

S117 aftercare; a short guide for social workers

- Children discharged from hospital following a period of detention under s3 the MHA 1983 are entitled to aftercare under s117 of the act. These are services provided jointly by CAMHS and children's social care services in order to reduce the risk of the young person needing to be re-admitted.
- Planning for aftercare takes place prior to discharge and includes a full assessment of the young person's needs in order to develop a care and support plan which is reviewed at least 6 monthly. Care and support can include personal support such as counselling, activities, support with employment and education, and social care support.
- Where a child is known to CSFH, it is important that social workers are involved in this planning so that the care and support plan can be fully integrated with the young person's own plan. This is particularly important for;
 - Looked after young people*
 - Young people with CIN or CP plans
 - Young people known to the CYPDS
 - Young people known to YJS.
- If a young person will be detained in hospital for more than 12 weeks their local authority children's social care is responsible for safeguarding and promoting their welfare under section 85 of the Children Act 1989. The duty involves visiting the child and carrying out an assessment of their safeguarding needs whilst in hospital.
- Hospitals will notify the MASH where a young person is admitted and:
 - if the young person is known, the information will be passed on to their allocated social worker
 - If the young person is not known, the case will be allocated to a social worker to carry out a child and family assessment to establish if the child is "in need".
- When assessing and planning for aftercare, social workers should take into account the young person's wishes and feelings and where appropriate, the views of parents and carers.

- The social worker should contact the mental health care co-ordinator to contribute to the aftercare planning and a young person cannot be discharged from hospital until an aftercare support plan is in place.
- All plans will be reviewed by the Camden Young People MH Admission Optimisation Network (Tier 4) who will make recommendations regarding provision including funding arrangements. Cases involving young people with complex medical needs will be presented to the Complex Needs Panel.
- In general, most young people will return home following detention, but for some this may not be in their interests. In these cases, social work assessments should explore whether the young person may be homeless and in need and should be accommodated under the Homeless Young Person's protocol.
- Provision for transfer to adult mental health services via Minding the Gap should also be included in any aftercare support plan where the young person is 17 years.
- *Please note: Young people looked after on a care order will continue to be looked after on detention but young people accommodated under s20 will lose their looked after status although the local authority continues to have a duty to keep in contact with the young person pending their discharge.