

5.5 Children & Young People Care Placements

Improvement Project Title: Supporting care experienced children and young people to sustain care placements which meet their needs and sense of identity
Executive Sponsor (Chair of Outcome Improvement Group): Rob Polkinghorne
Project Lead: Isabel McDonnell, Children's Services Manager, ACC/Andrea McGill, Service Manager ACC
Aim statement (What are we trying to accomplish? Over what time? Numerical target for improvement?) Increase by 10% the number of children and young people remaining in a placement between 16-18 years old by 2021; and Reduce the number children who experience more than 1 placement over a year by 2022
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan: Stretch aim 5; 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026
Why is this important What we know is that children and young people looked after at home are associated with poorer outcomes both within their educational attainment and with a higher likelihood of involvement with criminal justice systems. Focussing our improvement efforts on this cohort of children will support at home placements to be more sustainable, meeting the young person's needs and maintain their sense of identity. Improved planning for this cohort of children and young people should improve outcomes which have remained poor and relatively unchanged over time. What we know is that the early discharge of Compulsory Supervision Orders at home contributes to poor outcomes and as a partnership we need to improve the planning for this cohort of young people so that placements remain secured by legal measures. There is a range of research evidence which has sought to improve national practice in respect of this cohort of young people. The main findings of the study Overseen but Often Overlooked (CELCIS, 2015) were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The needs and circumstances of children looked after at home are complex, with their needs being as severe as many other looked after children.• Support services provided are often limited, inconsistent, and patchy. While service providers recognise the needs of these children, they can't always

respond because sometimes they feel their duties to other looked after children must take precedence.

- Outcomes for this group are some of the poorest in society, in particular poor education outcomes and involvement in the criminal justice system.
- Pathway plan will provide a focus for review that all providers around the young person will feed into

This is also reflected in the Joint Inspection of Children's Services in Aberdeen City (Sept 2019) which identified the following for children looked after at home;

- Wellbeing improvements not seen;
- High rates of exclusion;
- Limited use of children's rights service;
- Poor education outcomes; and
- Need for better data.

Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland. Regulations and Guidance on Services for Young People Ceasing to be Looked After by Local Authorities, 2004

CHAPTER 6: ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND PATHWAY PLANNING.

6.6 Local authorities must develop a robust and transparent framework which both addresses the needs of the young person while they remain looked after and plans to meet their need for support once they leave care. The local authority should consider and agree with young people how their support is to be delivered. The young person's views will play a vital role in assessing and planning for their future (see Chapter 3). The needs assessment (known as the pathway assessment) along with the views of the young person (pathway views) will then be the basis for preparing the pathway plan.

Local evidence indicates that practice surrounding care and pathway planning is underdeveloped with our local data indicating that of the 16 young people aged 16-17 years old who were looked after at home, only 3 had evidence of having a pathway plan in place. The current use of the Child's Plan does not give parity to the complex needs of this cohort of young people and risk assessment proportionate to their planning.

Measures: (How will we know if a change is an improvement?)

- **Outcome measures**

No. of young people aged 16-18 who remain in a single care placement
% of looked after population who are looked after at home
% of looked after at home remaining on a CSO aged 16-18 years

- **Process measures**

No. of young people with a pathway plan
% of identified workforce completed START AV training
% of pathway plans reviewed which meet the needs of the child
Review of the CSO at home

- **Balancing measures**

No. of placement moves experienced by YP aged 16-18 years

No. of CSO's discharged for children/YP who are looked after at home prior to 16th birthday

No. of young people looked after at home with a Child's Plan in place

Change ideas (What changes can be made that will result in improvement?)

To directly impact and improve the experience for the specific cohort of young people aged 16-18 years, looked after at home it is believed the following changes will lead to an improvement:

- Resource pack for Social Workers to use specific assessment tools to inform Pathway Planning.
- Introduction of new framework for reviewing the placement and planning for all 16-17 year olds who continue to be looked after at home to ensure parity of opportunity which their peers looked after in other settings already have built into their placement
- Introduce mandatory training for Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version (START-AV) across Children's Social Work to create compliance with youth justice national standards and to support improved decision making around Compulsory Supervision Orders securing placements at home

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these

- Continued 'fire-fighting' in children's social work that prevents staff from attending training or learning and adopting new assessment frameworks
- Reports produced by social work services do not provide the quality of assessment required to assist CSO disposal decision making by SCRA
- Approval of funding streams for START AV

Project Team:

Andrea McGill, Service Manager, Integrated Children and Families Service (this will be changed as the project will be taken forward and lead by a manager within children and families)

Kelly Hickman, Improvement Adviser

Lynne Richardson, Consultant Social Worker, Children & Families

Roma Bruce-Davies, SCRA

Children's Hearing Panel Member (to be identified)

Third Sector partner (commissioned service)

Kay Diack, Housing Access and Support Manager

Post 16 support (Skills Development Scotland/Opportunities for All) Rep

Hazel Flett, Senior Social Worker (Criminal Justice)

Linda Gray, Looked After Children's Nurse, NHS

Sarah Burnett Independent Review Officer

Outline Project Plan

Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
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