



Children's Services

16+ Care Leavers Service OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

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TARGET AUDIENCE:

**TYSS/ UAS Team/ YC
Hertfordshire including LDD
Team / CLA Service / 0-25
Together Service**

Please read alongside HCC Social Work Procedures Manual
<http://hertschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

1. Introduction & Vision Statement

Children's Services work closely together to ensure all care leavers are supported to thrive in their education setting, family and friends network and within the community. Services work together to support young people leaving care to make a successful transition to adulthood by providing high quality, personalised support to every care leaver.

Services for Young People have responsibility for support to care leavers who are:

- Qualifying age 16/17
- Qualifying and Former Relevant aged 18-21yrs
- Qualifying or Former Relevant up to their 25th birthday if in education or training and/or request a service.

Each area Targeted Youth Support Team has Leaving Care Personal Advisers to support this work. There is also a specific Care Leavers team for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UAS Team) and the YC Hertfordshire LDD Team (YCH LDD) Team support young people, often coming from the 0-25 Families Together service, who have complex disability related needs who are likely to receive Adult Services.

All work with young people is based on the development of a good relationship and listening to the young person's views, wishes and feelings. All young people can be vulnerable during transitional stages in life. Young people leaving care are likely to be particularly vulnerable due to their life experiences. Children's Services, in partnership with others, will seek to act as a "good parent". This implies accepting that the transition to adulthood can include more than one change of direction or breakdown in arrangements, when the young person will need support and encouragement to learn from what has happened, and start anew. This also indicates an understanding that young people mature at different rates and therefore, support into adulthood requires individual assessment and plans which are appropriate to the young person's needs, including those which arise from their gender, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation and disability.

2. Objectives

The Children Looked After Service will continue to support young people who are open to their service and have left care at age 16/17 for up to 6 months.

Services for Young People will provide a care leaver service to all young people aged 18 years or over who are former relevant or qualifying young people as defined by the 2010 Regulations. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring a planned and timely transition to the Targeted Youth Support Service, UAS Team, or YC LDD Team
- ensuring that young people are provided with the support necessary to successfully achieve independence
- supporting young people to fulfil their educational and career goals

- supporting young people to maintain relationships with carers and families, where possible
- ensuring that young people are clear about what services they can expect from Targeted Youth Support, UAS Team, YC LDD Team and what the service expects from them
- ensuring that regular and meaningful contact takes place
- ensuring that any difficulties that a young person may face are resolved in a timely manner, where necessary utilising expertise within the wider Services for Young People
- planning with young people for their full independence into adulthood
- listening to young people and ensuring the insight and views of care leavers is incorporated into the development of the care leaver service.

3. The Legal Context

The key pieces of legislation and guidance staff need to be most familiar with and consult alongside these procedures are:

- [Children & Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [The Care Leavers \(England\) Regulations 2010 \(revised 2015\)](#)
- [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 – 2010 \(revised 2015\)](#)
- [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3 – 2010 \(revised 2015\)](#)
- [Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#)
- [Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000](#)
- [Valuing People : The Learning Disability Strategy for The 21st Century](#)
- [Promoting the Education of Looked After Children](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Care of Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children](#)
- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness act 2017](#)

The responsibility of the Local Authority is to improve outcomes and actively promote the life chances of children they look after, known as ‘Corporate Parenting’. This term recognises that the task must be shared by the whole Local Authority and partner agencies. The role of the corporate parent is to act as the best possible parent for each child they look after and to advocate on his/her behalf to secure the best possible outcomes. In its ‘Corporate Parenting’ role, Hertfordshire County Council has a duty to the following young people:

Eligible Young People: Young people aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and are still being looked after. Eligible children are entitled to all the provisions of the looked-after service.

One category of young people who, although fulfilling the criteria for eligible young people, are not deemed eligible are those who have been in receipt of short-term breaks (Regulation 3(2) (a)). This would include a young person who has had a number of planned short-term breaks, none longer than 4 weeks and after each one they return to their parents or someone with Parental Responsibility. These young people are deemed Qualifying Care Leavers.

Relevant Young People: Young People aged 16 and 17 who are no longer looked after by a local authority, but who were looked after for at least 13 weeks after the age of 14 and have been looked after at some time while they were aged 16 & 17.

This includes young people who would have been a relevant child but for the fact that they had been detained through the criminal justice system, or were in hospital on their 16th birthday.

Relevant Young People are entitled to:

- A Personal Adviser
- A Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan
- Accommodation and maintenance
- Assistance to achieve the goals agreed in the Pathway Plan
- Local Authority contact to keep in touch

Former Relevant Young People: Young people aged between 18 and 25 who have been eligible and/or relevant children. If, at the age of 21, the young person is still being helped by the responsible authority with education or training, then he or she remains a former relevant child. Under the Children & Social Work Act 2017, care leavers can continue to receive a service up to the age of 25yrs regardless of education status if they require a service. Former Relevant care leavers can return to the local authority between the ages of 21 and 25 for assistance with education or training or for advice and guidance and their former relevant status will resume.

This includes former relevant young people who may be in custody at the time of their 18th birthday. Further information can be accessed at [The Children's Act 1989 Vol 3 Care Leavers in the Youth Justice System Pages 53-57.](#)

Former relevant young people are no longer dependent upon the local authority for income and housing costs. They can obtain benefits in their own right. If they become homeless at the age of 18-21 they will now automatically be seen as being in priority need. If they become homeless at the age of 21 or over, they will need to be assessed to establish whether they are vulnerable. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to carry out an assessment if a former relevant young person aged 21 to 25 wishes to receive advice and support. This assessment must look at whether any services offered by the local authority may assist in meeting any assessed need and if so, what advice and support it would be appropriate to provide.

Former Relevant Young People are entitled to:

- A Personal Adviser
- A Pathway Plan
- Local Authority contact to keep in touch
- Assistance with employment, education and training
- Assistance in general to achieve the goals agreed in the Pathway Plan
- Vacation accommodation for higher education or residential further education if needed

Former Relevant Young People aged 21-25 are entitled to

- A Personal Adviser until the former relevant young person reaches the age of 25 if they request an ongoing service (or until the program of work being undertaken on their 25th birthday is completed)
- An assessment (the relevant section/s of a pathway plan) under subsection (5) to determine whether any services offered by the local authority may assist in meeting any assessed needs
- Advice and support appropriate for the local authority to help the former relevant young person obtain any relevant services.

Qualifying Young People Over 16: Young people who have been in care (looked after) at least 24 hours after their 16th birthday but for less than 13 weeks since the age of 14.

Young people deemed **Qualifying Young People over 16** include:

- Young people aged 16 & 17 who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order
- Young people aged 18 to 21, or up to 25 who were previously subject to a Special Guardianship Order. NB: The young person must have been looked after immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order.
- Young people who were privately fostered
- Young people who were looked after for less than 13 weeks between their 14th and 18th birthdays, but for at least 24 hours aged 16 or 17.
- Young people who returned home, were subject to a Section 31 Care Order and were looked after for a minimum of 13 weeks (age 14 or 15) become an 'Eligible' child on reaching their 16th birthday. If their care order is revoked and they live at home successfully for 6 months or more they become Qualifying. NB: If the arrangement at home breaks down before the age of 18, they automatically become 'Relevant' children.
- Young people aged 16 or 17 who are deemed 'Eligible' and are accommodated under Section 20 cease to be looked after and become 'Relevant' children on returning to parents or those with parental responsibility. After a stable and settled six month period as 'Relevant' children this group become Qualifying. NB: If the arrangement at home breaks down before the age of 18, they automatically revert to being 'Relevant' children.
- Young people subject to respite care arrangements do not become Eligible or Relevant even where their period of being looked after exceeds 13 weeks between their 14th and 18th birthday. The respite periods must all be planned periods with no individual period exceeding 4 weeks. These young people are deemed Qualifying.

Where there is an assessed need, **Qualifying children** are entitled to:

- Advice, befriending and assistance
- Local Authority contact to keep in touch
- Assistance with education and training up to their 25th birthday
- Vacation accommodation for higher education or residential further education if needed

Depending on an assessment of need Qualifying Children and Young People may require and should be provided with the same level of service as Relevant or Former Relevant young people. See [The Children Act 1989 Guidance/Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance](#)

If a member of staff is unsure of a young person's status, clarification can be sought from their Team Manager or further information is available at: [The Children's Act 1989 Vol 3 The Legal Framework pages 10-14](#)

4. Case Transfer Arrangements

A transfer protocol has been devised taking into account the needs and views of Young People alongside the processes required to ensure timely case transfers from Children Looked After Service to Leaving Care services within Services for Young People. The protocol aims to support a proactive seamless transition and provide improved clarity of roles and responsibilities for professionals working with the young person as they transition into adulthood. All staff recognise that transition points may lead to increased instability for a young person and all staff will work closely together to support young people through this transition whilst ensuring the young person remains the focus of all intervention.

Roles and Responsibilities

CLA/0-25 Together Social Worker

- Case responsibility; case holder up until age 18
- Responsible for writing pathway plan
- Responsible for leading on and planning accommodation/ housing
- Statutory visits
- Responsible for informing the Personal Adviser of key dates such as CLA review
- Responsible for any required funding requests and authorisation pre 18 to bridge to post 18 (i.e. staying put, funding to cover legal appeal costs for UASC, etc)

Services for Young People (TYSS, UAS, YCH LDD) Personal Adviser

- Support worker from allocation (17 years 3 months/6 months) up until age 18
- Responsible for contributing to the pathway plan pre 18
- Responsible for contributing to visits pre 18 in order to build a relationship with the Young Person
- Responsible for attending the final CLA review
- Responsible to provide support with Independent Living Skills from the age of 17 years 6 months
- Case responsibility; case holder post 18, once transfer is completed

Brokerage, Benefits Officer

- Responsible for supporting with benefits claims from last CLA review
- For young people Staying Put, Supported Lodgings, Semi-independent Accommodation- Benefits Officer will support young person to make benefits application and will attend new claim interview with young person
- For young people on Job Seekers- Benefits Officer will support young people with application and take into Job Centre Plus 6 weeks before young person turns 18. Benefits Officer will introduce the young person to their Job Centre Plus (JCP) Personal Adviser and provide details of TYS PA to JCP PA
- For young people on ESA- Young person's carer is asked to make the initial phone call with the young person, Benefits Officer will then complete the application with the young person and post this.

Virtual School

- Responsible for leading on education plans

IRO

- Responsible for scrutiny and monitoring of progress of pathway plan and escalation where concerns are identified.

LAC and Care Leavers Health Team

- Available for supporting Looked After Children and Care Leavers with their non-urgent health needs
- Responsible for ensuring young people receive a Care Leavers Pack on leaving care/at the final CLA Review

Where the Children Looked After Service identifies that a young person aged 17 is demonstrating high risk behaviour, this risk will be shared with the Leaving Care Service who will provide early identification and allocation of a Personal Adviser (age 17, 3 months) in order to ensure close coordination of planning and risk management between both services during the transition into Leaving Care. All other young people will be allocated a Personal Adviser at age 17, 6 months.

Where a young person aged 17 or older has complex needs and the plan for adulthood is unclear (e.g. a young person not meeting criteria for adult services, but their needs are such that they require support over and above what can be provided by their personal adviser, mainstream housing etc), then the CLA social worker is to refer the case to the Transition to Adulthood Panel so that a multi-agency plan for adulthood can be strengthened.

All services will work with the young person, ensuring they know what transfer arrangements are in place and ensuring they feel listened to throughout the process of transitioning from being in care to leaving care.

Please see appendix A for the transfer flowchart, which details the timeliness of required processes.

Targeted Youth Support also support 16 & 17 year old qualifying young people where there are identified ongoing needs which require support. After a successful return home, sustained for at least 6 months, following the final pathway plan review and change of legal status to qualifying and no care order in place, a worker within Services for Young People, as identified by the TYS Team Manager, will take case responsibility for supporting the qualifying young person, following a case transfer.

5. Supporting Relevant Care leavers age 16/17

Relevant care leavers are supported by the team who worked with them at the time of becoming Relevant.

The Children Looked After Service will continue to support young people who are open to their service and return home at the age of 16/17 for up to 6 months. Similarly, Targeted Youth Support will continue to support young people who are open to their service and return home at the age of 16/17.

Relevant young people will be supported with their accommodation and maintenance as well as assistance to meet their needs in relation to education, training or employment.

Relevant young people will have **Pathway Plans** which should be reviewed under the following guidelines:

- A minimum of 6 monthly (unless required more frequently due to change in circumstance or request by young person)
- When a young person is coping well, the first review at three months will determine whether the following review could be at three or six months.
- Additional reviews to take place where the young person requests it
- Additional reviews to take place should the young person change accommodation (a pathway plan review should take place within 28 days in such circumstances)
- Reviews should always be brought forward where there is an assessed risk that a crisis may develop in a young person's life

The Joint Housing Protocol emphasizes the importance of placing the names of care leavers on the local authority housing waiting list as soon as they reach the age of 16. This will enable them to build up residence points under their care leaver status when they reach 18 years of age. In addition, Children's Services must alert the local authority housing department 6 months prior to the young person's 18th birthday of the impending housing need. The ten District Councils and County Council are working in partnership to ensure young people make a smooth transition to independent living which avoids the need to present as homeless. The District Housing Authorities have responsibility to give priority status to care leavers and must be involved in the pathway planning process.

6. Supporting Care Leavers post 18yrs and qualifying young people age 16/17

For Former Relevant Young People

Pathway Plans should be reviewed under the following guidelines:

- A minimum of 6 monthly (unless required more frequently due to change in circumstance or request by young person)
- When a young person is coping well, the first review at three months will determine whether the following review could be at three or six months.
- Additional reviews to take place where the young person requests it
- Additional reviews to take place should the young person change accommodation (a pathway plan review should take place within 28 days in such circumstances)
- Reviews should always be brought forward where there is an assessed risk that a crisis may develop in a young person's life
- The Pathway Plan should include a Personal Education Plan where appropriate.

Personal Advisers will work closely with young people to ensure they are actively involved in writing and reviewing their pathway plan. Reviews of Pathway Plans will be undertaken by Personal Advisers and will require line management approval. Where a Pathway Plan is complex, the TYS or YCC LDD Team Manager should seek independent advice where appropriate. Further information is available at [Reviewing Pathway Plans](#).

For all Care Leavers:

Local Authority Contact to Keep in Touch

Arrangements for contact and keeping in touch may vary, dependent on the needs, views and wishes of the young person. Care Leavers aged 16-19 will be seen by their Social Worker/ Personal Adviser at a minimum of once every two months. Care Leavers age 20-21 will be seen by their Personal Adviser at a minimum of every three months. For care leavers aged 21-25, the expectation is that they will be growing in maturity and independence. The level and form of contact between them and a personal adviser will be agreed and followed.

Personal Advisers will discuss with each young person ways to keep in touch which enable the young person to feel supported by their Personal Adviser and enable the Personal Adviser to check in and ensure the young person is achieving and accessing all support. Once contact arrangements have been agreed, the agreements must be written into the young person's Pathway Plan. Where Disabled Young Adults receive Care and Support from Adult Social Care, the keeping in touch arrangements will be personalised and proportionate to their needs and contact with other statutory services. This will be detailed in the Pathway Plan.

Personal Advisers need to discuss with the young person the actions that would take place if they are uncontactable and considered a missing person. If the young person is missing, please refer to Hertfordshire's policy: [Children Missing from Care or Home](#).

Personal Advisers will make all endeavours to have regular face to face contact with every care leaver that they support and ensure their accommodation is seen. It is expected that other contact with care leavers takes place in-between visits, e.g. by phone, text, email etc. The expected frequency of this kind of contact is a minimum of 6 weekly. If there are difficulties in regular contact (i.e. the young person is not making themselves available), then the Personal Adviser needs to inform their line manager, where consideration can be given to changes in approach, or who else might be in regular contact to support the Local Authority in keeping up to date with any changes or needs of the young person. The pathway plan must set out expectations for the PA to see the care leaver, and if relevant, arrangements for staying in touch in other ways, i.e. text, emails and phone conversations.

The young person will be made aware that they also have a responsibility to keep in touch with their Personal Adviser. It is important that Personal Advisers develop a good relationship with each young person so that young people feel able to inform their PA where they are having difficulties. This will enable the PA to best support their young people by putting additional support in place when needed.

Contact with care leavers must be meaningful contact. The Personal Adviser will review progress as set out in the Pathway Plan, as well as ensure that care leavers are increasing their knowledge and skills towards practical independence to help them cope with the day to day activities and responsibilities of life.

Every effort will be made to provide young people with a flexible service that meets their needs. This may include the provision of support from other services such as YC Hertfordshire or Herts Young Homeless. It is the responsibility of the Personal Adviser to coordinate these services. Where a young person is reluctant to engage directly with services or contact from the local authority, the pathway plan will set out how the local authority will still meet their needs via the use of a range of support services.

Accommodation

Young people who have left care are over-represented amongst young homeless people. They are also particularly vulnerable to exploitation by unsuitable adults or peers. Under the Housing Act 1996 Guidance, care leavers are given '[Priority Need](#)'. A [Joint Housing Protocol](#) has been developed with Housing partners and Herts Young Homeless to support and facilitate appropriate plans for accommodation. It is important that this particularly vulnerable group is given appropriate support to sustain their tenancies. Information received from Housing Departments and Housing Associations highlights that care leavers who get into rent arrears or become involved in anti-social behaviour are at a high risk of losing their tenancies.

The Joint Housing Protocol emphasizes the importance of early planning and placing the names of care leavers on the local authority housing waiting list as soon as they reach the age of 16. This will enable them to build up residence points under their care leaver status when they reach 18 years of age. In addition, Children's Services must alert the

local authority housing department 6 months prior to the young person's 18th birthday of the impending housing need. The ten Hertfordshire District/Borough Councils and Hertfordshire County Council are working in partnership to ensure young people make a smooth transition to independent living which avoids the need to present as homeless. The District/Borough Council Housing Authorities have a responsibility to give priority status to care leavers and must be involved in the pathway planning process. The JHP also covers 'Local Connection' arrangements stemming from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Herts Young Homeless will support care leavers through their Floating Support Personal Assistants. This support may include development of skills such as budgeting and paying bills and also may include support with tenancy sign up. HYH are encouraging early referral to their service to prevent difficulties arising. To refer a young person for support a [referral form](#) should be completed and forwarded to fsreferrals@hyh.org.uk.

Young people should not be placed in accommodation that does not correspond to their needs. Should the Personal Adviser have concerns regarding the suitability or security of accommodation for a young person, the concern must be raised with their line manager without delay.

If a young person in Foster Care is still in full time education or training on their 18th birthday, they may wish to stay with their Foster Carers until the period of education or training is over. The 'Staying Put' policy also includes the possibility for care leavers to remain with their Carers on the grounds of Vulnerability, or where there is a clear Move On plan. Requests for Staying Put MUST be presented to Hertfordshire's Access to Resources Panel (HARP) in-line with the Staying Put policy. Further information on Staying Put is available at [Hertfordshire's Staying Put Policy](#).

Whilst Staying Put offers the young person the opportunity to continue to live with their Foster Carers, significant changes take place in the transition from foster care; principally the basis on which the young person occupies the property and how the placement is funded. These issues need to be carefully and sensitively planned in order to ensure that both young people and Carers understand the nature of the arrangement.

Accommodation costs for young people aged 18 and older will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. Placements and accommodation costs for exceptionally vulnerable young people aged 18 and older may be funded in part or full following an assessment of need and the case being considered by the Hertfordshire Access to Resources Panel ([HARP](#)). It is expected that, in the main, young people will be claiming housing benefit at a rate which covers their accommodation.

The local authority has a responsibility to fund and support all failed asylum seekers aged 18 and over who are former relevant care leavers and where they have no recourse to public funds until the age of 21, until they are removed or until the date of removal, whichever comes first.

Employment, Education & Training

Care leavers are particularly at risk of missing out on a good career and further education opportunities. Pathway planning will seek to maximise and support opportunities for care leavers. Well before a young person leaves care their Personal Education Plan should reflect their aspirations and abilities. Young people need to be fully involved in discussions and plans for their future education, training and employment and be given advice and information that will enable them to make informed choices. The 16+ Virtual School Personal Advisers attend all year 11 PEPs where plans will be made to assist young people with their transition into further education, employment or training.

Where young people are undertaking apprenticeships, every effort should be made to ensure continuity in their accommodation in order to prevent disruption to their apprenticeship. From the 1 August 2018 Care Leavers aged 16-24 are entitled to a £1,000 bursary when undertaking an apprenticeship, this will be paid through their Training Provider.

Young people who are disabled will not be discriminated against in their access to education and associated services. Disability should not be a barrier to accessing further education, training or employment.

Personal Advisers must encourage wider participation in training, further and higher education by care leavers and ensure support is in place for appropriate opportunities and written into their Pathway Plan. Young people (care leavers) who are estranged from their family are entitled to means tested benefits (Income Support/Housing Benefit/Universal Credit) if undertaking full time education course of 12 hours contact time or more. Entitlement commences from the age of 18 and can continue until the young person reaches the age of 21, or until the end of the academic year following their 21st birthday.

If a care leaver returns to live with a parent and is therefore no longer 'estranged', the parent is eligible to claim child benefit/child tax credits/Universal Credit until the young person's 19th birthday. Care leavers are a priority group for Discretionary Lerner Support Funds administered by individual colleges. Advice can be sought from Hertfordshire's Virtual School for Children Looked After and Care Leavers on 01707 346614.

The provision of benefits support and financial support from the Virtual School and individual colleges/universities should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.

When young people are due to complete courses social care workers should attend a 16+ Personal Education Planning meeting to agree plans for their next steps (prioritising those young people who are work ready).

Young people between the ages of 21 and 25 years can continue a service and/or return to their Local Authority as a former relevant or qualifying young person including requesting support to resume education or training. Where young people aged 21 to 25 wish to resume or commence education or training the following guidelines apply;

- Young people should be directed to contact the duty worker for the leaving care team that supported them prior to their 21st birthday.
- A joint assessment of need will be undertaken by a Targeted Youth Support Service/UAS leaving care personal adviser and a worker from the 'Virtual School - 16 Plus Team'.
- Funding will be considered by the Care Leavers Education and Training Panel following an assessment of need (including access to financial resources) and will be based on the motivation and commitment of the young person to undertake, sustain and complete the course in line with agreed principles for funding.
- Following assessment of suitability, the Local Authority would support the young person until the program of education is over. Following acceptance by the Local Authority, the young person is entitled to a Personal Adviser and a Pathway Plan.

Care leavers are able to access additional support from JobCentrePlus Plus. A [joint protocol](#) with Job Centre Plus has been developed and aims to ensure HCC and Job Centre Plus work together with the young person towards more successful outcomes in relation to training and work. Each Job Centre Plus office has a designated Adviser who has a lead responsibility in relation to care leavers. The Children's Services-DWP joint protocol is currently being up-dated to incorporate Universal Credit (UC) arrangements in preparation for the whole of Hertfordshire becoming a Full UC Service Area in December 2018.

Additionally, a website is also available to match jobs to young people. This can be accessed by young people and Personal Advisers at <http://www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org/careers/>

YC Hertfordshire will support care leavers who are seeking employment, education or training including apprenticeships. This support can include careers guidance, job matching, learning and developing employability skills, work experience as well as signposting to a range of relevant programmes. . Leaving Care PA's should ensure that their area YC Hertfordshire Team is aware of all NEET Care leavers so that appropriate support can be discussed and brokered. Further information is available at: [YC Hertfordshire](#).

Health

Care leavers often have little information about their medical history and how to take care of their personal health. Therefore, Children's Services, in partnership with other agencies, will ensure that all young people leaving care have sufficient knowledge and access to services to enable them to take good care of their health, including mental and emotional health. A healthy lifestyle also means relationships, sexual health and exercise, caring about oneself and having people to talk to.

Personal Advisers will support young people to take responsibility for their own health and outline support available through their pathway plan. Where care leavers have additional health needs, including mental health, the Personal Adviser will support the care leaver to access resources and support to address their needs. All care leavers

should be given a health pack by the LAC and Care Leavers Health Team when they leave care.

The LAC and Care Leavers Health team can be reached on 01438 843004 or CLA.healthadmin@hchs.nhs.uk FAO LAC nurse. This team supports the health needs of young people who are in care and who have left care.

Risk Assessment Protocol

Personal Advisers will have open discussions with care leavers about risk and where there are concerns, support care leavers to keep themselves safe and access support to do so.

All teams should reference the [Risk Assessment and Risk Management Manual](#) in section 3.1.7 of the Social Work Procedure Manual.

In line with the Risk Management Process, every care leaver will have an up to date Risk Assessment on file, which is updated in line with guidance within the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Manual, authorised by a Manager and saved within the Livelink folder for Risk Assessment.

In line with the Risk Management Process, all high risk Care Leavers and those with complex needs will be referred to the Transitions to Adulthood Panel. Where there are concerns that a Care Leaver is going missing and at risk of, or is being sexually or criminally exploited, they need to be referred to Hertfordshire's SEARCH panel.

Wider support from Services for Young People (SfYP)

Within SfYP, there are multi-disciplinary workers with a wide range of knowledge and skills. It is the expectation that the Leaving Care Personal Advisers are able to easily access support from others within the service, in this way supporting their caseload and ensuring a pooling of knowledge and skills to best support young people.

Within the TYS team, specialist support and advice is available from the following workers who have specialist knowledge in their areas:

- Mental Health Workers
- Substance Misuse - Drug & Alcohol Workers
- Workers with expertise on youth offending issues

As well as providing support for education, employment and training YC Hertfordshire provides [Care Leaver HUBs](#) and [Independent Living Skills](#) programmes, as well as a variety of advice, information and preventative youth work programmes.

Safe Space may be able to offer counselling or art therapy.

In addition to the resources available within SfYP the Leaving Care PA's and the UAS Team work closely with:

- [Herts Young Homeless](#) who will support young people to access housing and sustain their tenancy, and will also offer advice around homelessness.
- [NYAS](#) - an independent advocacy service for young people up to the age of 24 who have been in care

- [POhWER](#)- an independent support service which provides information, advice, support and advocacy to people who experience disability, vulnerability, distress and social exclusion
- [Hertfordshire mentoring and counselling services](#)

Line Managers for the Leaving Care Personal Advisers will be familiar with the range of wider support available within Services for Young People and will support Personal Advisers by:

- Supervising a structured assessment of the young person's needs and a plan as to how the needs may be best met, having regard to diversity issues
- Ensuring that the young person's views, and their families where appropriate, are clearly represented in the assessment, planning and delivery of services
- Assisting in the co-ordination of interventions and partnership working
- Identifying high risk cases which require additional management oversight
- Supporting the Personal Adviser to plan appropriate exit strategies (i.e. when the young person has reached the appropriate age and is no longer requiring a service).
- Ensuring that the Personal Adviser is able to access support services and reviewing the Personal Adviser's support needs within supervision.
- Ensuring that as managers, they are up to date with legislation, policy and procedures in relation to care leavers

Youth Justice

Although the numbers of care leavers involved with the youth justice system and probation is small, they are a high risk group as past evidence demonstrates that there is a greater chance that their offending will lead to a custodial sentence.

Where a care leaver has support from youth justice or probation services, the Personal Adviser will work closely with the young person's key worker to ensure that care planning takes into account entitlements and support needs as a care leaver, including visits. It is important for the Personal Adviser to work closely with the Youth Justice case manager to ensure ongoing liaison and information sharing. Should a care leaver be in secure accommodation (prison etc), the Personal Adviser will liaise with the young person's key worker in the secure establishment to arrange contact with the young person and to ensure planning is in place, including moving on arrangements upon the young person's release from prison.

YC Hertfordshire (YCH) LDD Team

The Team works specifically with young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD).

The YCH LDD Team has a direct responsibility for Care Leavers with complex Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities by providing a Leaving Care Personal Adviser

The YCH LDD Team has a duty to attend the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review and write a Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Transition Plan for young people in Year 9 and again in their school leaving year which is Year 11 for Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) or Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Year 14 for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). For young people in mainstream school with an EHCP this function is provided by the YCH area teams in years 9 and 11.

The YCH LDD team currently trades Careers Guidance and /or Work Related learning with all of the Special Schools in Hertfordshire and the supported courses in three out of the four local colleges. They also support those who are educated at Out of County Specialist Schools and Colleges, because their needs cannot be met locally and within the community. One of the key objectives for the YCH LDD team is that more young people with complex special needs are enabled to access education locally, rather than attend out of county specialist colleges.

The Team provides specific bespoke support for NEET young people with LDD including a programme of supported employment where an adviser directly works alongside the young person within the workplace.

Transition to Adulthood Panel

This is the multi-agency risk management panel for vulnerable young people who are transitioning into adulthood and have complex needs that require complex co-ordination and a multi-agency response. With representatives from Children's and Adult services, cases considered will include children in need, children looked after and care leavers up to the age of 25yrs. It is the expectation that those involved with the young person (across the agencies) have been working together to address needs and risks.

The purpose of the panel is to provide advice, guidance and support to strengthen risk management planning where there are difficulties in progressing care plans for young people aged 17years and up to 25 years (where a care leaver or LDD). The panel will collaborate to simplify and improve services to young people where there may be difficulties in managing locally (an escalation panel). The panel will assist where they might be barriers to progressing plans.

Referrals can be made by professionals from health or children's social care, using the referral form (Appendix) and emailing this to the Panel Co-ordinator:

michele.turner@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Care Leavers – Post 21 years

Under the Children & Social Work Act (2017), care leavers are able to receive a service until they are 25yrs. This replaces previous guidance where care leavers only received an ongoing service due to education or LDD.

In order to meet this service need, a separate team has been put in place specifically to support care leavers aged 21-25 who remain or return for a care leaver service.

The aim is to support care leavers so that they can live successful independent lives with continued support if this is needed. There is no assumption that all care leavers will want or require ongoing Personal Adviser support and that they should develop maturity and more independence with the right support and social networks around them.

The 21-25 care leaver service will provide advice and guidance and broker solutions, working alongside care leavers. There are no financial duties attached to the new legislation. There will still be a pathway plan in place, but the legislation guidance states

that this doesn't need to be a full pathway plan if there is a need for support in one aspect of their life.

Contact between older care leavers and their Personal Adviser will be agreed in terms of frequency and method of contact. Once needs have been addressed, the care leaver might not wish to continue to receive a service. In which case, they will be provided with information to come back to the service at any time until they are 25yrs. The 21yr+ service allows care leavers to make contact and get advice and guidance whenever it is needed.

Care Leaver Allowances

Allowances and setting up home costs are based on assessed need. Further information is found within the [Leaving Care Finance Policy](#). All young people should have a bank account and where possible all allowances should be paid through their account.

Preparing Young People for Independence

In preparing a young person for the end of their care leaver service, it is important that planning has taken place with the young person. Preparation for leaving care should be included in their Pathway Plan and needs to confirm:

- That the young person has developed the skills necessary to live independently
- Is able to manage finances and has had access to allowances they are entitled to
- They are able to access health services such as a GP and Dentist and support services within the community.
- They are aware of Universal Service provision within their geographical area
- They are aware that they may be able to access support to return to education up to the age of 25 years.

When the young person is leaving the care leaver service, an 'exit' interview is required. The interview is an opportunity to formally acknowledge the end of their period in care and wish them well. It is also important for young people to give feedback regarding the service they have been provided with and ways in which they feel the service could be developed.

Children's Services has a range of life skills and preparation for independence tools that can assess the assessment and development of life skills work programmes.

Appendix A

17 Years
 CLA Social Worker
 To email Early Warning (appendix C) to TYSS (must incl. date of professional meeting & final CLA review)

17 Yrs 3 months (high risk CLA allocation)
 TYSS or YC LDD PA added as Support Worker

17 Yrs 4 months
 Professionals Meeting takes place
 PA attends if allocation at 17, 3 months
 Confirm post 18 arrangements (staying put)

17 Yrs 6 months (all CLA allocation)
 Final CLA Review
 PWP is reviewed
 PA, Brokerage (benefits specialist) and EET rep to attend (or send report) PA meets YP

17 Yrs 9 months
 PWP updated by CLA worker
 (Contribution from TYSS or YC LDD PA)
 HARP attended if required

17 Yrs 10 months
 Transfer Checklist (appendix B)
 Completed jointly by CLA and Leaving Care

18 Yrs
 Transfer to PA as allocated worker

Young people who are assessed to be at high risk at 17 years to receive early allocation at 17 years, 3 months to a Leaving Care Personal Adviser via CLA/TYS Strategic Meeting

If Concerns with PWP

IRO escalate to CLA service Manager

Outstanding tasks

To be escalated to Service Manager for CLA and TYS- Both to provide direction/ oversight/ timescales to ensure transition is on track for transfer at 18

Statutory visits are undertaken during this period by SW. PA to visit either on their own or jointly with CLA SW

Appendix B

Transfer Checklist for 0-25 Service/CLA and Targeted Youth Support /YCH LDD Service

Purpose and Expectations	
<p>This checklist is designed for the transfer of cases between 0-25 Service/ CLA teams and Targeted Youth Support / YCH LDD Teams and must be recorded in LCS (live link) once completed.</p> <p><u>For cases coming from DCT/ CLA to Leaving Care within TYS / YCH LDD:</u> This checklist should be completed jointly between 0-25 service/CLA and Leaving Care (worker and line manager) at least 2 months prior to transfer (so at age 17 years, 10 months). If there are any outstanding tasks highlighted by this transfer checklist, they should be escalated to the CLA Service Manager as well as the Vulnerable Young People, Strategy and Development Manager who will oversee completion of tasks in order to ensure a smooth transfer for the young person at age 18.</p> <p><u>For cases coming from TYS to CLA:</u> This checklist should be completed by the TYS Social Worker's line manager as well as the CLA Team Manager at least 4 weeks before transfer (between 1st and 2nd CLA review). If there are any outstanding tasks highlighted by this transfer checklist, they should be escalated to the CLA Service Manager as well as the TYS Team Manager who will oversee completion of the tasks in order to ensure a smooth transfer for the young person at the 2nd CLA review.</p>	

Name of Young Person and ICS number:	TYS / YCH LDD PA:
Current Social Worker:	TYS / YCH LDD PA's manager:
Current CLA manager:	How often has the TYS / YCH LDD PA had contact with the young person to date?
Is this young person residing out of county:	
Legal status upon age 18 (former relevant or qualifying):	
Date checklist completed:	Name of person completing checklist:
Key documents/ details: is there evidence of the following?	
Passport	
Birth certificate	
For UASC- Home Office number	
NI number	
NHS number	
Driving license	
Memory Box/ Life Story Book/ Any other personal documents	

Recording

Task	Yes/No/Partly	Comments/Action
Are demographics on ICS up to date? (i.e. correct address, relationships, key agencies, risks/ hazards)		
Is the chronology up to date with relevant and meaningful information?		
Are the final CLA minutes on ICS		
Is there an up to date case summary on file which provides relevant overview of the case?		

Pathway plan

Task	Yes/No/Partly	Comments/Action
Is the PWP up to date with relevant information?		
Is the PWP signed by the young person?		
Is the plan for accommodation post 18 clear within the PWP?		
Does the young person have a learning disability/ complex needs?		
If yes to above, has a referral been made to transitions team? If yes, have they accepted the referral?		
Has there been a programme of work for the young person around independent living skills? Are there any areas for development (please comment)		

Benefits and Entitlement

Task	Yes/No/Partly	Comments/Action
Is there evidence that the young person has been made aware of their entitlements? (i.e. the pledge, charter, money matters leaflet)		
Has the young person accessed any of their setting		

up home allowance? (please comment on how much is left in comments)		
Does the young person have a bank account? (where are the details of this held)		
Is there a named person to support the young person with benefits claim and Job Centre Plus? (please add name in comments box)		

Risk Assessment

Task	Yes/No/Partly	Comments/Action
Is there an up to date risk assessment? (in Livelink Need to know, Risk Assessment Folder with case note referencing date and where it is saved) Please add date of last risk assessment in comment box		
Does the Risk Management Plan address and manage the risk?		
Are there any identified concerns regarding lone working?		

Accommodation

Task	Yes/no/partly	Comments/Actions
Are the young person's details on the housing register? (please provide details of housing registration number/ bidding reference number and originating authority)		
If required, has funding been agreed by HARP/ MAP/ senior management for post 18 accommodation arrangement? (i.e. staying put, supporting lodgings, etc.)		
If this young person has a disability/ complex needs and does not meet criteria for transitions team, is there a realistic and funded independence plan in place		

for the young person post 18?		
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<i>Education Employment & Training</i>

Task	Yes/no/partly	Comments/Actions
Is there a final year 16+ PEP on ICS?		
Is Virtual School involved to support EET? (if no, should a referral be made)		
Has the EET/NEET status been updated on ICS? (in CLA tab)		
What is the plan for education, employment or training post 18; what support is needed to prevent the risk of becoming NEET		
Who is the young person's YC Hertfordshire P.A? (please add in comment box)		

Action Plan

Outstanding tasks	Person responsible for completion	Date to be completed	Date completed

Date and time action plan/checklist passed to relevant Team Manager and if outstanding tasks to Service Manager/ Policy Manager:	
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Early Warning of Case Transfer Document
 (to be emailed to Project Officer, Care Leavers **by age 17 years**)

Name of young person: ICS no:	Originating authority (one of the 10 Districts, i.e. Watford)	Date of birth	Age	IS this YP residing out of county? (if yes, where)	Category at point of transfer (Former Relevant/Qualifying)	Complexity: (TM decision) TICK ONE LOW MED HIGH	Risk Assessment DATE: Attached in livelink Risk Assessment Folder? (yes/no)
Case summary: (please include summary of risk, vulnerability, brief history and potential difficulties for future)						Key dates (must include next CLA review as well as date of professionals meeting): <u>Date/time/venue of professionals meeting:</u> <u>Date/time/venue of next CLA review:</u>	
Move on plans: (please include current housing/ accommodation status and any funding in place; if young person is 'staying put' please ensure this is detailed in this section with date of agreement from HARP)							

Housing Registration number:	
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Please indicate whether the young person has difficulties/risks involving one or more of the following (and the associated risk of harm to self/others):

	Risk of harm to self/others			
	<i>LOW</i>	<i>MEDIUM</i>	<i>HIGH</i>	<i>VERY HIGH</i>
Mental Health				
Substance misuse				
Sexual exploitation/concerning sexual behaviour				
Criminal/offending behaviour- risk of offending/ re-offending				
Risk of harm to others				
Learning/physical disability/difficulty				

Please indicate whether any of the following apply to the young person:

	YES/NO
Young person is pregnant or a parent	
Child/UBB is subject to CP plan or Care Proceedings	
Young person has had frequent missing episodes	
Young person is experiencing housing difficulties which could lead to imminent move or homelessness	
Young person resides out of county	

Current worker: _____ **Current Manager** _____ **Date** _____

Management info

Date Case Transferred: _____

Allocated to: _____

Date New Worker entered on LCS _____

Additional notes:

