Leicester City Children and Young Peoples Services.

Looked After Children

Children Looked After and Care Leavers aged 16 and 17 years of age.

Roles and responsibilities for Social Workers and Personal Advisers.

This protocol aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Social Workers based within the cities three Looked After Children teams and Personal Advisers based within the 16+ Team. This document can also be used by Foster carers, Residential Staff, Supervising Social Workers, Disabled Children's Service social workers, Hostel Key workers and most importantly for Young People for reference and guidance.

This protocol explicitly covers the age range of 16 to 17 inclusively. Responsibility and roles prior to 16 lie exclusively with the Social worker and unless there are clear reasons as to why not, the responsibility for post 18 to 25 inclusive rests with the Personal Adviser.

1. **Allocating a Personal Adviser.** This should take place at approximately 15 years and 9 months and is to be initiated by the young Persons Social Worker. The IRO should highlight this as a task at the previous LAC Review meeting. The LL system is to notify all Social workers when a young person requires a Pathway assessment (or an alternative notification system will be in place) The young person’s allocation will be discussed by the LAC Team Manager and the 16+ Team manager in an allocations meeting. Any requests made by the young person can be addressed at this point. For example there may be a very good reason to allocate a male worker for a particular young person. Only when both managers are in agreement will a 16+ Personal Adviser be allocated on the system and informed accordingly. It is the 16+ Team manager only who allocates on the system. A meeting arranged by the Social Worker must take place prior to the young person's 16th birthday and must include the Social Worker, and Personal Adviser. This meeting is designed to set out and have agreement on the process. When the introduction of the PA is taking place, how the Pathway Assessment Part 1 will be completed (Responsibility of the Social Worker). The PA may provide information which would contribute to the assessment but it remains the responsibility of the Social Worker.

2. **Social Worker arranges introductory visit of PA,** preferably at the young person’s placement. The meeting could just involve the Young person but may equally involve foster carer, residential worker, supervising Social worker or sometimes the young person’s family. This is a decision that in most cases can be arrived at in consultation with the young person. At the introductory visit the PA will give the Young person the Care leavers Entitlement Booklet and will explain the role of the PA. The PA will keep in touch with the Young person and visit them once every two months to ensure that they have all the support that they require.
3. **Once the Pathway assessment has been completed**, the Social Worker is responsible for the writing of the Young person’s Pathway Plan. The Personal adviser may contribute to certain sections of the plan. Generally speaking the Personal Adviser can contribute in the sections relating to Independence skills/knowledge, EET, post 18 moving on plans. The primary role of the PA prior to the young person turning 16 is to get to know the young person and aim to start to develop an effective working relationship.

4. **Allocation of Tasks.** This is to be agreed primarily by their Social Worker and PA. However it can and should include the young person, foster carers, residential staff, and college staff. If somebody can make a contribution to the plan they should be involved where appropriate. Generally speaking for those aged 16 and 17 the role of the PA would be limited to EET, Independence issues, moving on at 18 and benefits/finance issues as they approach 18. The Social worker has responsibility for the placement, any new placement, payment of Personal Allowance’s, care and family issues and need.

5. **When a young person becomes LAC following their 16th Birthday** the Pathway Assessment Part 1 should be completed within thirteen weeks by the Social Worker. The Young person has therefore become an eligible child.

6. **Social Workers assume responsibility** in the same manner and in accordance with this protocol for those young people aged 16/17 and who have become LAC due to the Southwark ruling.

7. **It is recommended that joint supervision sessions between SW, PA and respective managers** takes place in between reviews to ensure that plans and tasks are allocated accordingly and that the young person’s plan is progressing.

**Care Planning/ Pathway Planning. Roles and Responsibilities.**

**Education, Training and Employment.**

1. The Primary responsibility for EET related matters will rest with the Social worker unless explicitly outlined in the young person’s pathway plan. The PA will have an important role in updating the Pathway Plan EET section.

**Health and Emotional Well Being.**

1. Responsibility rests with the Social Worker with the exception of where young people are living in semi-independent / hostels/ independent type accommodation when it will be the responsibility of the PA.

2. Social worker is responsible for those young people who still require a Statutory Health Assessment.

3. Support to enable young people to meet medical appointments of all descriptions will be provided by or facilitated by the social worker where young people reside in residential homes,
foster care or perhaps placed with parents / relatives. Support can be to ensure that the Foster
carer, residential worker or key workers assist. For those living in semi-independent or
independent accommodation then the PA will provide support in the same way as the social
worker.

Accessing resources in the community.

1. This is everybody’s responsibility. However it is particularly the role of the PA where the
young people are in semi/ independent or hostel type accommodation. The PA should utilise the
knowledge of key workers in the placement but also be able to signpost young people to
relevant services in their locality when they are living alone. For those living in foster care,
residential care it would be expected that the staff in those locations would be utilised to support
young people to access local services.

Placements, Housing and Accommodation.

1. While the Young person is aged 16/17 and resides with a foster carer, in a residential
setting or placed with family any proposed changes to these arrangements are the responsibility
of the Social Worker and would also need to be agreed by the IRO in a planned manner at a
Pathway Plan review meeting. The PA’s role in this instance would be to support the young
person concerned and provide them with some advocacy to ensure the young person’s views
are listened to. PA’s can assist with the process of applying for supported housing or
independence as the young person reaches 18. The PA will be responsible for providing advice
on the Staying Put policy and for all general accommodation related issues post 18, including
staying put, University accommodation. For those currently aged 16/17 the Placements team
would also need to be informed/ consulted.

Finance.

1. Benefits. It is the Social Workers responsibility to support/ facilitate the young person in
applying for benefits 4 weeks prior to their 18th Birthday if the young person is entitled. Only
when this has explicitly been agreed in a Pathway Plan would the PA be expected to undertake
this task.

2. Accessing the Leaving Care/Independence Grant. This can be either the Social worker
or PA. The Independence Grant is intended to assist with the costs of setting up home. The
grant is paid in instalments and is used to buy essential items when young people move from
care to more independent living; typically the bulk of the grant is used to help furnish and equip
a young person’s first independent tenancy.

3. Any expenditure outside of the norm should be clearly specified in the young person’s
Pathway Plan and the Plan will need to have be countersigned by a manager of the respective
Social Worker.
Contingencies.

1. Every section in the Pathway plan should have contingencies both for when things go wrong or even when things are going right. For 16/17 year olds the Social Worker should be completing this section of the document. The PA may play a role in getting information, providing a report etc. but the Social worker is the author of the plan and must be satisfied with its content as ultimately until the young person ceases to be LAC it is their responsibility.

Transfer of cases.

1. All cases are to be transferred over to the 16+ Team for sole case responsibility once the young person ceases to be Looked After. For most this will be their 18th Birthday. For those in the Disabled Childrens team this needs to be explicit within the Pathway Plan if they are to retain a transitions worker for any period of time.

2. Both PA and Social worker must be satisfied that the Transfer checklist has been completed before a request to transfer is made by the LAC manager. Transfer requests can be completed at the same time as allocations.

3. At the appropriate time the Social worker, immediately prior to the young person’s 18th Birthday a multiagency meeting should be facilitated to undertake the transfer of the case to the Personal Adviser and the 16+ Team. It may be beneficial to have other agencies present at this point in order that a smooth transition takes place.

Disputes.

1. Where there are disputes between Social Worker and PA the immediate course of action is for these two professionals to see if an agreement can be reached. If not the dispute is to be addressed by the LAC and 16+ Manager.

2. Young People are of course able to use the complaints procedure if they are unhappy with either SW or PA. However the first stage would be to have an informal meeting between SW, PA and the Young Person.
Checklist for Case transfer when yp turns 18

Prior to the PA taking over the case responsibility, the PA will like to ensure that the following is already in place;

- Current PP on LL – with detailed information, current contact details and recommendations
- Chronology with significant info of why they came into care
- Transfer Summary
- Up-to-date observations
- Risk assessments

Also, will need to have the following work completed and where relevant, numbers added on LL,

- NINO
- Passport
- All benefits the yp is entitled to, needs to apply for or in place.
- NHS no
- Does the yp have a Birth certificate? Copy to be placed on EDRMS/file.
- Bank account?
- Provisional/full driving license or is there any agreement for driving lessons which have been agreed in the yp’s PP prior to their 18th birthday?
- Any recorded request for Access to Records needs to have being dealt with prior to case transfer.
- Any Life Story work already undertaken or in place for the young person?
- Has the young person accessed any of their LCG, if so, how much? Has the amount been recorded on the yp’s case recordings?
- Has the yp made a claim for benefits 4 weeks before their 18th birthday? (See attached letter)
- Has the yp had all of their clothing prior to leaving care (i.e. winter clothing, interview clothing etc.)
- Has the yp had their birthday/festive allowance prior to turning 18?
- Has the yp been given information on their Health Summary?
DWP LETTER TO BE COMPLETED AND FORWARDED 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO YP TURNING 18.

The letter below should be completed and issued to the care leaver approx. 4 weeks prior to their 18th Birthday. The care leaver should then take this letter ASAP to their relevant JCP office, please see postcode splits below, and show this to a JCP member of staff.

The process will then become the responsibility of JCP to ensure that an advance claim to benefit is taken and established.

Postcode splits are as follows:-

Charles Street JCP - LE2, LE5, LE18

New Walk JCP - LE3, LE8 - 4 to 6, LE9 - 1 to 3, LE9 - 5 to 6, LE9 - 9, LE19

Wellington Street JCP - LE1, LE4, LE6, LE7
To: DWP

Customer details:

Name:.................................................................................................................................

Date of Birth:........................................... National Number:............................................

Address:.................................................................................................................................

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I am writing to confirm that the young person named above has been looked after by the Local Authority (Leicester City Council) and will be leaving care on their 18th birthday.

This young person would like to make a claim to Jobseeker’s Allowance / Income Support (please delete as appropriate) and requires an appointment to be booked for them on or just after their 18th Birthday. The Care Leaver Pilot Marker must be set on LMS when setting up the LMS Record.

Please can you issue the appropriate clerical claim forms and annotate them, in red, ‘Urgent – vulnerable care leaver’

NB. In order for the young person to claim Income Support, the following grounds must apply,
- Is in full time education (more than 12 hours a week)
- Is in non-advanced education (below degree standard)
- Is aged under 21
- Has left Local Authority care and of necessity has to live away from his/her parents or anyone else acting in their place (former foster carers do not count)

Income Support (General) Regulations 1987 regs 4ZA (schedule 1B (15)) and 13 (2) (dd), DMG chapter 20

Documents will be provided at the interview to confirm the young person’s identity.

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(Insert Name) housing situation on their 18th birthday will be:

**Please ✔ tick the care leaver’s housing situation**

- Local Authority accommodation
- Private rented accommodation (including Staying Put or Supported Lodgings)
- Other accommodation (please specify): .................................................................

If more information is needed please contact Children in Care support worker, name and contact details provided below.

Name:..........................................................
Contact Number:..............................................

NB. Please attach a copy of this letter to the completed claim form before sending to the Benefit Centre.