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Putting Young People at the Centre

A summary report of the Leaving Care
 Regional Seminars 2003

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DfES Leaving Care Regional Seminars:

Putting Young People at the Centre

In mid-2003, the Department of Health/Department for Education and Skills held eight regional leaving-care seminars, which focused on multi-agency working and young people's involvement in leaving-care services. This final report presents a thematic review of the seminars and highlights the challenges and solutions identified by the participants. The themes are: transitions; corporate parenting; multi-agency working; personal support, family and social relationships; suitable accommodation; education, training and employment; finance; health and wellbeing; and young people's participation.¹

Background

Shortly after the passage of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, in June 2001 the Department of Health (DH) presented eight regional seminars to disseminate information about the Act and its (then draft) associated guidance and regulations.²

One year on, experience of working under the Act had highlighted effective multi-agency working and young people's participation as central to successful outcomes for care leavers. The DH Quality Protects Leaving Care Project Team proposed a further series of seminars to examine progress in implementing the Act.³ The focus was to be on multi-agency working and young people's participation, particularly the challenges to developing services that put engaging with young people and their needs at the centre of service delivery.⁴

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 – Reflections and Challenges

Keynote speeches at the seminars assessed changes in policy and practice for care leavers before and after the Act. Mike Stein⁵, for example, suggested that these had evolved over the past 10 years, rather than changing abruptly after the Act.

The keynote speakers identified the following positive changes since the Children (Leaving Care) Act was introduced:

- awareness of leaving-care issues among a wide range of groups;
- continued growth of specialist leaving-care services;
- diversity of staff teams;

¹ Summaries of each regional event can be found in Appendix B.

² Material about the legal framework was distributed at each of the seminars: The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Workshop Notes: Implementation Seminars, June 2001 First Key: London.

³ Materials for the 2003 seminars were written by First Key, much of whose work has been continued by the National Leaving Care Advisory Service (NLCAS), Rainer, shortly after First Key ceased trading in June 2003. Putting Young People at the Centre is available from NLCAS, tel: 020 8808 6127, email: NLCAS@raineronline.org

⁴ Further information on the planning and organisation of the seminars can be found in Appendix A.

⁵ Mike Stein presented the keynote speech at the South West and East Midlands seminars.

- development of the personal adviser role as specialist professionals with specific skills in work with vulnerable young people;
- improved management and information systems;
- involvement of young people;
- reversal of the trend for young people to leave care at 16;
- greater recognition of the importance of needs assessment and pathway planning in ensuring that the right services are provided to care leavers;
- emphasis on the role of corporate parenting in ensuring that care leavers are provided with the support they need to achieve their potential;
- development of multi-agency partnerships for providing support for care leavers;
- clarity of financial arrangements for 16- and 17-year-old care leavers;
- less stigmatisation of young people in and leaving care; and
- clarification of the role of the 'responsible authority' in ensuring that care leavers are provided with consistent support.

Many of these areas were also identified and expanded on by participants in each of the seminars.

However, delivering a quality service for care leavers that puts their needs at the centre continues to present many challenges to local authorities and their partner agencies. Mike Stein noted that, too often, the Act is seen as being about raising the minimum, rather than maximising the best services for care leavers. Many young people continue to experience life in care as unstable and are unable to access the educational continuity and specialist help that they need. Some care leavers are hard to reach. A significant minority of young people leave care before they have been properly prepared for a more independent lifestyle. It remains difficult for some young people to continue in education and others struggle to access training and employment opportunities. Some disabled care leavers are not getting the benefits that they are entitled to under the Children (Leaving Care) Act.

Sections of this report cover the specific individual dimensions of young people's needs that must be assessed in order for their pathway plans to provide them with the best opportunity to achieve their potential and lead an independent life, thus minimising the risk that they will be socially excluded. Each section describes what seminar participants identified as the range of barriers and challenges facing care leavers and inhibiting the development of the right kind of services to meet their needs as well providing examples of local solutions that have been developed to provide effective services to these vulnerable young people.

Each section of the report includes examples of good practice that were presented at the seminars. It is hoped that these will provide models for other local authorities and their partners so that they can further develop and improve their local care leaving services.

Transitions

Almost three fifths of young men, and almost two fifths of young women, aged 20-24, continue to live with their parents⁶. Young people leaving care often have little choice but to deal with the challenges and responsibilities of living independently at a far younger age. Young disabled people may experience abrupt or delayed transitions from care due to restricted housing and employment options and because of inadequate support. Young black, Asian and mixed-heritage people may face additional problems if they are isolated from their families and communities, and if they experience racism. Young asylum seekers may also face language difficulties in addition to problems relating to their immigration status.

Transitions for disabled young people

Calderdale Leaving Care Team

Calderdale is improving access to leaving care services for young people with disabilities through the Transitions protocol between Children's and Adult's Social Services, the Health Authority, the Schools and Children's Services Directorate, the Careers Partnership Limited and the Leaving Care team. Additional ways to enhance the participation and consultation of young people leaving care about services are being developed, both on a one to one basis through pathway plan reviews, and through an arts and media project.

Contact: Calderdale Leaving Care Team (NCH)
t: 01422 359907

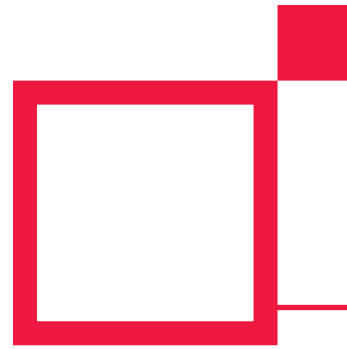
Barriers to successful transitions for care leavers

- For too many young people, leaving care is leaving home as their foster placement comes to an end. It is not always easy to convert their foster placement into an appropriate type of accommodation for young care leavers;
- Throughcare – in spite of the provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act, some young people experience very late planning for leaving care; often not until they are allocated a leaving-care worker;
- Some care leavers remain very vulnerable at the age of 21, yet their needs are not so profound that they are eligible for adult social care or specialist health services;
- There is a lack of educational and training opportunities for young people with limited social skills to help them move towards independence; and
- Eligibility for some key services continues to be determined by the different age ranges and definitions in partner agencies rather than the needs of each young person.

Solutions

- Post-18 support – providing young people with the time they need to prepare before moving on;
- Developing peer-mentoring schemes to help with transition;
- Training foster carers in the preparation of children for independence;
- Services for looked-after children begin the process of preparing children for adult life rather than just transferring this responsibility to leaving-care services;
- Bringing young disabled people into the leaving-care system where appropriate; and
- Integrating services, e.g., disability and leaving-care services, so that each service uses the expertise of others to benefit young people.

⁶The reference for this is The General Household Survey (2004) Living in Britain: Social Trends 34, 2004 edition, "Adults living with their parents" <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vink=10949&image.X+22&image.y=9>



Corporate parenting:

the local authority as a good parent

In a booklet designed for councillors, the Local Government Information Unit suggests that being a corporate parent means that councillors should:

- accept responsibility for children in the council's care;
- make their needs a priority; and
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their children.⁷

It is acknowledged that most young people in care have important relationships with their birth parents and family. It is also the reality that young people are sometimes parented by a number of people. It is assumed, therefore, that where possible, agencies will work in partnership with parents and family to provide good parenting and that each will take on appropriate roles in meeting this responsibility. Agencies must also work in partnership with foster carers and residential workers, giving attention to training and support to enable them to undertake their roles and responsibilities.



LB Ealing Care Leavers Drop In Centre

Marcella Phelan, Operations Manager, LB Ealing; Gary Olde, Drop in Centre Manager and young people from LB Ealing Care Leavers Drop In Centre

The project originated from care leavers' feeling that they didn't have a voice in the leaving-care services provided to them. An appropriate venue was found and decorated and, working in partnership with agencies including education, Connexions, Health – QP Nurse, Substance Misuse worker, Housing and Benefits, a wide range of programmes is run from the centre. These include education, employment advice, life skills – cooking, budgeting, accommodation, health education, performance arts, dance/music, film making etc. The centre works because it is a one-stop shop, accessible and young-person-led, offers a range of advice and support, ensures young people's involvement, places young people at the centre, focuses on the young people's agenda, helps develop friendships and peer support, and has widespread support across the authority.

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t: 020 8840 5201

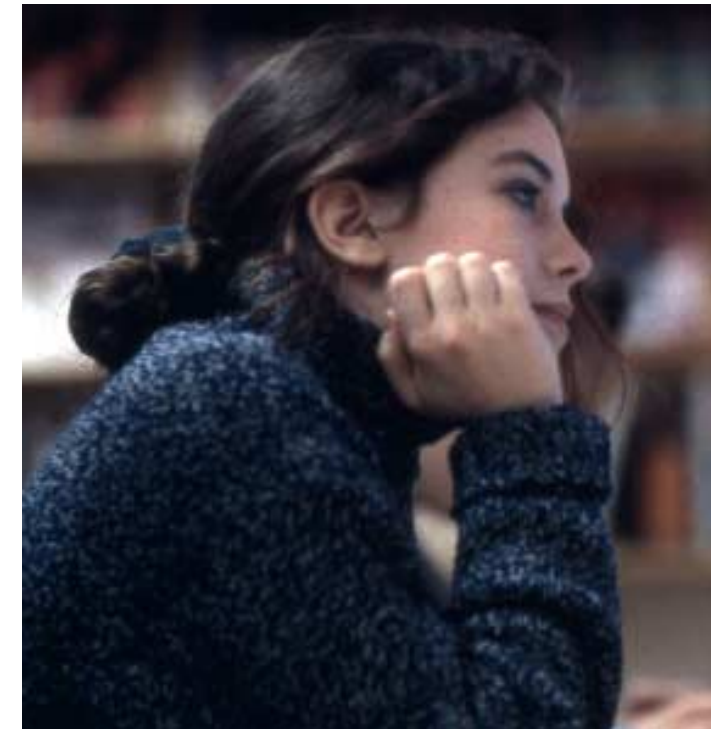
Barriers to successful corporate parenting

- Too much strategy, to the extent that planning takes the place of action;
- Lack of strategic planning across the council, meaning that support for care leavers is still seen as a social services issue; and
- Insufficient work to engage hard-to-reach young people.

⁷ LGIU/DfES (2003) If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent Copies available from: DfES publications t: 0845 6022260 e: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Solutions

- Relaunch corporate parenting – “so that the contribution of all agencies is highlighted”⁸
- Develop local strategic partnerships, multi-agency ‘corporate parent’ groups;
- Councillors and Directors take the lead on corporate parenting so young people are valued at the front line. As corporate parents, councils should be supporting young people’s aspirations and not putting barriers in their way;
- Councillors, partnerships and professionals working with care leavers must have a ‘can do, say yes’ attitude;
- Review awareness of pathway planning by social workers and staff in partner agencies; and
- Identify key champions for care leavers in relevant agencies and in each Council with Social Services Responsibilities.



⁸The Children Act, passed November 2004 - Section 19: Local authorities must, “designate one of their members as their Lead Member for Childrens Services.”

Multi-agency working

The Children (Leaving Care) Act reinforces the concept of multi-agency working. The Guidance to the Act states that “preparation for leaving care and the provision of aftercare must be planned in conjunction with all other interested agencies, e.g., education and housing authorities, the Connexions Service, Primary Care Trusts and where appropriate, other local authorities”.⁹

Directors of Social Services for each Council with Social Services Responsibilities invited a range of partners to attend the seminars, which in many regions resulted in an open and interesting exchange of views and experiences. Across all of the seminars, participants highlighted a range of barriers and challenges to working together effectively to improve outcomes for care leavers, and identified potential ways to overcome these.

True Partnership

Mick McCarthy, Kent 16 Plus

Kent County Council (KCC) and Rainer work in partnership to deliver services to young people leaving care. This was described as a ‘true partnership’, one that is based not on a purchaser/provider split, but where the will, finances and foresight of KCC enable Rainer to deliver a consistent countywide service, with services delivered under ‘one roof’, by a range of professionals, to a group of young people who are involved in monitoring staff appointments and are involved in regular consultation about the service.

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⁹The Children Act 2004, requires local authorities to make partnership arrangements with key partners and other relevant agencies, including the voluntary and community sector, in order to improve the wellbeing of children in their area – this would include improving the wellbeing of care leavers.



Making the Act Work Across Agencies: Partnership between Derbyshire CC, Barnardos, NCH and Connexions

Peter Battram, Planning and Project Manager, Derbyshire County Council

The context for effective inter-agency working covers:

- the need to work together, as a result of recent Government legislative and policy initiatives – the C(LC)A, Homelessness legislation, Connexions, Supporting People, CAMHS strategies
- the challenges – making the time, mutual suspicion, protective of own resources, new jargon, alien organisational cultures, and
- what works – clear understanding of overlaps in responsibility/mutual interdependency, shared targets, key personnel and a willingness to take risks.

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BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Knowledge and understanding

- A lack of consistency in services – cross-country or cross-borough. Inconsistency can be caused by a lack of communication between agencies, so they do not understand their role in supporting care leavers; or by different geographical boundaries for agencies.
- A lack of clarity about roles of different partners;
- A lack of financial and personnel resources - agencies provide minimum services rather than quality services. Resource constraints can lead to conflicting priorities, e.g., child protection/leaving care;
- A lack of trust between professionals with different backgrounds;
- A lack of continuity in the provision of services;
- Difficulties in accessing specific services because of the complexities of referral systems, narrow definitions of groups of service users, etc. This is particularly true for access to mental health services for 16 to 18-year-olds.

Geographical and eligibility variations

- Complications arising from different eligibility (particularly related to age) criteria for the full range of services necessary if care leavers are to be offered the support that they require in their local communities. Services mentioned by delegates included the Supporting People scheme for funding housing support costs, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Connexions, and services provided by Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).

Information sharing

- There is confusion about what information can be shared, and how. Different agency interpretations of confidentiality and of the implications of the Data Protection Act prevent effective communication between agencies.

Funding

- Uncertainty about future funding may make partner agencies defensive;
- Differing funding arrangements for leaving-care services can result in a 'geographical lottery';
- Difficulties in sustaining funding mean that it is hard to maintain partnerships when initiatives end; and
- Inappropriate labelling and stigmatising of young people by channelling them into particular services because there is funding available, rather than because those services best meet the needs of individual young people.

Solutions

- Well-resourced and developed joint protocols between health, education, training and employment, housing, benefits agencies, leisure services, etc.;
- More services to share premises; one-stop shops;
- Pooled funding, particularly with local health services;
- Multi-agency leaving-care teams – should ensure professional supervision for each specialist's field;
- Joint training to promote a common set of values by all professionals working with care leavers; all training on looked-after children and care leavers should be organised on a multi-agency basis to spread knowledge and support networking; foster carers should also be included;
- Clarification about what information can be shared about young people. This could be achieved through multi-agency protocols and joint training;
- Dedicated worker to share information about funding and resources across agencies;
- Named contact acting as a lead on care-leaving issues in each agency;
- Time – ensure that people have time to develop work on partnerships and networking;
- Local audit of all young people's services to establish how they could add value to current leaving-care services;
- Developing sub-regional groups to look at issues such as Connexions, housing, employment and tackling them together through joint-funded posts, etc.; and
- A regional approach.

Making the Act work across agencies: a children's strategic partnership

Phil Sawbridge, Head of Children's Planning, Warwickshire Social Services

The process of developing effective partnerships and cogent reasons as to 'Why bother?' - such as scarce resources and interdependence - were set out, together with 'Obstacles to Progress' - such as the lack of trust based on past experiences. The presentation ended with some guidance as to 'How to work effectively across agencies', starting with 'take a risk and trust each other' and ending with 'basing partnerships around need rather than process, take the high ground'. The essentials are mutual respect based on shared values and objectives, and establishing trust and ways of joint working.

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Youth Justice Joint Protocol

Leonard Kruczek, Wolverhampton Aftercare Services

The West Midlands Leaving Care Forum has drawn up a joint protocol between the leaving care and youth offending teams, based on an understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and setting out clear management accountability. Among other things, the protocol provides for joint risk assessments; pathway plans taking account of outstanding court orders, e.g., ensuring that post-custody accommodation is in place; and links with probation services.

Contact: Len Kruczek e: leonard.kruczek@tiscali.co.uk



Personal support

■ Family and social relationships

Most young people, whether they are living with their own families or in foster care or a children's home, experience some difficulties during their journey to adulthood. Care leavers have a lot in common with other young people, but there are some key differences that affect their need for support.

In comparison to their peers in the general population, young people leaving care have to cope with the challenges and responsibilities of major changes in their lives – in leaving foster care and residential care and setting up home, in leaving school and entering the world of work, or being unemployed and surviving on benefits, and in being parents – at a far young age than other young people.

The most recent DfES statistical collection on care leavers shows that councils are in touch with 85% of 19 year olds who were looked after on their 17th birthday.¹⁰ This is an improvement on recent years, but we should be concerned about the welfare of the remaining 15%. The regional seminars provided an opportunity for practitioners, policy makers and young people to consider how best they can provide appropriate and timely support to care leavers.

Many projects and initiatives concerned with housing, health and education, training and employment also inevitably have an important support and relationships component. Recent ESRC research revealed that care leavers struggling to deal with accommodation and relationship issues, and other basic aspects of living independently, often sideline education, training and employment.¹¹



Care Leavers' Peer Mentoring Scheme

Sheila Simpson, Kensington & Chelsea Independence Support Team Manager;
Cornetta Walker Williams, Peer Mentoring Project Manager; Hirube Tassisa, Peer Mentor

The scheme – still a work in progress – is a four-way partnership between Westminster's Accommodation and Leaving Care Team (WALC), Prince's Trust, Connexions, and Kensington & Chelsea care leavers. The task is to train and support care leavers to mentor younger, less experienced/able care leavers, through a project run with and for care leavers to aid their mutual development and achievement of potential. Tips included: "Use the skills, energy and expertise of your young people."

Contact: Sheila Simpson, Independence Support Team Manager,
t: 020 7598 4650 e: sheila.simpson@rbkc.gov.uk

¹⁰ DfES (2004) Statistics of Education: Care Leavers, 2003-04, England, Issue no: 05/03 ONS: London

¹¹ Ward JR & Pearson G (2003) Tracking care leavers as they move to independence ESRC on behalf of the Home Office

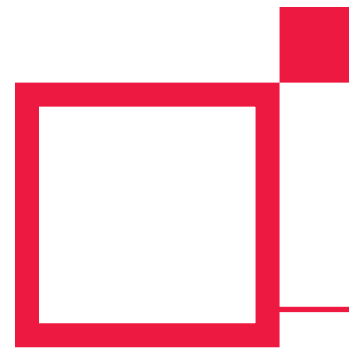
The Y-Not Project – Participation and Consultation

Simone Common, Sunderland Social Services

The Y-Not project is a partnership developed between Sunderland Social Services and the Helix Art project to offer 'drop-in with a difference' to care leavers. The involvement of young people has been integral from the start, promoting both ownership and participation. The collaboration with Helix Art has provided an opportunity for young people who are not readily accessing the service to participate and develop relationships with staff and other service users through visual art, DJ and creative writing taster sessions and working with a graphic designer to create a logo for Y-Not.

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Suitable Accommodation

Young people leaving care are a diverse group. Therefore they will have their own particular needs for different types of accommodation and support.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 imposed a duty on local authorities to provide support and suitable accommodation to relevant young people unless they are satisfied that their welfare does not require it. The Homelessness Act 2000 places a duty on housing departments to co-operate with social services departments in the assessment of former relevant care leavers' needs and the provision of services to meet these.

Accommodation issues for care leavers – Oxfordshire model of partnership

Cindy Fletcher, Care Leavers and Vulnerable Young People Accommodation Strategies, and David Gould, Banbury Homes, Shaftsbury Housing Group

This model of partnership working around accommodation issues for care leavers highlights the importance of defining the 'grey issues' (funding streams, statutory focus, working practice history, silo mentality, trust, government drivers) and working co-operatively to build protocols around them. These include joint protocols for 16- and 17-year-olds in housing need; joint-working with District Councils, Connexions and providers within accommodation panels; and a Development Manager to take forward strategic priorities and participate in District Council Homelessness Strategies.

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David Gould t: 01295 676921

Challenges to ensuring the availability of suitable accommodation

- Lack of choice of suitable accommodation;
- Lack of emergency accommodation;
- Too few foster placements, resulting in young people being moved on before they are ready;
- Difficulties in accessing specific services such as mental health, benefits advice;
- Disputes between different tiers of local government about housing responsibilities; and
- Elected members, particularly those with a responsibility for local authority housing services, maybe to support choice and priority for care leavers.

Solutions

- Give young people the opportunity to have another chance if they fail in a tenancy;
- Keep young people in foster care post-18, where appropriate;
- Improve the depth and quality of assessments when young people are ready to leave care – including at 21 for those not in education or training – explore; options for semi-independence schemes, providing additional support where necessary;
- Provide all care leavers with access to permanent accommodation, via supported living arrangements if appropriate;
- Employ a specialist housing Personal Adviser for care leavers;
- Establish a joint agency accommodation panel;
- Establish protocols for access to accommodation, including an agreement about how to respond if things go wrong;
- Turn the way accommodation is developed and organised on its head – centre it on the actual needs of young people; and
- Increase stability of placements and resources for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who are care leavers.

Cambridgeshire 16+

Michelle Dean, Teresa McMillan & Alison Gibson

Cambridgeshire 16+ engage in multi-agency work to assist care leavers to access and maintain appropriate accommodation. This approach incorporates the services of a looked-after-children nurse, Connexions workers, transitions workers and a clinical psychologist. It is also supported by the availability of a wide range of emergency, temporary and permanent accommodation options identified through: direct liaison with accommodation providers, young parents' house, JAP Panel, Council nominations, designated workers in independent accommodation (Stonham Housing), university holiday accommodation, remaining in foster care, bought beds (with key accommodation providers), crash beds and drop-ins.

Contact: Cambridgeshire 16+ Adviser Service
t: 01480 376404

Pioneer House

Janet Tarbun and Christopher Giles, Essex County Council

Pioneer House is a supported accommodation scheme run in partnership with an Essex housing association, Essex County Council and the Housing Department. It is the first of 7 county-wide schemes planned, and is managed by an Essex housing association, which also provides support to the young people, on behalf of the Leaving and After Care Service.

Each project provides 4 single flats and 2 shared flats for care leavers aged 16 and over. Each tenant has an allocated worker within Social Services, who works with them to meet their needs as identified in their Pathway Plan, and a social services Benefits Adviser works with the project to ensure that all tenants are claiming their full entitlements.

Contact: Janet Tarbun, Leaving and Aftercare Team
t: 01245 434012

Good Practice in Housing

Morag Currie, Children and Families (Supporting People) Co-ordinator, Hampshire Social Services

Hampshire follow a path of 'real partnership working' to achieve a full range of suitable accommodation options for young people rather than the inadequate hostel/B&B/night shelter options available prior to April 2003. The partners are young people, social services, Supporting People, District Councils, Wessex YOT, Connexions and the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board. Each partner signed up to a countywide joint working agreement, set up young people's housing panels, carried out needs and supply mapping, agreed to a data/information sharing protocol, treated each other with trust and mutual respect, and changed the working culture. Successes included:

- a County Young Person's Multi-agency Strategy Steering Group
- commissioning new housing services
- Housing Panels across the county
- increasing levels of housing-related support available to meet individual needs
- speaking the same language
- user consultation being at the forefront of shaping housing services.

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Northumberland Housing Project, Barnardo's

Sue Schofield, Children's Services Manager and Carol Preston, Supported Lodgings Co-ordinator

Barnardo's Housing Project is funded jointly by Northumberland Social Services, Barnardo's, Supporting People and Health to provide three separate services for young people who are leaving care or have been assessed as a child in need. The project works in close partnership with agencies that include social services, housing departments, benefits, and education and training organisations.

Young people are referred to **Floating Support** service by their social worker. Support is offered on a one-to-one basis, or in a group setting. Young people can meet every 2 weeks to participate in group activities including cooking a meal and organising and taking part in social events. The service has recently opened a training flat, with help from social services. This provides an opportunity for young people to experience the realities of independence through spending up to 3 nights a week in the flat, and for their readiness for independence to be assessed and developed.

The project also has 22 **Supported Lodgings** providers across the county. Recruitment is an ongoing issue. Potential providers undergo a thorough assessment, including police checks via CRB, two references, an employer reference if appropriate, social services check and lots of questions. This also helps to match young people appropriately, with as much relevant information as possible about the young person being supplied by social services.

Providers offer a room and support, which varies according to the provider and young person involved. It may be a combination of both practical and emotional support. Barnardo's role is to work with and support both the lodgings providers and social services to support the young person. Both services work very closely to ensure that a placement works.

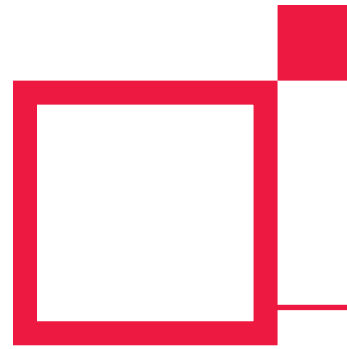
Contact: Northumberland Housing Project
t: 01670 714400

Second Chance Project

Rob Dunster, Warwickshire Leaving Care, and Kath Farmer, Christian Alliance Housing Association

The Christian Alliance Housing Association, part of the Warwickshire local Homelessness Accommodation Forum, provides a foyer-style unit dedicated to preventing the breakdown of any first attempt at independence and short term accommodation if it does fail. It has staff who move young people on and into their 'second chance'. The staff work in tandem with social services and the 5 housing authorities.

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Education, training and employment

Educational outcomes for young people leaving care remain poor, and their future opportunities are limited. 43% of young people leaving care in the year ending 30 March 2004 had at least one GCSE or GNVQ¹², and as few as 1% of young people leaving care go on to university.¹³ While these figures have shown some improvement in recent years, children in care remain unable to access the same educational opportunities as other children.¹⁴

The regional seminars revealed some progress in establishing multi-agency approaches to better respond to care leavers' needs for education, training and employment. The developing Connexions Service has provided a focal point for such work. However the seminars heard about difficulties in the following areas:

- Connexions partnerships are yet to be fully developed in some local authorities;
- Difficulty of working together where social services and Connexions are perceived to have a different ethos and different agendas; and
- Insufficient knowledge of what each agency can contribute, e.g., a leaving-care team can contribute to meeting Connexions targets.



Signpost Project, Wakefield

Liz Richardson, Service Manager

The Signpost Project works with young people not in education, training or employment. Young people who tend to fall within this group were identified and what makes transitions successful was considered. Many factors influence outcomes for young people, including individual young people's starting points, the availability of local housing, support from non-professionals (such as family and friends), personal development, preparation, educational qualifications, health determinants, professional support and the labour market. It was suggested that there is a danger in assuming that Connexions can solve all our problems; rather it should be seen as one part of the jigsaw.

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¹² DFES (2004) Statistical Bulletin: Care leavers, Year ending March 2004, England ONS

¹³ Jackson S, Ajayi S & Quigley M (2003) By Degrees: The First Year NCB in association with The Frank Buttle Trust

¹⁴ NLCS (2004) The education, training and employment of young people leaving care

Barriers/challenges

- Agencies can be too focused on their own agendas, rather than looking across agencies to develop services and support young people holistically;
- Different professional cultures evident between social workers and some Connexions staff;
- Negative attitudes of public, schools and employers; and
- Variations in funding and targets – targets for care leavers in education set too low. Care leavers believe that, too often, low expectations of schools and carers prevent them reaching their potential.¹⁵

Solutions

- Access to Connexions PA training for Leaving Care Teams;
- Increased support for further education through partnerships of LEAs, Social Services, FE colleges and Connexions across a single Learning and Skills Council area;
- Local authorities and Connexions should do more to provide work experience opportunities (particularly at the end of Year 10,) and
- As major employers in their communities councils could do more to offer employment to care leavers in the ‘family business.’

Support Services in Further Education

Rob Dunster, Warwickshire Leaving Care Service, and Janet Plant, Learning and Skills Council

Coventry and Warwickshire Social Services Department, the Learning and Skills Council, Connexions and all the local FE colleges have signed a joint protocol, with the aim of raising the standard of post-16 educational experience of care leavers. This is achieved by improving support services in colleges to provide better access and study support for care leavers, and to reduce the number of care leavers ‘dropping out’. The work was launched at a workshop for all college staff, including the new designated staff members who are modelled on designated teachers for looked-after children.

Contact: Rob Dunster
Tel: 01926 736450 Email: rob.dunster@warwickshire.gov.uk

¹⁵For more information about this, see Jackson S et.al (2003) op cit

Finance

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 introduced new financial rules for care leavers and made clear that the responsible authority is normally the primary source of income for relevant young people aged 16 and 17. This new income support role means that social services must provide allowances that cover maintenance, accommodation, and other expenses such as travel and leisure costs. In many areas, this has achieved the desired clarification. However delegates to the seminars identified continued issues and concerns in this area - including:

- The need to increase benefit levels for former relevant care leavers to those of adults (25+). Lower levels of benefit assume that young people will be living at home with parental support. Debate continues as to the need for additional London weighting to cover the additional costs (accommodation, travel etc.) of living in London;¹⁶
- Lack of consistency across local authorities in payments made to young people to set up home;
- Financial support systems can still be too slow and impersonal – they need to respond more quickly to the changing needs of care leavers; and
- At the time, delegates were awaiting the outcome of the current cross-Government review of financial support for 16 to 19-year-olds;¹⁷

Solutions

- Develop 'champions' for young people in the Benefits Agency at local level.

¹⁶ Young people led a debate on this issue at NLCAS' conference Debating the Act 2: Education, training and employment and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. Conference report available from t: 020 8808 6127, e: nlcas@raineronline.org

¹⁷ The Report of the Treasury Review, 'Supporting young people to achieve', was published for consultation in March 2004. The consultation ended 30 September 2004. It can be found at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/981DF/young_people_493.pdf



Benefit Agency Pro-forma

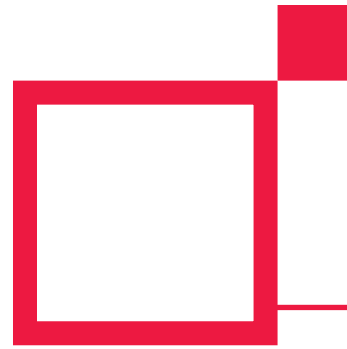
Enfield Social Services

Enfield Social Services established a working party to look at financial arrangements for care leavers and make them work in accordance with the C(LC)A 2000. So many inconsistencies emerged that, rather than challenge the former Benefits Agency, they decided to devise a standard agreement/letter to be used for all care leavers locally.

Enfield Leaving Care Team contacted the Customer Services/Benefits Liaison Officer linked to Supporting People and produced a letter clearly stating that secs.17, 23 and 24 payments do not affect a claim for benefits, thus avoiding unnecessary delays. Training has also been undertaken with Housing Benefit and leaving-care staff, resulting in an increased awareness amongst Benefits staff of the needs of care leavers.

Contact: Leaving Care Team, Enfield Council

16 Ladysmith Road, Enfield EN1 3AA Tel: 020 8379 0001



Health and Wellbeing

Care leavers' high levels of health needs may start before they come into care, and have sometimes been overlooked whilst they were in care. Children in care are less likely to receive adequate health care, including mental health care and health monitoring, than their peers. They sometimes miss out on routine health checks.

The number of placement moves experienced by some children in care can result in health records being lost, health appointments missed, children being placed at the bottom of waiting lists in the new area, and diagnosed conditions not being treated. Children placed away from their local authority may be particularly vulnerable to having their health needs overlooked.

Children in care may also miss health advice sessions at school if they are absent due to placement moves, and so they may be less able to recognise and tackle their own health problems. Young people leaving care have higher levels of mental, emotional and physical ill-health than their non-looked after peers.¹⁸

The Promoting the Health of Looked After Children guidance (DH, 2002) sets out responsibilities for ensuring that looked-after children have all their health needs properly assessed and a Health Plan implemented to meet these needs, which must be regularly reviewed. Healthy Care¹⁹ provides support and guidance to local healthy care partnerships in developing a programme of work which works towards a national healthy care standard. It offers a holistic model, which is based on children's and young people's needs and entitlements.

¹⁸ The mental health of young people looked after by local authorities in England (TSO 2003). www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=10432
Mongahan, M and Broad, B (2003) Talking Sense: Messages from young people facing social exclusion about their health and well-being, London: The Children's Society

Broad, B (1999) 'Improving the Health of Young People Leaving Care,'
Adoption and Fostering, 22 (5) 40-48

¹⁹ Healthy Care is a national programme funded by the DfES and developed by the National Children's Bureau. It aims to promote the health and well-being of looked-after children and young people by enabling them to:

- Experience a caring, supportive and sustainable relationship with a carer;
- Live in an environment and wider community that promotes health and well-being;
- Access health assessment, treatment and care; and
- Equip them with emotional and social life skills to maintain their own health and well-being now and in the future as an adult.



The National Service Framework for Children and Maternity Services sets out standards for the transfer of services for young people from CAMHS to adult mental health services – although there will continue to be vulnerable young people who fall below the threshold for tier 3 NHS support.²⁰

²⁰ The NSF for Children can be found at:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/ChildrenServices/ChildrenServicesInformation/fs/en>

Take Care, Take Control: Good Practice in Health for Care Leavers

Martin Hudson, Lewisham Social Services

This three-year multi-agency health project has been designed to promote the mental and physical health needs of young people leaving-care. It has been a partnership between Lewisham leaving care service, the Children's Society's Rights and Participation Project, and First Key, funded by the local Health Action Zone. The steering group was made up of local professionals and young people.

The project carried out a ten-week training programme for care leavers, who then conducted a local audit of care leavers' health needs; produced a health guide for looked-after young people and an award-winning health video and leaflet; and piloted a peer-mentoring scheme.

Notable successes of the project have included the appointment of a nurse for looked-after children; leisure passes; a plan for a well-being clinic; and the increased participation of young people with senior managers and politicians. The most prominent impact of the project has been on the culture of how managers think and how services are planned and reviewed. The project also benefited the health of the participants and increased their skills, knowledge and self-confidence.

Contact: Martin Hudson, Service Manager, Lewisham Social Services
t: 020 8314 9144 e: martin.hudson@lewisham.gov.uk
Report also available from NLCAS: t: 020 8808 6127
e: nlcas@raineronline.org

Barriers and Challenges

- Inadequate access to mental health services and support for care leavers, whether through primary health services (GPs), or more specialised CAMHS services. Leaving care agencies may be confused about the age and eligibility criteria for mental health and emotional support services used by their local NHS services. Some young people will be vulnerable and in need of emotional support, however, they will not meet eligibility thresholds for formal adult mental health services. Formal psychiatric services may not be appropriate, but there may be few, if any, other "adult services" to provide emotional support and intervention once young people reach 21+ and are no longer seen as the responsibility of leaving care services;
- 18+ transition to adult community care services may not be well managed;
- Lack of knowledge by leaving-care services of health networks – frequent organisational changes in the NHS and local authorities make it difficult for individual professionals in different agencies to form committed working relationships; and
- Insufficient access to leisure services.

Solutions

- Agencies must work together to provide co-ordinated services that are accessible and inclusive for young people, their carers and their families
- Health drop-in sessions with nurses – more accessible to young people;
- Training for GP's staff in primary health care so that they understand the importance of accurate record keeping and the dangers of young people's medical records failing to follow them when their placements change. Information is often not passed effectively between placements. It is vital that young people have as much information about their own health as possible;
- Training for foster carers about how to manage emotional problems that might otherwise result in stigmatising young people as mentally ill;
- Fast-track access to CAMHS for looked-after children;
- Timely mental health interventions – away from clinical settings;
- Establish local young-people centred drop-in health centre within the leaving-care team. and
- Increase partnerships with community leisure services to address young people's overall sense of healthiness and well-being.

The Emotional Wellbeing of Young People in Care

Cynthia Fletcher, NW Regional Development Worker, CAMHS

Work on the emotional well-being of young people in care was presented, starting from the premise that some care leavers are resilient, taking the life chances offered to them and succeeding, whilst others challenge themselves and society to the point of exasperation. Some of the many reasons why some young people fall into the second category were considered and suggestions made as to what professionals can do to protect and enhance care leavers' emotional wellbeing.

Contact: Cynthia Fletcher t: 01900 822350

The Threshold Project

Janet Tarbun & Christopher Giles, Essex County Council

The Threshold Project involves a multi-agency team including Leaving and After Care (social care), Connexions, CAMHS, Drug Action Team, YOS, PCT MIND, the Advocacy Service and the Lapis Centre. It provides a service to young people aged 13-21 whose lives are in crisis and who require emotional support and services to meet their mental health needs, encouraging ownership by involving young people from the start.

Contact: Janet Tarbun, Leaving and Aftercare Team
t: 01245 434012

Fit for Life

Jane Powell, Health Lead, Looked After Children, Knowsley Social Services & PCT

The 'Fit for Life' project is run jointly by Knowsley Leaving Care Team and the Health Team for Looked After Children. Problems encountered in trying to ensure adequate health care for care leavers include lost records, lack of accurate information, poor communication channels, a high 'fail to attend' rate, being less likely to use services and dropping to the bottom of waiting lists. Knowsley have addressed this through joint training, the appointment of designated doctors and teachers, the development of joint systems and procedures, and involving young people in the services provided. Positive outcomes identified for young people include: raised self-esteem, building relationships, awareness of own health needs and engaging with health professionals; and for the development of the service: involving young people and addressing their health needs, supporting young people to access health services, promoting the importance of communication and recording of information, and an improved understanding of corporate parenting.

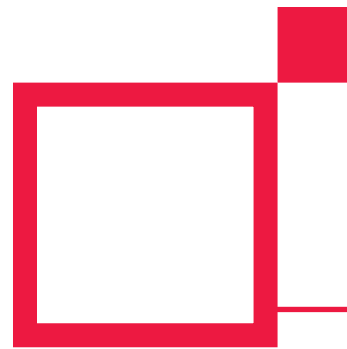
Contact: Jane Powell, Health Lead, LAC, Knowsley Social Services & PCT
t: 0151 443 4108 e: janepowell@knowsley.gov.uk

Parallel Health Centre, Bolton

Sandra Smethurst, Manager

The Parallel Centre aims to work with young people in securing their right to a positive and healthy lifestyle. An NCB report (2002) states, "They (care leavers) are reported to have greater health needs than their peers, yet less likely to receive adequate health care and treatment or be supported in developing their knowledge and skills in making decisions that promote health and wellbeing." The Parallel aims to meet these needs, in a building designed by young people for young people, through the provision of family planning and emotional health services and drop-ins, alongside general health clinics and advice.

Contact: Sandra Smethurst, Manager
t: 01204 526805 e: sandra.smethurst@bolton.nhs.uk



Young people's participation

Established young people's groups presented at all of the seminars but one, where two care-experienced employees of a local authority and a care leaver spoke. Aside from these young people, only one seminar (East) had any significant young people presence amongst the delegates. In the event, feedback from delegates rated the young people's presentations highly, and suggested that a greater presence of young people at the seminars would have enhanced the discussions.

WALC (Westminster Accommodation and Leaving Care)

Lily Assefa, Michael Jemberu, Jonathan Abel, Maria Bruce-Roberts

Care leavers from WALC described their activities such as peer mentoring and an annual conference for looked-after children and care leavers. They also highlighted their financial situation, showing a bare-bones budget based on the £42 a week they were receiving. Comments on pathway planning, collected by WALC, ranged from "They are a waste of time, and we don't stick to them" to "If something is drummed into my head it influences me to do things. I need my social worker to be on my case".

Contact: WALC (c/o Peter Hamilton)
t: 020 7641 3130 w: www.westminster.gov.uk/walc



MAC 40

Craig Nicholson, Emily Joslin, Bernadette Adams, Aida Braha

MAC 40 introduced their work and some of their achievements to date, including presenting to the QP Multi-Agency conference in February 2002 and providing a forum for young people in the South East to express their views. Areas of particular concern include pathway plans and communication by social services. They then outlined their plans for the future, including the initiating and sharing of good practice across the region, promoting the achievements of young people in care, developing the MAC 40 website, involving all local authorities in the area, and ensuring that young people actively participate in improving the care system.

Contact: Craig Nicholson and Emily Joslin
e: MAC40@lycos.co.uk

Hannah Powell, Berenice Brownswood and Dominic Dawrot from Stoke on Trent Social Services

Hannah and Berenice described, with great enthusiasm, their posts as development workers for the Stoke on Trent leaving-care team. They are employed full-time for three years on the same pay scale as personal advisers, and the posts are then handed on to two other care-experienced young people. They also commented on the C(LC)A – its purposes, aims and requirements for needs assessments, pathway plans and reviews – and stressed that foster carers and children's homes' staff needed to know more about the Act in order to work alongside social workers and young people.

Contact: Stoke on Trent Leaving Care Team t: 01782 236737

Yippee Group (Young Independent People Presenting Education and Entertainment)

Alison Dundas and Rosetta Mack

Yippee was formed in April 2000 by young people who had been in care in Manchester and the surrounding area. Based at Barnardos in Manchester, the group attempts to improve the care system by delivering training and presentations to students and professionals (including teachers and social workers). They stressed the importance of targeting hard-to-reach young people – such as those on benefit, homeless or those who have left school early with no qualifications – as well as the possibility of hopeful futures for those who do receive the necessary support.

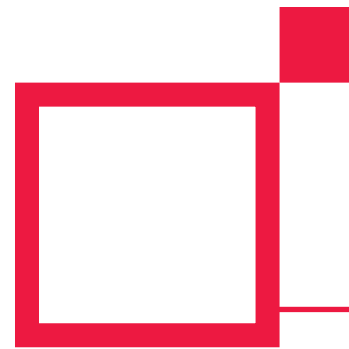
Contact: Kim Harwood, YIPPEE Co-ordinator
t: 0161 226 6722 w: <http://sites.ecosse.net/yippee>

Young People from Bournemouth Social Services

Kevin Bryer, Emily Lucas, Samantha Russell, Ricky Dransfield, Chantelle Blaquize and Toby Hutton

The Bournemouth group reminded delegates of the vulnerability of care leavers and the importance of appropriate accommodation in achieving goals for better education outcomes. They presented their members' views about the pluses and minuses of Pathway Plans and reviews as currently carried out, and suggested changes. The proposals included conducting the reviews in less formal settings, checking before the review that only relevant matters will be discussed, and ensuring better planning and communication with all participants before the review. Regional forums of leaving-care workers should be made accessible to young people to share good practice.

Contact: Bournemouth Post Care Team
t: 01202 456700



Themes from the conferences and key messages for the future

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 allows for local authority discretion in the delivery of services in each area. Local authorities are expected to develop, for example, an appropriate Pathway Plan and transparent criteria for financial arrangements, as well as comprehensive policies and procedures that have been approved by Council Members and are accessible to young people and other professionals.

Experience shows that successful implementation of the Act requires effective collaboration not only across local government departments, but also between a range of partner agencies, including social services, health, housing, education, youth services, youth justice, Connexions, voluntary-sector organisations, carers and young people themselves. Many of these partners have statutory or contractual responsibilities to provide services to young people, including care leavers.

National overview

Nationally different agencies providing essential services to care leavers continue to follow a range of direct approaches to meeting their needs. Consequently local partnerships have achieved varying success in making sure that each care leaver, especially those whose life-experiences have left them most vulnerable, is provided with the necessary opportunities to reach their potential.

Nevertheless, at these regional seminars, there was a great deal of agreement between delegates about what the barriers were to making the meaningful partnerships that are needed to achieve outcomes for care leavers and about how to overcome these.



BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

LOCAL

- Not all local authorities have a strong corporate parenting ethos;
- In some local authorities there has been poor communication about leaving-care services, leading to a lack of understanding between potential partner agencies;
- Different agency approaches to confidentiality and information sharing prevent effective communication about how best to support care leavers and other vulnerable young people;
- Where agencies perceive resources to be constrained they become defensive and less willing to share, which, at best only leads to the provision of good-enough, minimum-standard services;
- Some care leavers consider that the services they receive are determined by a postcode lottery; and
- Lack of time: how to ensure that staff in agencies working with vulnerable young people have time to develop work on partnerships and networking.

NATIONAL

- Geographical boundaries, the range of legislation and regulations governing partner agencies, and differing age ranges for eligibility for services can make it difficult to identify partner agencies with any confidence;
- Agencies may find it difficult to work in genuine partnership where legislation does not require it;
- Some partnerships are the result of specific initiatives with dedicated funding streams and it may be difficult to sustain this when funding reaches its end;
- Negative attitudes of public, schools and employers towards young people in care and care leavers; and
- Lack of genuine consultation with young people.

Solutions and recommendations to improve multi-agency working

LOCAL

Financial support

- Responsible authorities and their partners should follow the outcome of the recent cross-Government review of financial support for 16 to 19-year-olds;²¹ and
- Develop 'champions' for young people in the Benefits Agency at local level. The Treasury Review contains a discussion of the potential for a young person's specialist in each Benefits Agency. See, for example, the pro forma used by Enfield Social Services.

Joint training

- Joint training for all professionals working with care leavers – to increase knowledge of care leavers and other specialisms and to improve communication and understanding between professionals. All training to include foster carers. Young people should be recruited as trainers so that professionals are able to have real insight into their perspective

Corporate parenting

- Councillors to take lead on corporate parenting across the authority. This is reinforced in documents such as the DfES/LGIU booklet for councillors, and "The Children Act – requires the appointment of a Lead Member of Children's Services."²²

Multi-agency working

- More multi-agency groups at all levels and formal protocols between services;
- Increased pooled funding – enabling resources to be shared and services developed more jointly. Support for this is found within the Green Paper, Every Child Matters, and the subsequent Children Bill, primarily through the creation of Children's Trusts;²³
- More consistent dissemination of good practice; and
- Named contact in each agency to take forward their agency's response to care leavers.

Information sharing

- Information sharing – clarification about what can be shared, how, and when.

Involving young people

- More consistent involvement of young people in service planning and delivery, and in recruitment and training of staff.

NATIONAL

Increase emphasis on health and wellbeing

- It is a requirement that young people are registered with a doctor and a dentist on leaving care – however it is equally important to ensure that a more holistic approach is taken to supporting young people's health and wellbeing. Seminar participants felt strongly that a Public Service Agreement or Performance Assessment Framework target should be developed in order to monitor improvements in this.

Tackle age discrepancies

- Seminar participants were also of the view that benefit and service rules for care leavers post-18 as current rules don't help people to live independently, e.g. cut off for Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs), access to CAMHS, and Connexions are age based rather than needs-led. The Treasury Review has recognised that perverse incentives exist in the current benefit rules and are consulting on proposed solutions.²⁴ The proposed new National Standards for Leaving Care also address this issue.²⁵

Involve young people

- Delegates supported a national commitment to genuine participation by young people in future development of services.
- Hold more young people's conferences;
- Create structures that really listen to young people; and
- Develop a national target for young people participation.

Multi-agency working

- Develop a national resource directory for leaving-care services.

²¹ See also footnote 12. The review proposes a simplification of current financial arrangements for 16 to 19-year-olds to remove the complexities, anomalies and perverse incentives so that continual participation in education, training and employment is encouraged.

²² The Children Act 2004 - Part 2 Section 17 – print edition available by contacting TSO Customer Services on 0870 600 5522 or e-mail customer.service@tso.co.uk

²³ DfES (2003) Every Child Matters www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters; Children Bill is published at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200304/ldbills/035/2004035.htm

²⁴ Treasury Review (2004) Supporting young people to achieve: Towards a new deal for skills

²⁵ DfES (draft2004) National Standards for Leaving Care www.raineronline.org

Service development

- Increase stability of placements for all looked-after children and young people;
- Services to support unaccompanied asylum seeking young people should be further developed;²⁶
- Ensure that disabled care leavers are able to access all the necessary leaving-care services to which they are entitled under the Children (Leaving Care) Act;
- Increase support for care leavers in further and higher education (FE and HE) by, for example, raising the expectations of professionals to encourage young people to enter FE and HE, continuing to work with institutions to enable them to encourage applications from care leavers and support them effectively during their courses;
- Identify ways to encourage the sharing of good practice as it develops, which will act also to diminish variations in the development and delivery of services across local authorities.

Feedback gathered from delegates by the conference organisers revealed that managers and practitioners from many different agencies working with care leavers welcomed the opportunity presented by this series of seminars to identify and think through the barriers and challenges to successful multi-agency working in their local areas.

Examples of very good practice and innovative ways of developing partnerships in the pursuit of high quality services for care leavers are highlighted throughout this report. It is clear that there is much good will and enthusiasm for developing services in this way, indeed it is considered to be the only sensible way forward. However, really keeping young people at the centre and maintaining multi-agency partnerships will remain a challenge in a changing environment where there will be competition between priorities.

²⁶ LAC(2004)6 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Leaving Care Costs sets out the arrangements for the funding of local authorities most affected by the recent Hillingdon Judgment on the status of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, to assist in meeting the costs of supporting additional numbers of ("former relevant") children under the provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000: www.dfes.gov.uk/childrenfamilies/cfcirculars.shtml

Knowledge of the resources that exist or are planned in the area is one of the keys to working together effectively to deliver services, as is identifying the gaps. Local areas will have the opportunity to do this in their Children and Young People's Plans²⁷, Health Improvement Programmes, Youth Justice Plans, and other plans that identify resources for, and gaps in provision of, children's and young people's services.

Equally important is the existence of local networks of people and agencies working with young people who are living in or have left care. In different regions of the country, informed and skilful networking is taking place. The purpose of the regional seminars, and this final report, has been to facilitate the further development and enhancement of joint working in local networks in order to improve the effective delivery of quality services to care leavers. If the identified solutions and proposed recommendations are taken forward and acted upon, locally, regionally and nationally, then it will be possible to continue to make progress.

²⁷ The Children Act 2004 - Part 2 Section 17 – print edition available by contacting TSO Customer Services on 0870 600 5522

Appendix A: Planning and organisation of the DH/DfES Regional Leaving Care Seminars

One year on from the initial regional seminars in June 2001, experience under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2001 had highlighted effective multi-agency working and young people's participation as central to successful outcomes for care leavers. The DH Quality Protects Leaving Care Project Team, itself composed of a range of agencies and individuals concerned with care leavers, proposed that regional seminars again be presented, focusing this time on multi-agency working and young people's participation.

Again Directors of Social Services were asked to invite a range of partners. Working with the DH (later, the Department for Education and Skills) and the conference organisers, Frameworks, the SSI Regional Development Workers (RDWs) took on much of the work of identifying regional Chairs, key speakers and good-practice presenters. RDWs were also asked to identify workshop facilitators. The materials for the seminars, Putting Young People at the Centre, were written by First Key (much of whose work has been continued by the National Leaving Care Advisory Service at Rainer shortly after First Key ceased trading in June). First Key also identified and supported the young people's groups presenting at the seminars and assisted in the planning and organisation of the seminars. The seminars took place from May to September 2003.

Programme

The Quality Protects Leaving Care Project Team agreed a model programme for the day, which the Regional Development Workers then tailored to the needs of their region. It included a keynote address, a young people's presentation, a good-practice example, two workshop sessions and a plenary session. The model programme was used in most regions, the main variations being additional good practice examples and one less workshop

session.

Young People's Participation

Established young people's groups presented at each of the seminars but one, where two care-experienced employees of a local authority and a care leaver spoke. Aside from these young people, only one seminar (East) had any significant young people presence among the delegates. This might have been because the limited size of the venues meant that each Social Services Director was offered only a small number of invitations, which they used to maximise multi-agency participation. In the event, feedback from delegates rated the young people's presentations highly, and suggested that greater young people presence at the seminars would have enhanced the discussions.

Workshops

The aim of the workshops was for participants to share practice and experience and develop a group identity as joint providers of services to care leavers. The RDWs were given a suggested workshop format, which they were free to adapt to local requirements. The format had the delegates organised into workshops by geographical area so that agencies that might be working together could examine barriers and challenges to multi-agency working and propose solutions based on their area.

Volunteer facilitators, briefed by First Key (later NLCAS), led the workshops and had a case study for delegates' use, if needed to focus the discussion. The workshop format was to look at barriers and challenges in the morning session, and solutions in the afternoon. Young people were given the option of joining one of the workshops or running their own workshop, with support from First Key.

A number of the RDWs varied the format to have only one workshop session and one organised the delegates into workshops by subject area, such as "accommodation", rather than by geographical area. Some workshops recorded only barriers and challenges, suggesting that solutions were implicit in the challenges. Another seminar asked delegates to consider what could be done to improve outcomes for young people leaving care and then to identify, and commit to pursuing, one local action to achieve this.

The programme for each of the seminars is set out in Appendix B.

Appendix B:
Regional Seminar Programmes

LONDON

13 May 2003, Bloomsbury London

RDW: Andrew Turnbull

Chair:

Roger King,
Chief Executive, West London Connexions

Keynote address:

Denise Platt, Chief Inspector, SSI

Young people's perspective

WALC
(Westminster Accommodation and Leaving Care)

Care Leaver's Peer Mentoring
Scheme

Sheila Simpson, Cornetta Walker Williams,
Hirube Tassisa, Kensington & Chelsea

Ealing Care leavers' Drop In Centre

Marcella Phelan, Gary Olde and young people

SOUTH EAST

4 June 2003, Westminster, London

RDW: Jo Blake

Chair (& keynote address):

Karen Bays, Medway Council

Young people's presentation

MAC 40

True Partnership

Mick McCarthy, Kent 16Plus

Accommodation issues for
Care leavers –
Oxfordshire model

Cindy Fletcher, Care leaver and vulnerable
young people accommodation strategies;
David Gould, Banbury Homes, Shaftsbury Homes

WEST MIDLANDS

9 June 2003, Birmingham

RDW: Martin Banks

Chair & keynote address:

John Coughlan, Corporate Director of Social Care,
Telford & Wrekin; ADSS Children & Families Cttee

Young people's presentation

Hannah Powell, Berenice Brownswood, Dominic
Nawrot, Stoke on Trent Social Services

Links with Youth Offending
Services

Len Kruczek, Wolverhampton Aftercare Services

The Story So Far –
Partnership Working

Rob Dunster, Warwickshire Leaving Care; Kath
Farmer, Christian Alliance Housing Assoc.; Janet
Plant, Learning & Skills Council

Making the Act work
across agencies

Phil Sawbridge, Warwickshire Social Services

EASTERN

10 June 2003, Newmarket

RDW: Jo Blake

Chair:

Lisa Christensen, Director of Norfolk Social Services
David Akinsanya, BBC TV

Keynote address:

MAC 40

Craig Nicholson, Emily Joslin, Bernadette Adams,
Aida Braha

Cambridgeshire 16plus Service

Michelle Dean, Teresa McMillan, Alison Gibbons

Pioneer House & the
Threshold Project

Janet Tarbun & Christopher Giles, Essex CC

EAST MIDLANDS

7 July 2003, Nottingham

Chair:	Richard Beaver, SSI Inspector
Keynote address:	Prof. Mike Stein, University of York The C(LC)A: Reflections and Challenges
Young people's experiences of the Leaving Care Act	YIPPEE – Alison Dundas and Rosetta Mack
Partnership between Derbyshire CC, Barnardos, NCH & Connexions	Peter Battram, Planning & Project Manager, Derbyshire CC

SOUTH WEST

8 July 2003, Bristol

Chair:	Peter Murphy, Assistant Director, Childcare Services, South Gloucestershire Social Services
Keynote address:	Prof. Mike Stein, University of York The C(LC)A: Reflections and Challenges
Young people's presentations	WALC – Lily Assefa, Michael Jemberu, Jonathan Abel, Maria Bruce-Roberts Bournemouth Social Services – Kevin Bryer, Emily Lucas, Samantha Russell, Ricky Dransfield, Chantelle Blaquize, Toby Hutton
Take Care, Take Control Good practice in health	Martin Hudson, Lewisham Social Services
Good Practice in Housing	Morag Currie, Supported Housing Co-ordinator, Hampshire Social Services

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH EAST

16 July 2003, York

Chair:	Martin Hazlehurst, First Key/NLCAS
Keynote address:	Anne Weinstock, Chief Executive, Connexions
The Signpost Project Young people not in ETE	Liz Richardson, Wakefield
Housing Support	Sue Schofield & Carol Preston, Northumberland Housing Project – Barnardos
Young people's experiences of the Leaving Care Act	YIPPEE – Alison Dundas & Rosetta Mack
Participation and Consultation The Y-Not Project	Simone Commons, Sunderland Social Services

NORTH WEST

25 September 2003, Bolton

Chair & keynote address:	RDW: Dorothy Lewis
Chair (afternoon):	Prof. John Aston, NW Director, Public Health
Young people's presentation	Linda Priest, Assistant Director, Oldham Social Services
Collaborative Working	YIPPEE – Alison Dundas, Rosetta Mack, Natalie Samms
Emotional well-being of young people in care	Dave Eaton, Head of Primary Care/Acting Service Manager, Blackpool PCT
Fit for Life	Cynthia Fletcher, NW Regional Development Worker, CAMHS
Parallel Health Centre	Jane Powell, Health lead, Looked After Children, Knowsley Social Services & PCT
	Sandra Smethurst, Manager, Bolton

Appendix C: Agencies from which delegates came

Local authorities: Councillors, social services, education, housing, health, development, independent review unit, FSU, mental health, Employability Plus, finance, quality assurance, YOT, young people's participation, substance misuse, policy and planning, specialist nurse, commissioning.

Connexions

Partnership Board

Primary Care Trusts

NHS Trusts

Voluntary organisations

Housing Associations

Universities

Central Government – SSI, DH(DfES), SEU, ODPM, Government Offices for East England, South East England

Learning and Skills Councils

BBC

