

Bitesize session overview

Today we'll look together at:

- Overview of the main legislation & duties to care leavers
- Upcoming policy changes
- Headlines from research drawing on what care leavers' say support transition from care
- The session will be an opportunity to reflect on the crucial role residential care plays in supporting young people as they grow older and prepare to leave care
- Towards the end there will be a chance for reflection / Q&A

Contact: Dr. Claire Baker (independent researcher)

clairebaker76@gmail.com



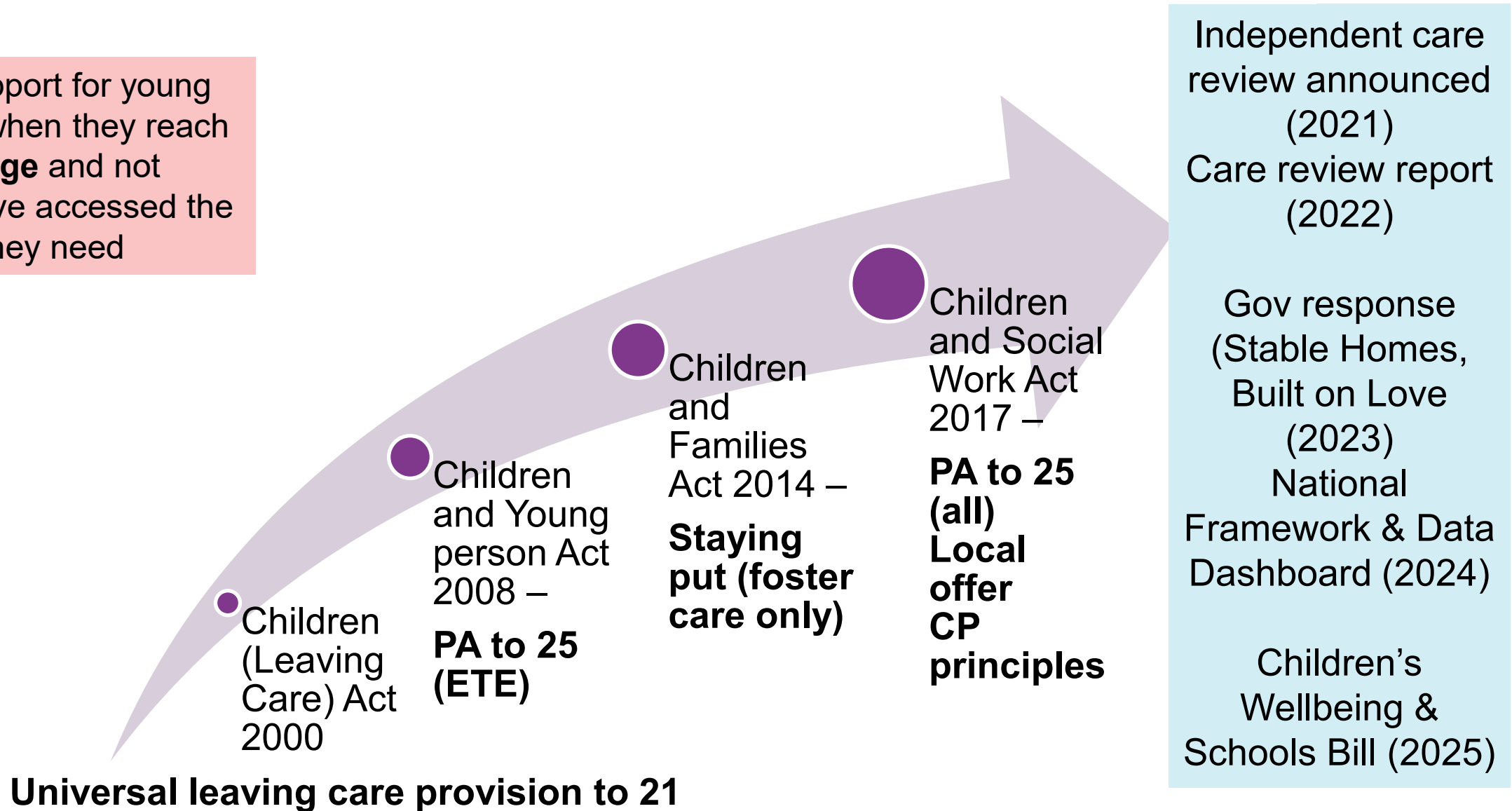
Evolving policy context



- Leaving care represents a risk point in young people's lives
- There is a danger that transition from care can undo positive impacts of care
- Experiences of care leavers vary widely – some move on successfully, others merely 'get by' and some face considerable struggles
- Disparity in support offered to care leavers ('territorial injustice')
- Changing profile of care leavers ('late entrants', increase in asylum seeking young people)
- As a result 'leaving care' is an area of continued policy development (extended and new duties)

Progress in leaving care policy ...

Generally, support for young people ends when they reach **a particular age** and not when they have accessed the support that they need

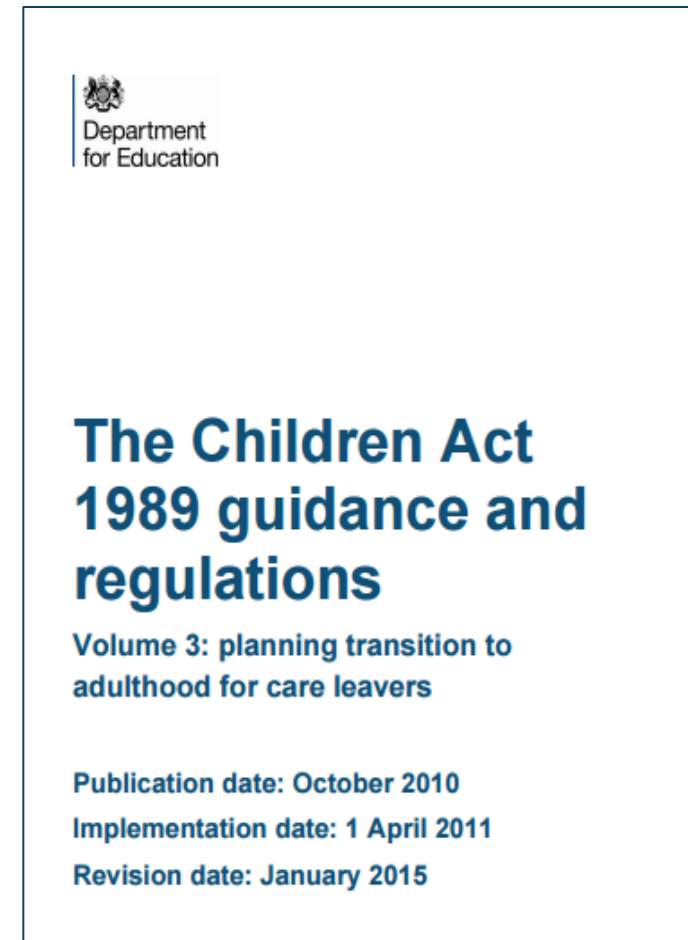
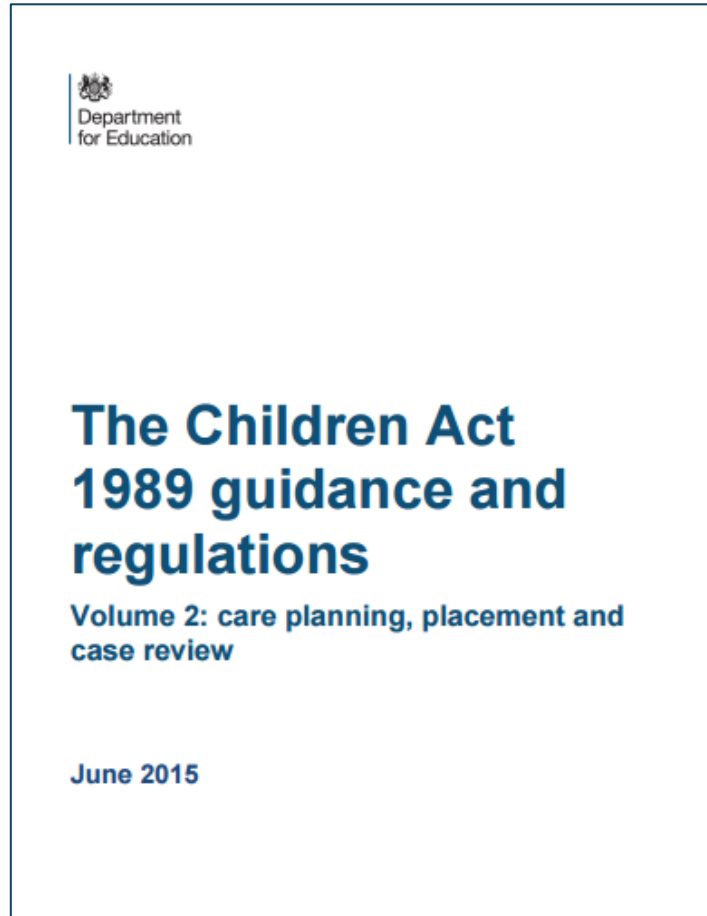


Who is a care leaver?



- **13/14/16 rule** (to qualify for support under Children Leaving Care (2000) Act
- 13 weeks or more looked after since your 14th birthday with at least one day on or after your 16th birthday.
- An **Eligible** care leaver is aged 16 or 17 who meets the above and is still looked after (13 weeks can be continuous or separate episodes of care – not respite care).
- A **Relevant** care leaver is aged 16/17 who meets the above and is no longer looked after (left care after age 16)
- A **Former Relevant** care leaver is aged 18 or over and was one of the above.
- Use the Coram Voice tool <https://coramvoice.org.uk/myrights/my-rights-when-i-am-leaving-care/am-i-a-care-leaver/>
- Government site on care leavers entitlements: <https://www.support-for-care-leavers.education.gov.uk/en/home>

Department for Education guidance



Needs assessment (to inform pathway plan)

- Within 3 months of a young person's 16th birthday
- Use the assessment underpinning the Care Plan as starting point
- Address current & longer term needs to support successful transition to adulthood
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will have scrutiny role of quality of assessment, planning, care & review and ensuring child's views are heard
- Views to be included: young person's wishes and feelings; parents; other adults inc. carers; education providers; Personal Adviser; IRO
- Social worker's analysis and assessment with management scrutiny and oversight

What is a pathway plan?

- Builds on the needs assessment and is prepared as soon as possible after
- It sets out how to meet assessed needs
- It includes the care plan

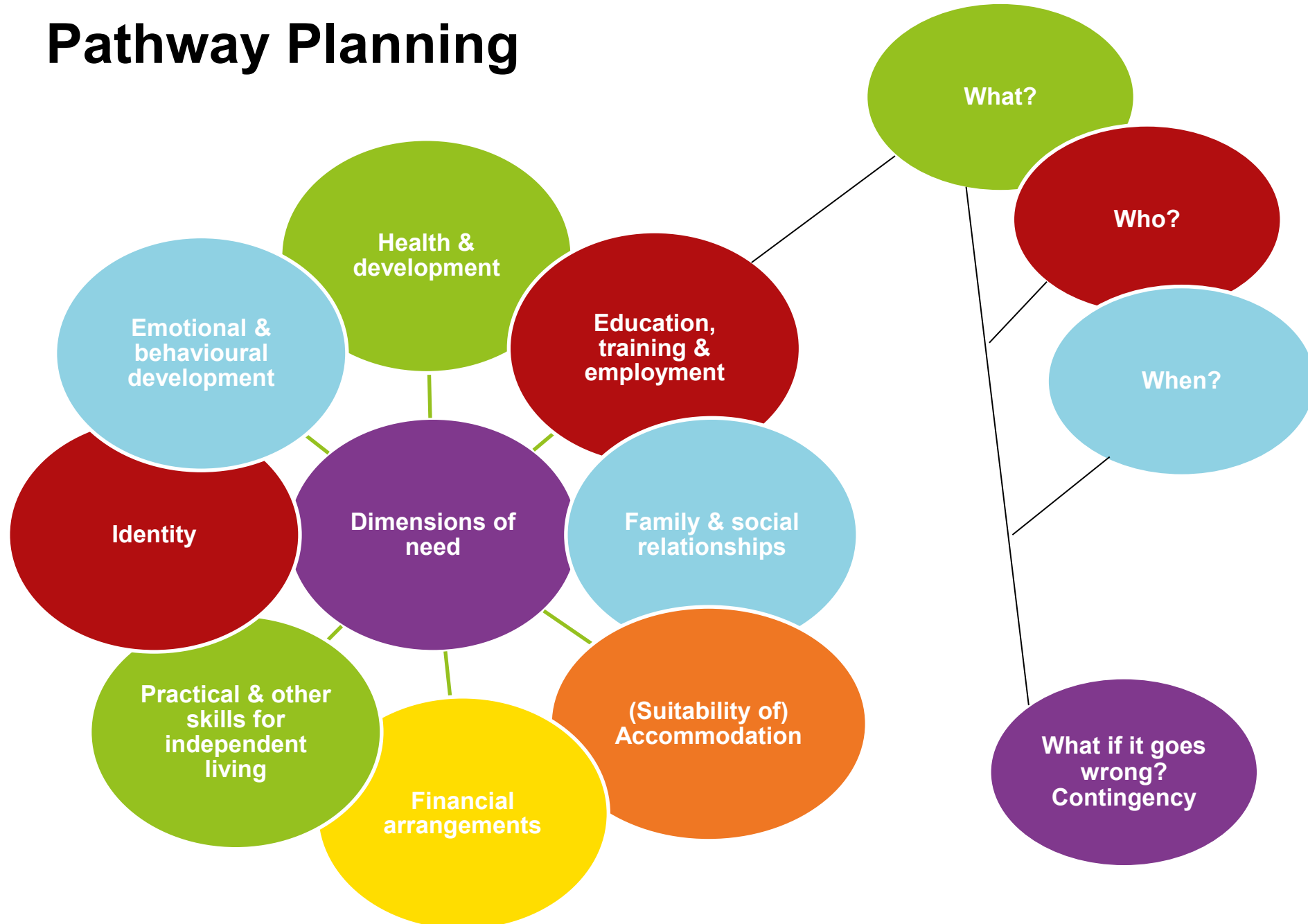
“It is a plan setting out the advice, assistance and support which the local authority intend to provide a child... both while they are looking after him and later; and when they might cease to look after him”

- Pathway plan must be prepared for all eligible children and continued for all relevant & former relevant – a ‘living document’
- Reviewed at least every 6 months (or more frequent if circumstances change or requested by young person)
- Under 18 Independent revising officer (IRO) scrutiny

Pathway Planning

Looks at how
LA can
support
young person
as grow older
(inter-
dependence)

Developed
with the
young person
based on
their needs



Good pathway plans..

- Record the progress the young person has or has not made
- Include the views of the young person and others
- Have analysis – why are you making these recommendations/plan?
- Underpinned by principle: Is it good enough for my child
- Ensure there are back up /contingency plans
- Are aspirational
- Deal with both short-term issues and long-term goals

Support for care leavers age under 18

Eligible children (are looked after)

- The same support as any looked after child - maintain the care plan, reviews, IRO, social worker
- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan (with regular review)
- Personal Adviser

Relevant children (not looked after)

- Stay in touch
- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Personal adviser
- Maintain suitable accommodation
- Other assistance as their welfare requires
- Assistance with education or training

Support for care leavers over 18

Age 18 up to 21

- Keep in touch
- Personal adviser
- Regular reviews of pathway plan
- Financial assistance (if needed) to pursue education or training
- £2,000 bursary if undertaking HE course
- £3000 setting up home allowance
- Support continues until age 21 or longer if requested by care leaver

After 21

- Support continues if requested by care leaver
- Care leavers can come back for support after 21 until 25

Extended support to all care leavers up to the age of 25

Children and Social Work Act 2017 – PA to 25 – this is about young people who have reached the age of 21 but not the age of 25 who want continuing support

1. Need to discuss with YP as approach age 21 if wish to continue receive support
 2. Those aged 21-25 can come back to request help
- Appoint PA till 25 (stop earlier if YP say no longer wants one)
 - Right to assessment of needs and prepare pathway plan if they been closed to services (should be proportionate)
 - LA to provide former relevant child with any advice and support which assessment identified as appropriate

Local offer for care leavers

- From April 2018 LA have had statutory duty to publish and co-produce information about services which may assist care leavers in preparing for adulthood and independent living
- About both legal entitlements and additional discretionary support
- Every local authority and partners – housing, health, mental health, adult transition, benefits agency, etc set out their offer to care leavers aged 16yrs to 25yrs
- LAs need to consult on content of their local offer & update it from ‘time to time’
- Covers:
 - a) Health and well-being
 - b) Relationships
 - c) Education and training
 - d) Employment
 - e) Accommodation
 - f) Participation in society

See: <https://www.careleaveroffer.co.uk/>



Children and Schools / Well-being Bill: Corporate parenting (2025)

- In 2017 DfE introduced through a set of Corporate Parenting Principles
- But principles were not strong enough – so now government introducing a set of duties on all local authorities, every Govt Department and other organisations.
- They will have to understand their data and the outcomes for care leavers.
- To produce three yearly plans that will reduce the inequalities and improve the outcomes for care leaver -push towards developing multi-disciplinary leaving care services.
- The Care Leavers Inter Ministerial Board will be the reporting mechanism for each Govt Department.

Children & Schools/Well-being Bill: Staying Close (2025)

- There is a gap in support nationally for young people leaving residential homes and other forms of accommodation. These young people often find themselves in independent accommodation without support and often find themselves isolated and unable to manage with the challenges that independent adult life brings.
- The new duties will replace the current Staying Close grant funded scheme and will require each local authority to consider whether former relevant children (up to age 25) require Staying Close support.
- The aim is to help develop confidence and skills for independent living so that young people can feel positive about their future and opportunities as a result of the support they receive.
- Will require all local authorities to assess whether the provision of Staying Close support to former relevant children (up to age 25) is required in the interests of that person's welfare.

Cliff edge of support

Aged 17 ½ living in a children's home

- Somebody to talk to everyday/ help sort out problems.
- Food, heating, pocket money provided.
- Support from social worker, IRO, school, key worker in children's home etc.

Aged 18 ½ living on your own

- Nobody to talk to once you shut the front door.
- You have to sort out food, heating spending money
- Expectation you are an adult and therefore sort things out.

“Accelerated and compressed transitions”



Finding my way

- Film: Finding My Way is an award-winning animated documentary about the challenges and expectations of leaving local authority care

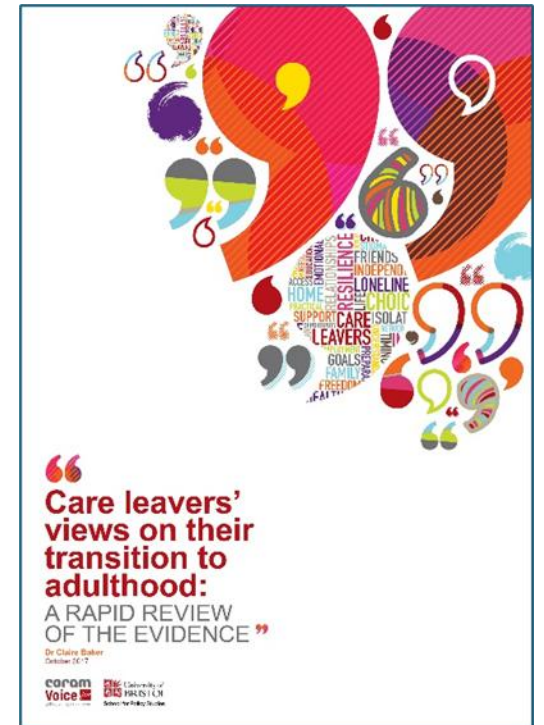


Finding My Way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLMJXZdyCbY>

What do young people say about leaving care?

- Care leavers' often reflect that their **support declined once they “left” the very visible looked after system.**
- Many feel they leave **care too early**, without enough preparation.
- They do not **feel emotionally ready** for living alone, and for the loneliness after care.
- Care leavers **need more information about their entitlements.**
- Care leavers **need somebody to call on** for help and advice.



<https://www.coram.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Care-Leaver-Rapid-Review-24.10.17-final-proof-2.pdf>

- Gradual and extended transitions
- Preparation
- Relationships
- Freedoms & Pressures of adult life

all your life...decision have been made on your behalf so now that you've got to suddenly become an adult and make decisions yourself. You think, am I making the right decision or can I even make a decision, you can doubt yourself

I will have to move on very soon after I am 18 which is frustrating, why put my somewhere that I have to leave at 18

I think the thing most folk need is trust. If you can see that somebody trusts you it makes you feel happier, it makes you feel as though you want to get it right in your life. It makes you want to get your life sorted out and basically get on with it.

I went from not paying anything, and I mean anything, literally just my clothes and my cigarettes, to having water rates and light rates, TV licence, council tax and having these different cards to pay for different things. Wow it was a bombardment! The one question I kept asking myself was, 'how will I cope?' the answer is you don't. This is where I am now, my mental health is getting worse

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

Quality Standards describe outcomes that each child must be supported to achieve while living in the children's home

- The quality and purpose of care standard

(vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult;

- Care planning standard

(iii) (iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f1b54ed915d74e33f45f0/Guide_to_Children_s_Home_Standards_inc_quality_standards_Version__1.17_FINAL.pdf



Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards

April 2015

Support for young people

- Become
- NYAS
- Coram Voice
- Children's Commissioner – Help at Hand



Laura Beveridge

Kids in care: Let's start a revolution!



Kids in Care: Let's Start a Revolution! | Laura Beveridge | TEDxGlasgow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-wp7HN9Zvs&app=desktop>

What are the issues in your children's home for your young people laving care?

Use chat function or raise hand

Anything surprise in what we've covered?

