

LBWF

Guidance for

Transition of children looked after to leaving care service

Transition into adulthood is a daunting process for any young person. LBWF acknowledge that transitions for looked after children into leaving care service is a very complex process where young people will need support from their workers and all the other adults around them to support them through this process. Transitions occur for different young people at various stages of their life's from starting primary school, moving to secondary school, preparing for independence and leaving home. These transitions also coincide with physical, emotional, psychological and physiological developments that are coupled with changes to roles and relationships with family, friends, community and professionals who are supporting them. No means an easy process.

LBWF is aware of these challenges and ensure that the process is started as soon as possible. It is also important to note that some young people will need more support than others during this process. The success of the transition process depends on the young person's experiences during the planning and their understanding of information that will be shared with them during the process. When this goes well children, young people, their parents/carers can feel confident of the future and have a resilience to manage issues that might be faced by them.

The Pathway Plan supersedes the care plan at 16 years of age and becomes the main Plan for the young person. This is then reviewed as part of the Statutory Reviewing Service. The allocated social worker will complete a needs assessment and pathway plan for young people at the latest 16 years and three months. Foster carers, service providers and young people will contribute to these plans making sure that all the needs of the young person have been assessed robustly and that a plan is in place to meet these needs called a Pathway Plan.

There are various aspects that needs to be considered as part of this process for example, the young person's emotional and physical wellbeing, contact with family and friends, ethnicity, legal status in the country, financial and budgeting circumstances, education, training and employment, suitable accommodation, single partners needs to support their child/ren. As part of this process practitioners within LBWF will make use of The My Guide to guide young people with the specific life skills that needs to be considered/developed as part of this transition into independence.

It is important to note that not all young people will be ready to consider or talk about some of these themes hence the importance that all adults who are involved in supporting the young person help to contribute to the development of the pathway plan. The aim of the Pathway Plan is to look at areas where the young person may need additional support and input to help them towards independent life skills development.

To ensure that preparation and discussion is started at an early stage the following process will be followed:

At age 16 years:

The allocated social worker and a leaving care coach will have a discussion around what needs to be in place at the age of 18 when young people transfer over to the leaving care service. At that stage a check list will be completed to see what needs to be in place. It is important to start thinking about for example bank accounts, national insurance numbers, passport, legal status in the country, future plans for accommodation i.e. staying put or council accommodation, education training and employment, physical and emotional well-being. As previously mention not a lot of people will be ready to discuss and or think about these but foster carers, service providers can contribute to these.

At 17 years of age:

When the young person turns 17 years of age the children in care team manager will informed the leaving care team manager of these young people. The leaving care service will then identify a leaving care coach who will be allocated to the young person on their 18th birthday. Leaving care coach will support the social worker to make sure all the necessary plans are in place for the young person to transfer to leaving care service when the young person turns 18 years of age.

At 17 years and 6 months:

The young person is presented to transitions panel (**find attached guidance remit of panel**). The panel consist of colleagues from LBWF Council Housing, Department of Work and Pension, SEND, children in care team managers, leaving care team managers and heads of service from Corporate Parenting. The purpose of this panel is to ensure that robust plans are in place to support transitions of the young person into leaving care service and that the necessary preparations are in place to transfer the young person from children in care team to the leaving care team. Additional to this our colleagues from housing and DWP will be informed of the specific young person who will be applying for benefits and accommodation on their 18th birthday. In this way they can put a marker on their name to ensure there is an allocated coach who will be supporting them.

The leaving care coach will be attending the young person last Looked After Review where the plan will be reviewed by the IRO for the last time before the transfer takes place. During this period, as part of the transfer process the team manager form the children in care teams will complete the **check list** (Attached) for transfer and send this over to the leaving care team manager who will once reviewed accept the young person's case. Issues that are referred to in this are:

- SW to ensure ID and supporting documentation (Passport, Driving Licence, photo ID, ARC card) is obtained YP prior to transfer
- SW to ensure YPs savings are collected and ready to handover at 18 years old – this will include savings from all previous placements.
- LCC to be invited to final LAC Review.
- Handover meeting to be arranged by SW and LCC.
- Housing Report to be completed if plan is for own tenancy.
- SW to ensure case is updated and ready at handover – chronology, case summary, visits and pathway plan.
- Please ensure Summary page is updated with key information (Solicitor details, significant contact details, etc.)

It is important to be aware that whilst the transitions process has been designed in accordance to the young person's ages, the transfer and developing of the plans will be in

accordance to the needs of the young person and as such plans needs to take into account young people's abilities skills and emotional wellbeing as part of this process.