



**Children's Safeguarding and Family
Help**

Corporate Parenting Service

Care experienced young people in
custody procedures

1 Introduction

This guidance has been written for personal advisors working with care leavers aged 18 and above who are in custody or who are about to be released from custody. It should be read together with the *Responsibilities of the local authority to former looked after children in custody* policy. [Responsibilities of the Local Authority to Former Looked...](#)

2 Purpose and scope

- Care experienced young people can face considerable disadvantages and barriers to achievement and stability as they leave care and move into adulthood and independence without support from family. For those who are in custody or about to be released, moving on to independence can be especially daunting.
- These young people will need extra support during sentence, when planning for release, and on release to support their resettlement as they move back into the community and continue their transition to adulthood. As a corporate parent, Camden must provide the practical and emotional support that they will need.
- Camden will remain involved in the young person's life in order to:
 - provide support for the young person during their sentence
 - plan for their release into the community
 - provide continued support on release in order to help them avoid re-offending, overcome the disadvantages they face as offenders and to integrate successfully back into the community
 - enable them to continue to move successfully to independence.
- Although this policy focusses on care leavers aged 18 and over, the policy will also apply to those young people who will be under 18 on release and who will still be looked after. However social workers should refer to the relevant CLA policies for details of how Camden will discharge its duties under the Care Planning, Placement and Review regulations 2010 both when the child is in custody and when they are released. [Children looked after and care leavers \(1\) | Children's Policy & Practice Hub \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

3 Eligibility

Any young person who was looked after for more than 13 weeks from the age of 14 prior to receiving a custodial sentence will be eligible for leaving care services on reaching 18. It is the responsibility of the Care Experienced manager to keep track of all young people in custody who are approaching their 18th birthday and ensure that they have an allocated personal advisor from the age of 17½.

4 Joint working and information sharing

- Personal advisors will need to work in partnership with CLA social workers around the transfer of case responsibility once the young person is 17½. Please refer to the *Transfer to Leaving Care* protocol available at: [transfer-to-leaving-care-procedures.pdf](#)
- Personal advisors will also need to work in partnership with prisons and probation services in order to implement sentence plans and resettlement plans. Joint working includes:
 - attending planning meetings with prison and Probation services
 - liaising with the prison in order to ensure the young person's status is known and to facilitate visits
 - sharing information to support the aims of this policy.
- Corporate Parenting Services need to inform prisons of the young person's status as care experienced as the young person enters custody. This is the responsibility of the allocated CLA social worker or personal advisor who should ensure consent to share information has been obtained from the young person.
- Prisons should also be given basic information about the young person to ensure that their needs are met during their sentence, for example health conditions and any vulnerabilities that may affect safeguarding their welfare.
- Young people should be given details of Camden's local offer for care leavers and social workers or personal advisors should explain clearly to the young person their rights whilst in custody and the level and type of service and support they can expect from Camden during their sentence and following release.

5 Allocation of a personal advisor

- Where the young person has already left care when given a custodial sentence their personal advisor will remain allocated throughout their sentence; where the young person becomes eligible at 17½ whilst in prison, a personal advisor will be allocated as set out in the *Services and support for care leavers* policy.
- If a young person reaches 21 years during their sentence, personal advisors must check whether they wish to continue to receive a service and should emphasise the benefits of continuing with the service in order to access support during the sentence and during resettlement.
- If a care experienced young person aged 21 or over is not receiving a service, the Care Experienced manager should contact them annually to offer a service up to the age of 25.

6 Visits and contact with the young person

- Care experienced young people in custody should be visited in prison by their personal advisor at the same frequency as other care leavers:
 - every 8 weeks (for those aged between 18-21)
 - then every 3 months up to the age of 25 depending on the young person's circumstances.
- For young people in custody, a lesser frequency may be preferable depending on the location of the prison but this must be discussed with the Care Experienced manager and agreement reached on the most appropriate frequency. Where necessary, it may be necessary to agree more frequent visits if there are concerns about the young person's welfare.
- Personal advisors should also facilitate visits by the young person's birth family or other significant people where this is thought to be consistent with their welfare.
- Young people who remain looked after should be visited at the frequency set out in the *CLA in the criminal justice system* policy. [cla-in-the-criminal-justice-system.pdf \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

- To facilitate telephone contact in prison, personal advisors can ensure young people are in receipt of an allowance (see below) to enable them to make phone calls or explore other means of contact with the prison, for example via email or agreeing with the prison when the young person can take telephone calls. Following release, personal advisors should ensure the young person has a mobile phone.

7 Integrated planning processes

- Care leavers in custody will be subject to the following planning frameworks:
- They will have a sentencing plan overseen by the prison and probation services to supervise activities whilst in prison.
 - As they progress towards their release, they will move to a resettlement plan designed to provide them with the practical support when they leave prison.
 - Throughout their sentence and resettlement, they will continue to have a pathway plan that will reflect their sentence and resettlement plans and detail the services and support they will receive from CSFH on release in order to successfully reintegrate into the community and continue their journey to independence.
- **During the sentence**, personal advisors will continue to instigate pathway planning, with review meetings held with the young person during visits. Pathway plans should be shared with the prison authorities and probation.
- Personal advisors should attend sentence planning reviews and invite a representative from the prison and probation to contribute to and attend the pathway review.
- **A month before the young person's sentence ends**, probation must hold a resettlement meeting to plan for their release. It is imperative that personal advisors attend this meeting and where possible, a pathway plan review should take place at the same time to ensure both plans are integrated. A pathway plan review must take place at least one month prior to the young person's release dealing with the practical aspects of what will happen immediately on their release.

8 Financial support

- Personal advisors should ensure care leavers in custody and who are being resettled receive any financial support that they are entitled to under the *Financial Support for care leavers* policy: [financial-support-for-care-leavers-2023-24.pdf \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)
- A review of the young person's need for financial support should be included in the pathway plan review.

8.1 In custody

- Ensuring young people in custody have some financial provision is essential for their safeguarding and support. Every care leaver in custody should receive £10 per week as well as birthday payments up to their 21st birthday under the current care experienced financial support policy.
- However personal advisors should carry out a needs assessment to identify any other financial support the young person may need whilst in prison.

8.2 On release

- On release, a grant will be given to pay for basic items (see details of the support package shown in appendix 1). The grant will be for up to £500 and based on an assessment of the young person's needs carried out by their personal advisor.
- Personal advisors should:
 - help the young person to claim any benefits and entitlements in order to maximise their income
 - help the young person to access bank account or savings
 - ensure that any savings or earnings from prison that have been accrued by the young person whilst in custody are paid over to them.
- It is likely that this cohort will require extra support around budgeting when first released to allow them to become accustomed to managing their own money.

8.3 Clothing

In custody

Personal advisors should ensure that the young person has adequate clothing for their needs in prison based on their needs and situation, for example mothers who need maternity wear. Personal advisors should be aware that young people serving longer sentences will need to replace worn clothing or clothing they have grown out of. An assessment of clothing needs should be carried out during the review of the young person's pathway plan to ensure they have the items they need. Personal advisors should be aware of the clothing allowance payable to all care experienced young people.

On release

Young people living in the community will be entitled to receive a clothing allowance under the *Financial support for experienced young people* policy. However, as part of the resettlement plan, personal advisors may need to assess the young person's clothing needs within the pathway plan as they may require further clothing on release, for example if they have outgrown clothing. Details of clothing to be provided as part of the support package on release is shown in appendix 1.

8.4 Support for pregnant women and mothers

For details on support for pregnant women and mothers leaving custody, please refer to the relevant policy.

8.5 Support for UASC

- If an unaccompanied asylum seeking minor receives a prison sentence they will be considered a Foreign National Offender (FNO) if they have not received leave to remain or refugee status. The young person's immigration status must continue to be resolved and should remain a focus in their pathway plan and this should be carried out in partnership with the prison authorities and probation.
- Whilst in prison, young people will still be entitled to the same level of services and support as for other care experienced young people under CSFH policies and the care experienced local offer.

- On release, FNOs who do not have settled status in the UK may be deported immediately or sent to an Immigration Removal Centre. Personal advisors must be able to react to either of these outcomes and try to plan for these eventualities within the pathway planning framework.

9 Support for resettlement

- Leaving prison is likely to be a source of anxiety for young people, especially if they were discharged from care during their time in prison and will be living in a different environment, together with struggling to adapt to life outside prison.
- Planning for release and resettlement should take place within the pathway planning framework and begin at least one month prior to the release date. It is imperative that planning is undertaken in partnership with probation services and personal advisors attend any meetings.
- The meeting should confirm the following arrangements are in place and these should be detailed in the pathway plan and the young person made aware of them:
 - the address that they will be living at on release
 - who will meet them when they are released
 - any reporting arrangements and details of contact with the personal advisor and other professionals
 - who will provide personal support and when this is available
 - arrangements for their education, training or employment
 - arrangements for meeting their health needs
 - arrangements for any financial support, benefits etc
- Personal advisors must:
 - liaise with the Resources service in a timely manner to ensure the young person has a suitable place within the Housing Pathway
 - make arrangements to meet the young person from prison and take them to their accommodation if this is their wish
 - hold a pathway review meeting immediately after release to ensure resettlement plans and community sentences are being implemented and the young person's needs are being met
 - visit the young person at the frequency as set out in the *Leaving care and transition* policy
 - where needed, make any appropriate referrals for adult mental health or social care services.

10 Young people transitioning from youth detention to adult prison

- Young people moving from youth detention to adult prison will also be undergoing the transition from being in care to being experienced. This double transition is likely to be very difficult so it is essential that a personal advisor is allocated before the change happens in order to work with the allocated social worker to achieve a smooth transfer of case responsibility and ensure there are no gaps in services and support for the young person.
- The social worker and personal advisor should visit the young person jointly to explain how their status is changing and what to expect in terms of continued support from CSFH via the local offer.

11 Where support ends at 25

Where a care experienced young person turns 25 while in prison, CSFH will close the case. However personal advisors should be sensitive in ending the relationship with the young person by holding a final visit to inform the young person of the closure and to signpost them on to suitable help. Leaving care grants should be set aside to be paid to young people on release to support their move to their new accommodation.

Appendix 1: Support Package of Care for young people leaving custody

Further information regarding duties and responsibilities is documented in the updated Policy.

Building a good relationship is one of the main successes in our work with young people, the last 6 months of the young person in custody, the day they are released, and the following months are very important. During these periods' conversations about education opportunities, their likes and dislikes regarding food, clothes, hobbies can further develop a good relationship.

The Personal Advisor will be involved in supporting the young person to purchase some of the below items prior to their release and accompany them shopping. This will be dependent on other factors such as age, and the wishes of the young person. Spending time with the young person when they are first released is crucial.

£500.00 to be used to purchase items required.

Task to be completed prior to young person leaving custody.	Timescale Prior to release or once the young person is in the community.
Accommodation – referral for accommodation to Resources Service for suitable accommodation to meet the young person needs, approved by probation at least two weeks before young person is released.	2 months before release date referral to be made- probation to approve accommodation 1 week before accommodation is needed
YP in custody should be visited regularly through custody to prepare them for release.	6 weekly
Plans discussed for EET when released – to include visit from Virtual School or information obtained to be shared with young person around areas of interest.	6 months
Referral for mental health support if young person needs additional support in the community, Minding the Gap, The HIVE, Brandon, Adult MH services	3 months
Referral to Evolve for mentoring- need a named worker while the young person is still in custody	Contact to be made with the young person by the Evolve worker during the last 2-3 months in custody
Oyster card to be organised.	2 weeks
Provisional Drivers licence – which can be used as a form of ID.	2 months

Set up bank account.	Within 4 weeks in the community
Support the young person to set up an email address	During statutory visit while in custody
Mobile phone to be purchased– if they do not already have one	3 weeks prior to release
Money for a hair cut	On day of release
New Ruck sack	2 weeks prior
New Trainers	4 weeks prior or within a week of release
1 or 2 jogging suit/track suit- depending on young person choice	4 weeks before release or bought with the young person on day of release.
Toiletries	These items should be purchased and given to the young person on the day when they return to the community.
Food parcel – should include food that has been discussed with the young person over the last 6 months favourite sweets, also basic food essentials	2 weeks before young person is released.
3 times -Food voucher for a meal £15.00 each - you can get an uber Eats voucher on Amazon by email the code should be given to the young person on day of release to order favourite food	Voucher ordered in advance and given to the young person on day of release.