



## **Children's Safeguarding and Family Help**

Corporate Parenting Service

Supporting care experienced young  
people: practice guidance

## Care experienced young people

### 1 Introduction and purpose of policy

This document provides practice guidance and local procedures for social workers and personal advisors working with care experienced young people, including helping them to prepare to leave care and supporting them once they have been discharged from care. It should be read together with the *Leaving care and transition* policy. [Leaving Care and Transition](#)

### 2 Camden's services for care experienced young people

- The Corporate Parenting Service is responsible for delivering all aspects of Camden's services for care experienced young people. Eligibility for services and a description of the services that should be provided under the Leaving Care Act 2000 are summarised in appendix 1.
- The Children Looked After service will work with young people aged 16-18 who are preparing to leave care. Young people will have an allocated social worker who will provide a statutory CLA service under care planning regulations and carry out the needs assessment and pathway planning within the care planning framework.
- The Care Experienced service will work with young people aged 18 and over who have been discharged from care to support them through the transition to independence. Young people will have a personal advisor allocated at 16 to work with the social worker to prepare the young person for independence and who will take over the role of main professional support once the young person is 18 and has been discharged from care.
- A dedicated Connexions worker based in the Care Experienced service will work with all care experienced young people to provide specialist advice and support on education, training and careers and will sign-post young people to appropriate resources. In particular, the worker will support those young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- A specialist benefits advisor from the Department of Work and Pensions is available on a weekly basis to give benefits advice to young people.
- The 16+ manager of the Virtual School will provide advice and assistance to young people and personal advisors in order to support the young person's plans for education, training and employment and promote the young person's long-term goals.

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- The Care Experienced service will operate a duty service during office hours to advise young people, colleagues and external agencies on issues such as eligibility and services provided and to provide an emergency service for care experienced young people in the absence of their allocated personal advisor.
- Details of Camden's duty towards supporting eligible young people and former relevant young people financially, including amounts payable and how this duty changes during their transition towards independence, can be found in the *Financial support for care experienced young people* policy. [financial-support-for-care-leavers-2024-25.pdf](#)

### 3 Discharge from care and transfer to the Care Experienced service

- A young person will be transferred to the Care Experienced service on reaching 18 and the process for this is set out in the *Leaving Care Transfer protocol* available at: [transfer-to-leaving-care-procedures.pdf](#)
- The Care Experienced manager is responsible for allocating a personal advisor once a looked after young person is 16.
- There is an expectation that from the age of 16, the social worker and personal advisor will work together to ensure a smooth transition of the case and that the young person is able to meet with the personal advisor so that there is an opportunity to share important information and enable the personal advisor to get to know the young person.
- Arrangements for discharging a young person from care and transferring the case to the Care Experienced service must be discussed and agreed at a statutory LAC review held at least one month in advance.
- As soon as is practicable following the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the CLA MOSAIC record should be closed and the young person's case transferred to the allocated personal assistant. The CLA manager should complete the discharge from care record on MOSAIC.

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### 4 Responsible local authority and care experienced young people living out of borough

- The Children (Leaving Care) Act defines the authority responsible for providing leaving care services as *the last authority to look after the young person*. This is to ensure stability and continuity for the young person and avoid inter-authority disputes regarding provision of services.
- Responsibility for care experienced young people cannot be completely discharged by the responsible authority. However, certain duties can be delegated by agreement to another authority where the young person primarily lives, with funding transferred by the responsible authority where necessary.
- The Corporate Parenting Service will retain full case responsibility and the young person should have an allocated personal advisor. Negotiations with the host authority as to what tasks will be delegated should be carried out by the Leaving Care manager, but Camden will remain responsible for all pathway planning processes and financial support.
- Where a care experienced young person is a parent and there are concerns about the safety and welfare of their child, the local authority where the child lives is responsible for providing a social care service.

### 5 Pathway planning procedures

- Preparations for the young person's transition to adulthood should begin once the young person is 15½ and should be incorporated into the CLA care planning process with arrangements to carry out the pathway needs assessment discussed and agreed at the statutory CLA review prior to the young person's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Social workers should encourage young people to attend pathway review meetings, exploring any options for participation with the young person, for example attending the pathway reviews either in person or virtually or use of an advocate.
- It is also important that young people are given copies of assessments and pathway plans.

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- Social workers should endeavour to meet with the young person prior to the review to discuss what issues may be raised and to ensure they are able to get their views across, using the CLA consultation form available at: [lac-consultation-form-16plus.pdf \(camden.gov.uk\)](https://www.camden.gov.uk/media/1048222/lac-consultation-form-16plus.pdf)
- Social workers should also meet the young person after the review to ensure they understand the decisions made and to go through the pathway plan.
- The assessment should build on the most recently updated assessment of the young person's needs as well as their care plan, including their health care plan and PEP, and any other plan such as an Education, Health and Care plan.
- Social workers should record the assessment on the template available on MOSAIC.
- Young people should be actively encouraged to participate in the process of reviewing their pathway plan and should be consulted on who they wish to attend with them. However, all professionals and agencies working with the young person should be consulted and asked to contribute to the review process with permission from the young person.
- The young person should also be consulted on how the review meeting should be conducted. Although the IRO (and personal advisor once the young person leaves care) would normally chair the meeting the young person may wish to take on this role as they become more independent.
- The review should be recorded on the MOSAIC pathway plan review record and shared with the young person within 10 working days of the review taking place in line with the division's recording policy. Following the review meeting, the personal advisor should update the plan and distribute copies to all people who attended the review. Any changes to financial provision must be authorised by the team manager.

## 6 Steps to independence assessment

- The Steps to Independence assessment (or AQA equivalent qualification) is a tool designed to be used with the young person once they are 16 but should continue to be used post 18 until it is thought that the young person is ready for independence. The assessment focuses on helping young people to develop the specific skills, attributes and resources they will need to live independently, such as cooking and budgeting.

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- The assessment is on-going and used to measure the progress a young person is making towards developing skills for independent living. The assessment is carried out with the young person by the young person's foster carer or key worker from the age of 16 and reviewed by the IRO, social worker or personal advisor as part of visits. As an outcome of any progress the young person is awarded housing points towards the allocation of social housing.
- The assessment should continue past 18 where this is necessary for the young person to continue to develop independent living skills and to accumulate enough points. When personal advisors believe that a young person is ready for an independent tenancy and has enough points to bid for properties, they should refer them on to the Pathways Move on team.

## 7 Keeping in touch

- For eligible young people aged 16 to 18 the care planning regulations will still apply and young people should be seen by their allocated social worker at the frequency set out in the *Social work visits to looked after children* policy. [Social Worker Visits to Looked After Children](#)
- For former relevant young people aged 18+, personal advisors need to keep in touch in order to keep informed about their wellbeing and progress in living independently and achieving the goals set out in their pathway plan. However this needs to be balanced against the young person's privacy and the need to give them space to develop their independence.
- For care experienced young people aged 18-21 living in Pathways accommodation provided by Camden, personal advisors must visit the young person at the accommodation:
  - within 7 days of first moving to new accommodation unless the personal advisor has supported the move and been to the accommodation when they moved
  - subsequently, within 28 days prior to the first pathway review
  - then every 8 weeks.
- Outside of these visits, the frequency and method of contact should be appropriate to the young person's levels of maturity and their needs and circumstances, for example higher levels of contact may be needed for young people who need higher levels of personal support.

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- From the age of 21, frequency of visits should be at a frequency of every 3 months.
- Methods of contact can include telephone calls, texts or emails, but there must be some face to face contact to enable personal advisors to assess the young person's wellbeing as this could be a crucial time in their transition when problems in coping begin to arise as support gradually decreases. The personal advisor should visit them at their accommodation at least once between pathway plan reviews.
- It is also important that personal advisors keep accurate, up to date records of contacts with young people, including a record of any visits and any communications such as emails or texts sent or received. Details of the frequency and method of keeping in touch should be recorded on the young person's pathway plan.
- The pathway plan should include what actions the Care Experienced service will take where contact with the young person is lost after a specified period of time and where this happens the personal advisor must take all reasonable steps to re-establish contact with the young person. This may include enquiring with friends and family as to their possible whereabouts, and if the young person is thought to be in potential danger, they should be reported to the police as a missing person.

## 8 Support for care experienced young people up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday

### **Type of support**

- Camden has a duty to support care experienced young people up the age of 25, but young people can choose to end contact with the Care Experienced service at 21 if they wish and may return to request further support up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Support may include an allocated personal advisor, a needs assessment and a pathway plan, or access to the duty service.
- The extent to which the Leaving Care service will support care leavers after the age of 21 will depend on their assessed needs and should focus on the specific issues where the young person is in need of support, for example housing, mental health difficulties or accessing education.

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- Support from the Care Experienced service should include information and advice in relation to education, training and employment and finding (but not providing) suitable accommodation and helping young people to access benefits. The personal advisor should also liaise with any other agency that is providing a service to the young person and signpost young people to relevant services as required.

### Decisions on continuing with support

- As the young person approaches their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, personal advisors should discuss their possible continued need for support with them. The updated assessment carried out in preparation for the pathway review held before the young person's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday should assess their continued need for support and the pathway review should make a decision about whether the young person will continue to receive a Care Experienced service after 21 and up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- If the young person chooses to continue receiving a Care Experienced service, their pathway plan will remain in place up to the age of 25 or until they no longer need support.
- If the young person chooses to end contact with the Care Experienced service, their case may be closed and stepped down to a duty service; they should be advised of their right to return and request services up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### Young people returning for a service

- Young people will be advised that initial contact will be via the Children and Families Contact Service who will screen the referral to ensure the young person is a Camden care experienced you and meets the criteria for a service and to find out briefly what services and support are needed. The Contact Service (MASH) will complete a contact and referral record and pass this on to the Care Experienced service duty via the MOSAIC inbox.
- The Care Experienced service duty worker should contact the young person to discuss their needs and following this initial contact a decision will be made on whether to carry out a needs assessment or whether it is more appropriate to signpost the young person on to relevant services depending on their presenting needs.



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- At the initial meeting it should be made clear to the young person the extent to which the Care Experienced service can offer support and provide services and that any service to be provided will be discretionary based on their assessed needs.
- Young people should be made aware that other council services such as Housing are responsible for providing services alongside CSFH and that they may be referred on to other services if this is a better way of meeting their needs. Young people should also be informed that they need to cooperate and provide information as requested for assessment or the Care Experienced service may not be able to provide a service.
- If a needs assessment will be carried out, the Care Experienced manager should allocate the case to a Care Experienced worker. If the assessment identifies need, the young person will be allocated a personal advisor and will progress to a pathway plan.

## 9 Accommodation

### Eligible young people aged 16-18

- At 16 children looked after will be living in a foster placement or residential placement and CLA social workers should begin to discuss their housing options with them as part of the pathway planning process in order to decide on what option will be pursued.
- It is Camden's policy to encourage young people to remain in their foster placement under a *Staying Put* arrangement up to the age of 21 and such an arrangement should always be the first accommodation option to be considered. CLA social workers should liaise with the foster carer's supervising social worker to begin discussions around a potential staying put arrangement. Social workers should refer to the *Staying put* policy. [Staying Put](#)
- As an alternative, young people who are thought to be ready may move into supported accommodation within the Young People's Pathway as a step towards living independently. The young person will remain looked after whilst living in pathway accommodation and care planning regulations will continue to apply.

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- Decisions on whether not to allow a young person to move into supported accommodation should be discussed and agreed at a statutory CLA pathway review and should only be agreed if it can be evidenced that the young person is ready for this step.
- When it is agreed that a young person is ready to move to supported accommodation their CLA social worker should refer them to the Pathways Referral Co-ordinator and complete a *pathways referral form and risk assessment* available on MOSAIC or for under 18 year olds, a *placement request form*.
- The information from this form will help to match the young person to the right type of accommodation within the pathway depending on the level of support they need or whether they have specific needs, for example a mother and baby provision.
- All young people living in pathways accommodation will have an allocated keyworker to provide support to develop increasing independence and help them implement their pathway plan. It is essential that social workers liaise with the young person's keyworker and share information about the young person's progress towards independence and any concerns regarding their safety and welfare.

## Former relevant young people aged 18+

- At 18, care experienced young people are likely to be living in semi-independent Pathways accommodation (or in a Staying Put arrangement up to the age of 21) and will be preparing to move on to their own tenancy.
- The timescale for moving on to independent accommodation will be different for each young person, and it is important that personal advisors are able to assess the young person's increasing ability to manage before agreeing to any move towards more independent living.
- A decision on moving on should be based on the progress made in the Steps to Independence programme as assessed by the personal advisor and keyworker and the young person must demonstrate that they:
  - are ready to manage independent living
  - are ready to manage their own tenancy
  - agree with the on-going services and support offered by the Leaving Care team
  - understand and agree to be bound by the conditions of the tenancy

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- are prepared to work jointly with Care Experienced service and Housing to ensure the tenancy is successful.
- When personal advisors believe that young people are ready to move on and this can be evidenced via the Steps to Independence programme, and the young person has accumulated enough points, they will be referred to the Move on team to be nominated for an independent tenancy. The final referral should be a joint decision between the keyworker and the personal advisor if both are working with a young person.
- All Camden care experienced young people will be allocated points that enable them to bid for studio properties in Camden. Care leavers with special needs, for example those who are vulnerable through disability or young parents, will be allocated extra points.
- A pathway plan review must take place as soon as is practical within 28 days after any move to independent accommodation. The review should look at:
  - whether the accommodation is suitable (see below)
  - how the young person is coping and whether they need more support
  - whether it will be necessary to hold the subsequent review after three months or whether a review at six months is more appropriate.
- As the risk of a young person losing their tenancy may be high, a plan should be in place detailing the level of support they may need in order to prevent any difficulties during the probationary period of the tenancy. This may include support from the Floating Support team, additional contact from the personal advisor or additional contact from the key worker etc.
- If a young person chooses to live outside Camden but is not ready for an independent tenancy, then efforts will be undertaken to identify a supported housing provider in the local area and quality checked to ensure they can offer the level of support the young person needs. However, Camden cannot guarantee that a provider will be available in the area chosen by the young person and supported accommodation will be offered to the young person as available.

### **Test of suitability for independent accommodation**

- Statutory guidance states that care experienced young people should be living in suitable accommodation, which is defined as accommodation that:
  - meets the young person's needs
  - is provided by a landlord of suitable character
  - complies with health and safety requirements for rented property

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- has been chosen having taken into account the young person's wishes and feelings and their education, training and employment needs.
- As far as possible personal advisors should take reasonable steps to ensure young people are living in suitable accommodation.

## Private tenancies

- Most care leavers will remain in supported housing until they are assessed as ready to take on their own tenancy, which will generally be a social housing tenancy. However, some young people may choose to obtain a tenancy with a private landlord either because the pathways project does not meet their needs or because they have chosen to live outside of Camden and are not eligible for housing in that area.
- Where possible and if Camden is in support of this arrangement, the personal advisor must be satisfied that the landlord is of good character and that the accommodation is safe and suitable for the young person.
- The Corporate Parenting Service will support the young person to enter into an agreement with the landlord to secure the tenancy and agree any additional support the young person may need. The Corporate Parenting Service may also consider assisting with the deposit in advance. However this would be paid directly to the landlord if satisfied with the tenancy agreement.
- Personal advisors will need to visit the property to check on all aspects of suitability and discuss the matter with the young person and their manager or senior if there are any issues of concern.
- When considering suitability, personal advisors should consider:
  - the facilities and services provided
  - state of repair
  - safety
  - location
  - support
  - tenancy status
  - financial commitments and affordability for the young person.

## Adult Pathway

- Some young people may have extra needs making them more vulnerable and unable to develop essential skills for independent living. The young person may not be engaging with their personal advisor and may have a chaotic lifestyle that will require on-going social care support past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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When their needs can no longer be met in the Young People's Pathway, the Adult Pathway will be considered.

- Where this is the case, the young person would be referred to the Adult Pathway by the Young People's Pathway manager. The young person will continue to be supported and helped to develop independence skills and will continue to accumulate housing points up to the age of 25.

## 10 Education, training and employment

To ensure care experienced young people have opportunities to achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations, the Corporate Parenting Service will:

- build on the foundations of young people's previous achievements and assessed strengths as set out in their pathway plan
- provide high quality advice and guidance on accessing higher and further education and progressing plans for training and employment opportunities so that young people are aware of their options and can make informed choices about their future career options
- actively encourage and support young people to engage in education, vocational training and apprenticeships
- ensure each young person has a pathway plan that supports them in achieving their goals and which sets out the support they will receive
- continually review the young person's progress at pathway plan reviews to ensure they remain engaged and that adequate support is being provided to enable them to pursue their goal
- provide a gateway to lifelong learning for those young people who wish to return to education at a later date by linking in with the Connexions Service and the Virtual School to provide learning and training opportunities
- offer advice to care leavers on requesting an EHCP (Education health care plan) for additional support in their place of education
- support care leavers in advocating on their behalf in the event of education disciplinary meetings to do with behaviour to help the young person maintain their place in college.

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### Eligible young people aged 16-18

- Care planning regulations will apply to this cohort and social workers should refer to the *Supporting the education and promoting the achievement of children looked after* policy for details. [Supporting the Education and Promoting the Achievement of...](#)
- All young people should be in compulsory education or training and have a PEP in place up to the age of 18 that maps out their education, training and employment pathway and details the support they will receive to achieve their goals. There should be a PEP in place even if the young person is not in education, employment or training (NEET) or is in the process of re-engaging. For details see the *Education care planning guidance*. [education-care-planning.pdf](#)
- PEP meetings need to focus on the young person's long-term goals and should agree the roles and responsibilities of carers, keyworkers and social workers in supporting the young person's ambitions and allocating tasks such as helping the young person to complete application forms.
- It is vital that social workers, carers and keyworkers are fully involved in the PEP process in order to help support the young person and take an interest in their ambitions and encourage them to have high aspirations for their future.
- The Post 16 education, training and employment manager is responsible for quality assuring the PEP and can liaise with designated CLA teachers at schools and advocate for the young person where there are difficulties in implementing a young person's PEP.

### Role of social workers and personal advisors

- Social workers and personal advisors have a duty to fulfil the role of a good corporate parent by ensuring that all care experienced young people recognise the importance of planning for their future careers and making the most of education and training opportunities.
- In they should recognise the additional barriers to achievement faced by care experienced young people and help them to have high aspirations and to build on their strengths whilst recognising their weaknesses and needs.

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- Where possible, young people should be encouraged to remain in education in order to make them better prepared for independence and to improve their opportunities for future employment.
- Social workers and personal advisors should ensure that issues around education, training and employment are addressed in the pathway planning process and that the young person's pathway plan provides a package of support that promotes attainment, such as stable living environments and financial, practical and emotional support. The plan should also include details of any vacation accommodation during university breaks to be provided to care leavers in higher education.
- Social workers and personal advisors should liaise with the designated person within the young person's college in order to plan how to support the young person to engage with their course. This is particularly important where a care leaver is attending a college outside Camden.
- If a young person is at college outside Camden, their personal advisor should liaise with the home local authority to look at what support can be provided to the young person.

### **Role of the Connexions advisor**

- The Connexions worker based in the Leaving Care team should provide targeted services for care experienced young people to ensure a smooth transition from the young person's PEP to their pathway plan in terms of their education, employment and training opportunities.
- The Connexions advisor will provide young people with encouragement to engage in education and training and helping them to access voluntary work experience so that they can improve their skills and become more employable. The advisor can also help young people access grants and funding to support their long-term plans.
- Personal advisors should involve the Connexions advisor in all aspects of planning for the young person's future in terms of their education, training and future careers. Young people should be referred to the Connexions advisor so that they have an opportunity to receive expert advice and guidance, particularly if they are NEET (see below).

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### **Role of the virtual school**

- Social workers and personal advisors should liaise with the Post 16 education, training and employment manager based in the Virtual School in order to access advice and information about educational opportunities and accessing education bursaries for 16-19 year olds.
- The Post 16 education manager can also provide advice on:
  - the best education and training provision for individual young people based on their academic ability, including recommendations for possible courses
  - referring the young person onto an apprenticeship scheme, either Camden's or the national programme
  - provision to help care leavers who are NEET or facing specific barriers to learning (for example those with mental health or emotional difficulties) to prepare for and re-engage with learning, for example through mentoring schemes or life coaching.

### **Young people who are NEET**

- Young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) are more likely to fail to achieve their potential and are at a higher risk of becoming socially excluded in the future.
- Where a social worker or personal advisor is aware that a young person under the age of 20 that they are working with is NEET, they should refer the young person to the Connexions advisor. For any young person who is not in education, training or employment, the allocated worker will make a referral on to the NEET Panel. This is particularly important for young people who have learning disabilities or face other barriers to accessing education and training opportunities.
- The panel consists of representatives from Camden's virtual school, the Connexions service, Corporate Parenting team managers and the Corporate Parenting Head of Service and/or service manager, a representative from Drive Forward and the Access to Benefits advisor.



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- The panel will consider what actions have worked and what actions have not been successful in the past to help the young person to engage and explore other education, training and employment opportunities available to the young person. The panel will also devise a NEET Action Plan and put a strategy in place to support the implementation of this plan, which will be monitored and implemented by the social worker or personal advisor.

## 11 Health and wellbeing

### Eligible young people aged 16 to 18

- Camden has a statutory duty to promote the health of Children Looked After and social workers should refer to the *Health care assessments and plans* policy for details. [Health Care Assessments and Plans](#)
- Social workers should liaise with the CLA nurse in order to follow up with the young person to address health issues and make appropriate referrals to the relevant health services.
- If the young person is pregnant or a young parent, the CLA nurse will liaise with ante-natal services, health visitors and the Family Nurse Partnership in order ensure the young person is engaging with services and receiving appropriate support.
- If there are concerns about sexual health and a possible link with child sexual exploitation these will be flagged up in the health care plan for social workers to follow up with the young person.
- The CLA nurse will also work with young people to help them prepare for independence so that they are able to take increasing responsibility for their own health issues including managing any on-going health conditions.
- At the last CLA review prior to the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday the CLA nurse will share the young person's discharge summary or "Leaving Care summary". This document sets out the young person's medical history including their immunisation status and any outstanding health issues that may impact on the young person post 18. The summary should be given to the young person and shared with the social worker and GP.

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- Re-assessment of the young person's health needs may show deterioration in the young person's health or that they have previously undiagnosed health issues, particularly learning difficulties.
- If there are concerns that the young person may require ongoing social care support from Adult Social Care under the Care Act 2014, for example due to learning difficulties, the social worker should discuss this with the CLA nurse and a decision made on whether to make a referral to the CYPD Transitions team.

## Post 18

- At 18 the CLA health service will end involvement with the young person and will provide them with their "Leaving Care summary", a discharge summary giving details of their medical history including immunisations and outstanding health issues.
- It is an expectation that the young person will then take responsibility for their own health as an adult. However personal advisors should still continue to support the young person to do this, and pathway planning should ensure that the young person's health needs are addressed and the following are promoted:
  - management of any on-going health issues
  - healthy lifestyles
  - sexual health
  - emotional wellbeing and good mental health
  - sports and leisure activities.
- Care experienced young people should be encouraged to register with GPs and dentists and to take up any available services. The personal advisor should liaise with health professionals to ensure that the young person is taking up necessary health services and that appropriate referrals for services are being made.
- Personal advisors should also make young people aware of their rights and entitlements with regard to health care and ensure they know how to access health services. At 18 young people will need to pay for some NHS charges such as prescriptions but personal advisors should check whether they qualify for any exemptions.

## 12 Safeguarding young people

### Eligible young people aged 16 to 18

- Social workers should be aware that young people aged 16-18 remain subject to safeguarding and child protection procedures and CSFH continues to have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- Young people who are leaving care and moving to supported accommodation are particularly vulnerable due to their lack of experience, especially if they have mental health problems, emotional issues or problems with substance misuse. Social workers need to consider how they can maintain contact with their support networks when planning this move.
- If social workers have child protection concerns about a young person aged under 18, they should consult with the child protection Independent Reviewing Officer and consider convening a strategy meeting under Camden's child protection procedures. This is particularly important in cases where the young person:
  - is assessed as being at risk from continued contact with family members or people who pose a risk to children
  - makes a disclosure of historical abuse
  - makes an allegation against a carer or residential worker
  - is a sexual offender or there are concerns that the young person is a perpetrator of sexual abuse
  - may be at risk of child exploitation (see below).
- If the young person lives outside of Camden, child protection referrals should be made to the relevant children's social care office in the local authority area where the young person lives.
- Social workers, carers and keyworkers should be aware that the definition of domestic abuse includes young people aged 16 and 17 and that any young person they work with who may be experiencing violence and abuse within their intimate relationships either as a victim or perpetrator. Further guidance on working to safeguard these young people can be found in the *Domestic abuse policy and guidance*. [cssw-domestic-abuse-policy.pdf](#)
- Social workers should also be aware of the following potential safeguarding issues and refer to the specific guidance:

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Child exploitation: [child-exploitation-policy-and-procedures.pdf](#)

Missing children; [missing-children-social-work-procedures.pdf](#)

### Post 18

- Personal advisors and keyworkers should be aware that once a young person reaches 18, safeguarding and child protection systems under the Children Act 1989 will no longer apply where there are concerns about the welfare of the young person.
- Instead, safeguarding issues should be dealt with under the adult safeguarding procedures set out in the Care Act 2014 which places a duty on local authorities to safeguard adults who are vulnerable because they require care and support and are otherwise unable to protect themselves from abuse and neglect.

Further information and definitions of abuse and neglect can be found at:

[Camden Council: Safeguarding adults \(adult protection\)](#)

## 13 Young people in specific circumstances

### Young people returning home

- If a looked after young person returns to live at home with their parents, someone else with parental responsibility or someone with whom they had lived under a Child Arrangement Order prior to coming into care, the young person will not qualify for a full leaving care service if the arrangement lasts for more than 6 months.
- If these arrangements break down before the child reaches 18, they will revert back to their former status, ie: eligible or relevant child under the Children (Leaving Care) Act.
- CLA social workers should consider a possible return home throughout the young person's care episode, but a final decision as to whether or not this is in the young person's best interest should be taken at the statutory CLA review nearest the young person's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Where rehabilitation home is being considered, this should form the basis of the pathway needs assessment, and the young person's pathway plan should detail what services will be in place in order to support the return and how the placement will be monitored.

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- A contingency plan should be in place detailing the circumstances under which the return will not be considered successful what will happen should the return home break down irretrievably, including what support will be made available to the young person to enable them to move towards independence without the support of their parents.
- The return home will need to be monitored and supported by the allocated CLA social worker to ensure that the arrangements continue to be in the young person's best interest and enable them to achieve positive outcomes.
- The first pathway review should focus on whether the arrangement should continue or whether the young person needs to receive a full leaving care service in order to achieve their potential and move to independence successfully.
- As the Leaving Care Act does not intend to replace the support of parents who are able to provide their child with a stable home, it is an expectation that where the return is successful, the Corporate Parenting service will withdraw support after 6 months.
- However, as young people under 18 are not able to claim benefits, this may cause hardship to the family, and the social worker should consider continuing to provide some financial support from the leaving care budget.

## Young people with disabilities

- Young people known to the CYPDS will have an allocated worker and receive support up to the age of 25 to help them transition to adulthood and ensure they receive appropriate support from adult services under the Care Act 2014. Where the case is de-allocated by the CYPDS the young person will be referred to the Care Experienced team for a leaving care service.
- Some looked after young people may experience mild disabilities or learning difficulties but will not reach the threshold for a service from the CYPDS.
- However, pathway needs assessments must take any disability into account to assess whether the young person may require a service from adult social care in the future and where appropriate, social workers should consider making a referral to the CYPDS Transitions team. This should be discussed with the CLA nurse as part of health care planning.

## Care experienced young people

For further information, please refer to the CYPDS policy: [children-and-young-peoples-disability-service-policy.pdf](#)

### Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)

All UASC presenting to Camden will become looked after and will be entitled to all CLA and leaving care services as for young people born in the UK but entitlement to services may change over time depending on their immigration status. For more information please refer to the *Unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of trafficking and modern slavery* policy. [Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of...](#)

### Looked after young people in the Criminal Justice System

- Young people who are subject to a care order and who subsequently receive a custodial sentence will remain Looked After whilst in custody and will continue to qualify for a leaving care service.
- Young people who are accommodated under section 20 and who subsequently receive a custodial sentence will lose their Looked After status. However, if the young person is 16 or over, and was accommodated immediately prior to being sentenced and had been looked after for 13 weeks or more, they will be a **relevant child** and will qualify for a leaving care service or may return to being looked after (an **eligible child**) if this is thought to be in their best interests.

For details of working with care experienced young people who are in the criminal justice system please refer to the *Looked after children and young people in contact with the youth justice system* policy. [Looked After Children and Young People in Contact with...](#)

### Young parents

- Pathway planning for young parents should consider what support they will need in order to care for their child or consider contact arrangements if they are not involved in their child's care.
- Social workers and personal advisors should consider whether a mother and baby placement would be a more suitable accommodation placement (see link to policy) and if the young parent is to move to supported accommodation this should be to a specialist provision. [parent-and-child-placements-policy.pdf](#)

## Care experienced young people

- Where a looked after young person (under the age of 18) becomes pregnant social workers must carry out a pre-birth assessment. Further details can be found in the Pre-birth assessment policy: [pre-birth-assessments-policy.pdf](#)
- Where there are concerns about the welfare of the baby the social worker should consult with Child Protection IRO and make a referral to the MASH team on behalf of the child. If the young person is placed out of Camden, a safeguarding referral should be made to the children's social care service for the home borough but the allocated CLA social worker or personal advisor should remain involved in the case.
- Social workers and personal advisors should provide support to care experienced young people who are parents or pregnant and should encourage them to engage with ante-natal and post-natal health services to ensure the child's health needs are met. Social workers and personal advisors should also help parents' access information and advice on relevant benefits and consider whether their current housing is sufficient.

## Relevant young people

- Relevant young people are those aged 16 and 17 who have left the care system and are no longer subject to care planning regulations. Because Camden's policy is to encourage young people to remain looked after up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, very few care leavers in Camden will be relevant young people.
- However, these young people will be particularly vulnerable and will remain subject to the safeguarding duty owed to all children. It is therefore vital that Camden provides a high level of support and oversight in order to safeguard and promote their welfare and ensure their transition to independence is successful.
- Pathway planning should include the following:
  - A pathway plan should be in place for when the young person is discharged from care and a personal advisor allocated.
  - Their pathway needs assessment should be carried out prior to being discharged from care and based on the same criteria as for eligible children.

## Care experienced young people

- Personal advisors should ensure the young person is in receipt of universal services and knows how to access any other service they may require. Any agency that is providing services and support to the young person must be involved in pathway planning.
- An assessment under the Steps to Independence programme should be carried out as part of the pathway needs assessment and this should consider whether the young person should continue to be looked after.
- Where the young person wishes to move to independence before their social worker feels they are ready, this will need to be discussed with the young person and their IRO should also be involved in this.

## Qualifying children

- Qualifying children are children aged 16-21 who were looked after by Camden for less than the qualifying period of 13 weeks since the age of 14.
- Camden can provide advice and assistance to qualifying children under the Leaving Care Act 2000 subject to an assessment of their needs and based on their circumstances and decisions on provision of support will be on a case by case basis.
- Camden will take steps to ensure qualifying young people are aware that they may seek support if needed by publishing information about their entitlement on the Camden Care Experienced Local offer website and young people will be able to access support and signposting from the Care Experienced duty service.
- If requested by the young person, the Care Experienced duty service can carry out an assessment of need and draw up a plan if on-going support will be offered based on their assessed needs, with regular pathway plan reviews.
- Camden will first establish that the young person is unable to access any kind of support from their parents or previous carer/special guardian and any advice and assistance provided would be subject to assessment and based on their needs.



**Appendix 1: Leaving care services, eligibility and service description**

<b>Leaving care status</b>		<b>Description of services to be provided</b>
<p><b>Eligible children</b> (16-18 who are still Looked After by Camden)</p>	<p>These are young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged 16 or 17</li> <li>• are currently looked after</li> <li>• have been looked after for at least 13 weeks (or for periods totalling 13 weeks) since the age of 14 and after the age of 16.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all the provisions of the Looked After Children system</li> <li>• allocated social worker</li> <li>• needs assessment</li> <li>• pathway plan and review</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant children</b> (16-18 who are no longer Looked After)</p>	<p>These are young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged 16 or 17</li> <li>• are not currently looked after</li> <li>• have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and up to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and have since left care</li> </ul> <p><b>or:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged 16 or 17</li> <li>• are not currently looked after</li> <li>• were detained in custody or admitted to hospital on attaining 16 and immediately prior to this had been looked after for 13 weeks since the age of 14</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal advisor</li> <li>• needs assessment</li> <li>• pathway plan and review</li> <li>• accommodation and maintenance</li> <li>• assistance to achieve their goals (ie: education) as set out in their pathway plan the responsible authority must keep in touch</li> </ul>
<p><b>Former relevant children</b> 18 and over who were eligible or relevant children prior to reaching 18)</p>	<p>These are young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged 18 or above</li> <li>• were an eligible child but have since left care</li> <li>• were a relevant child but have since reached the age of 18</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the responsible authority must keep in touch</li> <li>• personal advisor</li> <li>• pathway plan and review</li> <li>• assistance with education, training or employment</li> <li>• financial assistance where needed vacation accommodation for higher education</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• residential further education if needed</li> </ul>

## Care experienced young people

<p><b>Former relevant children pursuing further education or training</b></p>	<p>These are young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged between 21 and 25</li> <li>• have been a former relevant child</li> <li>• approach their local authority once entitlement to leaving care services has ended but who wish to pursue a programme of education or training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal advisor</li> <li>• needs assessment</li> <li>• pathway plan and review</li> <li>• financial assistance to support education or training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Qualifying children</b> (16-21 who were looked after for a short period but who are not eligible, relevant or former relevant children)</p>	<p>These are young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged 16-21</li> <li>• are entitled to advice and assistance because they were accommodated between the ages of 16 and 18 in a variety of settings, including schools and hospitals or were privately fostered, but are not eligible or relevant children</li> </ul> <p><b>or:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are aged between 16 and 21</li> <li>• if under 18, are subject to a special guardianship order</li> <li>• if aged over 18, were subject to a special guardianship order</li> <li>• were looked after prior to the special guardianship order being granted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice, assistance and befriending</li> <li>• financial assistance with education, training or employment</li> <li>• assistance in general</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vacation accommodation for higher education</li> <li>• residential further education if needed</li> </ul>

**Appendix 2: Content of needs assessments and pathway plans for relevant and former relevant children**

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Information to be included in pathway plan</b>
Health and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of primary healthcare services</li> <li>• Arrangements for the young person’s medical and dental care according to their needs making a reference in the health plan established within the care plan in place when the young person was looked after.</li> <li>• Access to specialist health and therapeutic services.</li> <li>• Arrangements so that the young person understands the actions they can take to maintain a healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>• Opportunities to enjoy and achieve and take part in positive leisure activities.</li> </ul>
Education, training and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of the young person’s aspirations and career ambitions and actions and support to achieve this.</li> <li>• Access to careers advice.</li> <li>• Education objectives and support – continue to use the young person’s Personal Education Plan.</li> <li>• Arrangements to support the young person in further education and/or higher education.</li> <li>• Support to enable suitably qualified young people to enter apprenticeships, make applications to university or gain necessary qualifications.</li> <li>• Arrangements for work experience, career mentoring or pathways into employment etc.</li> </ul>
Emotional and behavioural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the authority will assist the young person to develop self-esteem and maintain positive attachments.</li> <li>• Does the young person display self-esteem, resilience and confidence?</li> <li>• Assessment of their capacity to empathise with others, reason and take appropriate responsibility for their own actions.</li> <li>• Capacity to make attachments and appropriate relationships, show appropriate emotion, adapt to change, manage stress and show self-control and appropriate self-awareness.</li> </ul>
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the authority intends to meet any of the young person’s needs arising from their ethnicity, religious persuasion, sexual orientation.</li> <li>• How does the young person understand their identity stemming from being a child in care and a care leaver?</li> <li>• How the authority will assist the young person to obtain key documents linked to confirming their age and identity.</li> </ul>

## Care experienced young people

Family and social relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the young person's relationship with their parents and wider family.</li> <li>• Contact with family – carried across from care plan.</li> <li>• Young person's relationships with peers, friendship network and significant adults. Strategy to improve any negative features of these relationships.</li> <li>• How all these relationships will contribute to the young person making a successful transition to adulthood and how they will assist with integration into the community that they identify with.</li> </ul>
Practical and other skills necessary for independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The young person is adequately prepared with the full range of practical skills they will need to manage the next planned move towards greater independence.</li> <li>• The young person is prepared for taking greater responsibility as they are expected to manage more independently.</li> </ul>
Financial arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of care leaver's financial needs and their financial capacity. Does the young person have a bank account, national insurance number and appreciate the value of regular saving etc? Do they have access to financial support and adequate income to meet necessary expenses?</li> <li>• Pathway plan must include a statement of how the authority proposes to maintain a relevant child, the arrangements in place for the young person to receive financial support and contingency plans.</li> <li>• Statement of financial assistance to be provided to a former relevant child.</li> </ul>
(Suitability of) accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An assessment of the quality of accommodation where the young person is living/any accommodation under consideration for them to live in.</li> <li>• How far is this suitable for the young person's needs?</li> <li>• What steps might be taken to improve it?</li> </ul>