the need has been assessed.

4. When a young person is no longer eligible for a service, the Care Leavers’ Service Personal Adviser must consider any identified need for ongoing support at the last review of the Pathway Plan and seek to make any necessary arrangements to facilitate this; e.g. by arranging for services from an Adult and Community Care Service Team or
a voluntary organisation. Such plans must be fully explored well in advance of the last review.

5. The Care Leavers’ Service Personal Adviser must review the plans and achievements made since the Needs Assessment and Care Plan with the young person and seek to action any outstanding plans that are achievable.

6. Where the young person is amenable, the Personal Adviser must undertake a monitoring/evaluation questionnaire/interview with the young person (this must be sent to them if the PA is not in direct contact with the young person) and forward it, when completed to the CARE Leavers’ Service Team Manager. Personal Advisers must ensure that this process is prioritized when ending service provision.

*The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Volume 3 – Transition* has been updated. Changes associated with this update can be viewed at the following (NCAS) link:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Practice – Case Closure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange to see a young person well before closing a case and plan an appropriate ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider how the young person may feel – is there a loss? The Care Leavers’ Service may have been the young person’s main source of support for many years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a young person’s entitlement to a service from CLS ends (either at their 21st birthday, or up to their 25th birthday), the Personal Adviser must either transfer young person to the appropriate adult team, or close and archive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In either case, the PA must:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform the young person that their case is closing to the Care Leavers’ Service. Write a closing letter or a transfer summary – to be signed by the personal adviser, young person and signed off by the Care Leavers’ Service Assistant Service Manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete and update ICS and the Care Leavers’ Service database systems with date of transfer/closure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Good Practice – Involvement and Advocacy |
| 1. Care leavers’ views and experiences are central to the development and delivery of a successful leaving care service. |
| 2. Care leavers are actively involved in the organisation, development, delivery and review of their services – including the recruitment, selection, induction and training of staff and carers. |
3. The Local Authority has a written strategy for care leavers’ involvement, including an implementation plan which is regularly reviewed and evaluated by and with care leavers.

4. Care leavers are encouraged, supported and assisted to develop the skills necessary to advocate for themselves – either as individuals or as group.

5. There is an effective, independent and accessibly advocacy service for care leavers that is regularly reviewed and evaluated.

6. There is a clear, accessible and effective complaints system for care leavers, which is regularly reviewed and evaluated.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
Foster Carers (including private Foster Carers), Lodgings Providers and Residential Key Workers.

It is the responsibility of the Primary Carers (noted above) to:

1. Meet with the allocated Personal Adviser.

2. Contribute to the Pathway Assessment Process - which Surrey Children’s Service has overall responsibility for.

3. Meet identified objectives within the young people’s Pathway Plans.

4. Attend reviews of Pathway Plans as appropriate.

5. Establish a culture within the home which facilitates preparation for adulthood.


7. Work closely and in partnership with the allocated Social Worker/Personal Adviser.

    It is the responsibility of the Social Workers/Personal Advisers to:

8. Ensure that they are familiar with the placement arrangements and importantly make contact with the primary carer prior to case responsibility transfer to the Leaving Care Service at 18yrs.

9. Ensure that initial contact with carers, prior to the young person’s 18th birthday should be via letter introducing themselves before meeting at them at the young person’s 18th birthday statutory review. The Personal Advisor should explain to the carer their intention to make contact with the young person placed with them.
The initial letter to the young person must be copied to the carer and, if being sent to a foster carer, to the Supervising Social Worker.

10. Contact care(s) periodically to enquire about the young person’s wellbeing, and if visiting the young person in placement, to have an informal chat and re-enforce the carer(s) valued input to the young person’s wellbeing and personal development.

11. Consider always, with the young person and their carer(s), what support role the carer(s) could provide once they leave the placement. This may have an important impact on post placement contingency planning.

12. When appropriate carer must be asked to also attend the transfer meeting and it is then the responsibility of the relevant worker to ask the young person to invite them.

13. Carer(s) are a very valuable resource to access to inform the Pathway Assessment, and to assist in updating the Pathway Plan.

**Good Practice – Working in Partnership with Foster Carers**

- Foster carers play a key role in a young person’s life. It is essential therefore, that Social Workers/PAs and foster carers work in partnership with each other – often the young person has been with the foster carer many years to the point where the young person is considered part of the family.

- Introductions should be dealt with sensitively. A high level of communication is imperative. Social Workers/Personal Advisers should ensure that foster carers are contacted in advance of the first meeting with the young person, and ideally the first meeting should in fact include the foster carers.

- It is also essential that Social Workers/Personal Advisers notify the Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Team of their involvement with the young person.

- Foster carers must always be consulted as part of the Pathway Assessment, Plan & Review process. If a communication issue develops in either side of the working relationship, it should be bought to the attention of a manager and dealt with swiftly.

- Ultimately foster carers and Social Workers/Pas must work together in order to provide the best possible service to the young person and to jointly prepare him/her for transition to adulthood and to living independently within the community.

- When it is time for the young person to move away from the foster placement, future contact should be fully addressed. It is hope that in most cases that the foster carers will continue to be a part of the young person’s support network, but this must always be negotiated and clarified.
HEALTHCARE

All care leavers between the ages of 16 and 18 years will be offered a Review Health Assessment at 16+, which is facilitated by the Looked After Children’s Health Team.

This will include a discussion about health histories and pathways to gain information in the future.

The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children writes to all care leavers, providing general information about accessing health information, and emphasising the importance of the need for full GP registration.

Key points:

- All requests for Health Assessments should be made via the Looked After Children’s Coordinator
- The social worker must discuss ‘refusers’ or disclaimers with the Specialist Nurse or Designated Nurse. In such cases alternative approaches may lead to positive engagement and a better outcome for the young person.

Contacts
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  Designated Nurse for Looked After Children  
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YOUNG PEOPLES’ PRIMARY MENTAL HEALTH

1. The 3Cs service (CAMHS for Children in Care based with SABP) will support the mental health needs of care leavers up to age 18 and will facilitate appropriate transition to adult mental health services.

2. Catch 22 ‘24/7’ service provides a CAMHS link nurse to work with Dual Diagnosis up to age of 21. Key links between Young Person and CAMHS, CMHRS, EIIP and Mindful Service.

3. The Mindful Service is Surrey Wide. There are 2 mental health workers – one based at the YMCA in Guildford and one at the YMCA in Redhill.

MINDFUL:

Works with 16-25 year olds with emerging to moderate mental health needs who are not receiving secondary mental health services but may require them. These young people often find statutory services difficult to engage with.

- Offers consultation to professionals to discuss the individual cases.
Assists the young person to access IAPT (Increased Access to Psychological Therapies), or other agencies if secondary mental health services are not required.

Works with the young person to assess if they do need secondary mental health services, work with the young person to engage with the right services and use one-to-one sessions to help the young person with their mental health issues.

Delivers group work for young people eg mental health issues and illicit substances.

Provides educational programmes for staff working in the 3rd sector to raise awareness of mental health.

Targets vulnerable groups of young people - homeless, NEET, leaving care and drug/alcohol.

The Surrey & NE Hants Early Intervention in Psychosis Service (EIIP)
1. Service is delivered by 2 teams covering the Surrey and NE Hants area.
   The East Surrey Team are based at Farmside in Epsom.
2. West Surrey Team and North East Hants team are based at The Base, St Peters Hospital Chertsey with a satellite base at Aldershot Centre for Health.

EIIP
Take direct referrals which can include the young person, carers, schools, colleges, university, third sector or secondary mental health providers, GPs, etc so this may include referrals regarding care leavers but not specifically.
EIIP work with 14-35 year olds, within the area and a first presentation of psychosis or suspected psychosis within the last 3 years. If there is a suspicion they are developing a psychosis then an assessment would be offered.

Following assessment if the young person’s needs are not best met by the EIIP service ie not psychotic then this may facilitate a referral to IAPT for follow up or signposting to the right service for their needs. If the young person needs can be met through the psychosis pathway they will be offered a 3 year care plan using CPA which will have a holistic approach to recovery which will be a bio-psychosocial approach. There is much inter-agency work involved to meet the needs of the young person and a care coordinator will have the role to promote this work.

Primary Mental Health Workers, Surrey Family Services – provide advice and consultation to SFS staff regarding mental health issues of young people who SFS are working with, this includes care leavers up to the age of 19.

CATCH 22 Surrey Young People’s Substance Misuse Service
A county-wide specialist service offering an emergency crisis line and counselling and pharmacological support as part of a tailored recovery approach.
A multi-professional team of specialist support workers provides a range of support including:

- whole-family work
- A&E link work
- a 24/7 emergency referral & crisis line for young people
- specialist prescribing and pharmacological support for rapid response for prescribing needs
- a ‘harm-reduction’ approach that informs young people about the effects of drug and alcohol misuse and the risks involved
- individually tailored help, based on an assessment of each young person’s needs
- specialist support for mental health problems
- access to prescribing and needle exchange services
- alternative therapies, such as acupuncture
- access to mentors, aftercare and recovery support
- transitional support to adult services
- additional support for care leavers and those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25.

The service is based at: The Mansion, 68 Church Street, Leatherhead KT22 8DP
Tel: 01372 832905
E-mail: ypsm@catch-22.org.uk
See Links & Resources section for a pdf brochure and link to website.

Service Manager
steven.bird@catch-22.org.uk
Mob: 07782 208 902

HOUSING DEPARTMENTS

1. It is the responsibility of the Housing Departments, Surrey’s Children’s Service and CLS to work towards establishing joint working protocols as part of their comprehensive homelessness strategies. These working arrangements should include joint procedures for sharing information, planning provision, clarifying local connection and developing allocation policies with regards to care leavers.

Housing Departments, Youth Support Services (SFS) Surrey’s Children’s Service and Care Leavers’ Service must ensure that:

2. Staff are trained in the provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Homeless legislation and joint working protocol arrangements.

3. They contribute to the monitoring and review of Joint Working Protocols.

4. A District/Borough housing representative must be invited to attend the young person’s first statutory looked after review following their 17th birthday, to update the accommodation section of the Pathway Plan.

5. Social Workers and P.As ensure that care leavers have signed the Leaving Care Information Sharing Agreement as part of their Pathway Assessment and Planning Process.

6. That in the event of an emergency placement a Common Referral Form (CRF) is to be sent to the Homelessness Prevention Panel in the SFS requesting a placement.

District/Borough Housing Department’s homelessness strategies are in part informed by:
7. Quantitative data on care leavers within their district/borough boundary.

8. An initial referral form sent to the District/Borough by their PA that the young person wishes to reside in, as identified in the Pathway Plan, during the young person’s 16th year, with their permission, towards establish a local connection. This to be followed by an application to on the housing register in that District/Borough. All 16yr olds to be registered with the District/borough housing list with which a local connection has been established. In some cases this could result in the young person being registered with more than one housing department.

9. The young person’s application for housing registration needs to be where a local connection has been established. From their 17th year District/Borough housing departments must be invited to attend Pathway Meetings.

10. If there is a dispute as to which District/Borough the young person qualifies for, this should be resolved by the respective District/Borough as part of the local connection criteria agreed with Surrey’s Housing Departments.

11. A local connect criteria and pro-forma has been developed by Surrey Housing Departments for care leavers.

12. Housing Providers: When considering a placement in Supported Housing, Social Workers/Personal Advisers must ensure that a Placement Agreement is in place.

13. Supporting People: Funding has been bought back into Surrey County Council and into the Supported Housing Budget.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Each young person still in education or training needs to have a ‘final education meeting’ as a matter of good practice to summarize and capture achievements and areas needing further work at the end of a program of study. This approach should also include non-curriculum issues such as psycho-social development, activities and interests, and preparation for work.

2. Such good practice could be promoted by the college/school providing an end of terms report, which could be put onto ICS as a way of tracking the young person’s progress and achievement.

3. The final education meeting needs to include: the young person, their PA, Course Tutor/Year Head and other professionals involved in the young person’s life. Although the Virtual School will not be expected to attend, information about the outcome of the meeting should be shared with them – if appropriate.

4. Transitions to Adulthood Guidance and Regulations Vol.3 – The person’s Personal Education Plan (PEP) and care plan should already include information about their
career aspirations and ambitions. This should be developed as part of the Pathway planning process.

The Head Teacher or Designated Professional must ensure that:

5. Confidentiality is maintained for the anonymity of looked after children and young people the school setting and that any information is shared strictly on ‘needs to know’ basis.

6. There is regular liaison and consultation with the Leaving Care Personal Adviser, Foster Carers and Residential Workers, parents, the Virtual School, the young person’s Social Worker (if still under 18 yrs) and any other professionals involved in the young person’s life.

7. Further information can be found in Surrey County Council’s Corporate Parenting Handbook.

SURREY FAMILY SERVICE

1. The service will support all looked after children who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) from the planning stage in the January of year 11 (alongside school and virtual school) to the August of their 19th birthday.

2. Those not NEET will be held by the 4 areas so that they are aware of the cohort and are ready to proactively check statuses and attend interviews if needed.

3. If a young person resides in Surrey, the service will allocate a worker from each of those NEET in Surrey who will work with the case holder to access education.

4. If the young person resides out of Surrey, the service will look to connect them and any allocated workers to services in that authority (which will be checked out first).

5. The service will also support confirmation of bursaries and other queries and will support colleagues with any issues related to this group and successful access to education post 16yrs.

YOUTH JUSTICE

1. A minority of young people who are, or have been looked after will have committed criminal offences.

2. It is important to note that young people, who are Eligible, Relevant; or Former Relevant children, qualify for the duties in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 irrespective of whether they have previous or current convictions or are subject to a custodial sentence.

3. Some of these young people will be subject to various Court orders, all of which will be supervised by the relevant Youth Offending Team (YOT).

4. The Probation Service will in most instances supervise persons over the age of 18 yrs.
5. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) or the Probation Service will be concerned to ensure as far as possible that those young people do not re-offend. In trying to achieve this aim, they will not only address young people's offending behaviour, and consequences; but also their development into self-reliant adults who have 'grown out' of offending.

6. CLS is committed to working in partnership with the local YOT and Probation Service to develop written protocols which clearly outline how each service will interface with each other, covering area such information sharing and co-working.

7. Co-working or individual agency roles must be clearly referenced within the young person's Care Plan.

8. The CLS is committed to involving YOT or Probation Service in the development and ongoing review of young people's Pathway Assessments and Plans.

OTHER KEY AGENCIES/ORGANISATIONS

In addition to the above there are additional roles listed in Chapter 3 of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 for the following:

- Voluntary Organisations
- Providers of Children's Homes
- The Department of Work and Pensions

INFORMATION SHARING

1. The requirement to share a young person's details with other agencies must be explained to the young person during the assessment process in a way that is both sensitive, clear and in keeping with their understanding.

2. Information sharing also needs to be compliant with the Data Protection Act – if in doubt about any aspect of this requirement, advice should be sought from an TEAM MANAGER.

3. Only basic information should be shared which is relevant to the young person's future well-being and development, unless there is another justification for disclosure (see SCS limited IS A5 card).

4. The agencies with whom information must be routinely shared are:

5. Housing Departments – In terms of clarifying local connection, registering young people on the Housing Register and ensuring the relevant Housing Departments contribute to the Pathway Planning process. Once the Pathway Plan is in place, and assuming that the young person has signed ISA, their PA must send the Education, Employment and Training section of the plan to the relevant area and ensure the update EET sections are forwarded in the future.
USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

This section is to provide relevant and useful links and will be updated regularly to ensure that the resources listed are fresh and relevant.

**CLS Risk Management Process – October 2013**
I:\CSF\Leaving Care\Risk Management

**Updated Risk Management Guidance**
I:\CSF\Leaving Care\Risk Management

**Risk Data Base**
I:\CSF\Leaving Care\Risk Management

**Blank Risk Notification Form**
I:\CSF\Leaving Care\Risk Management

**Young Parent Joint Assessment Form**
I:\CSF\Leaving Care\Risk Management

http://leavingcare.org/ - NCAS
Website with up-to-date information and news on key changes for Care Leavers.

**Catch 22:**

**New BIS Guide on the NCAS website**

**Revised Guidance Staying Put and PA to 25 – Updated Transitions Vol 3 Guidance**