

Progress Report	Project End Report 5.3: Increase the number of care experienced young people by 10% receiving multiagency throughcare/aftercare support by 2023.
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Governance Group	CPA Management Group – 26 January 2025

Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project 5.3 ‘Throughcare/Aftercare Support’ and seeks approval to close this project on multiagency support provided to Care Leavers as the aim has been achieved with a 68% increase in the number of CEYP receiving support.

Summary of Key Information

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The poorer outcomes of those with care experience are well documented. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) documented in a pre-inspection report 2019 that current multi-agency services and supports in place for care leavers were not at the level to match known needs, and as such, there was need for improvement.
- 1.2 Subsequently, there have been several events and policies to consider in our planning for Care Experienced Young People: Covid 19, The Promise, Trauma Informed Practice, Scotland UNCRC and Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together.
- 1.3 The 2020/2021 Review of Care Leaving Services within Aberdeen City Council highlighted the need to strengthen engagement and participation with young people and across the partnership. The project was also aligned with the Corporate Parenting Plan Children’s Services Plan 2020-23. The limited data available between August 2020-July 2021 suggested that only 43% CEYP were eligible. It was felt that this figure did not accurately reflect the proportion of eligible CEYP and the need to ensure accurate recording over the course of the project was prioritised.
- 1.4 The information and data shared within this report is drawn from the social work system. However, this does not diminish the role they have in improving the outcomes for care experienced young people. Those open for support, by nature and where relevant, have support from multiagency partners (e.g. health, education, police, 3rd sector, housing) and this would be documented in the young person’s pathway plan.

2. IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

- 2.1 Against this background, the CPA Board approved the project charter for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to increase by 10% the number of eligible care leavers receiving multi agency through care/aftercare support by 2024.

3. WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

- 3.1 The multi-agency project team agreed to focus a number of approaches with a view to:
 - Supporting improved educational outcomes.
 - Improve the experience of transitions for care leavers, with increased planning around accommodation options and the support available alongside these.

3.2 The following changes were tested:

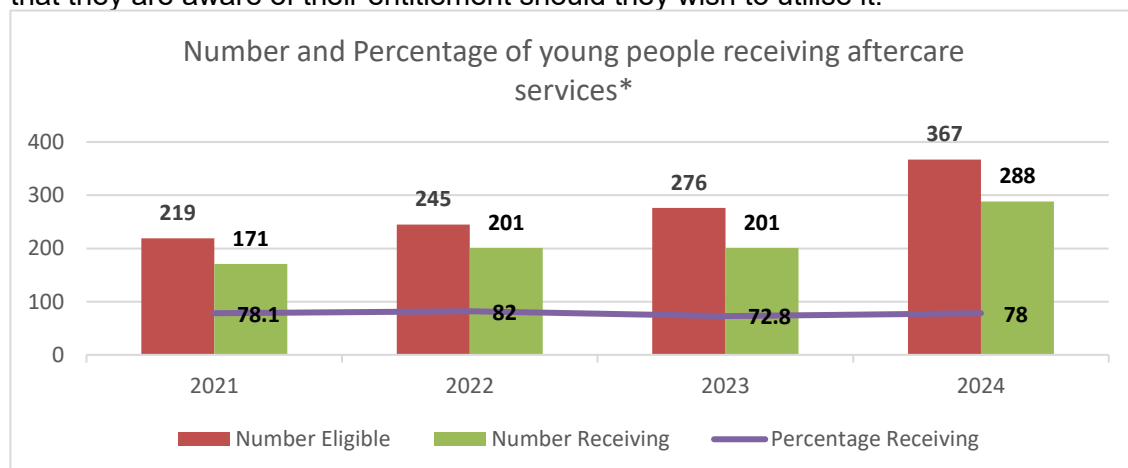
- A. Improving transitions into higher/further education, employment, and training.
- B. Review/refresh the multiagency welfare assessment process.
- C. Developed and launched awareness raising material for CEYP on their rights/access to services.
- D. Developed material/run information session/training for professionals on CEYP rights to increase professional's awareness.
- E. Reduced the number CEYP being closed between the ages of 16-19 years.
- F. Increased Pathway Planning, with housing colleagues being present where appropriate.

4. **HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?**

4.1 Yes, the aim has been achieved. There has been a 68% increase in the number of eligible young people receiving aftercare (from 171 in 2021 to 288 in 2024). 78% of young people identified as being eligible are receiving support in 2024, the same as in 2021 despite there being far more young people identified, and an increase of 5.2% from 2023.

4.2 There has been a 68% increase in the number of children and young people eligible for through/aftercare since 2021, with 367 young people eligible for throughcare and aftercare services (which does not include those in continuing care placements) in 2024, compared to only 219 in 2021. The increase is partially attributable to the work being undertaken with the group of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (67% of this increase) as per Home Office direction.

4.3 Of the 367 eligible young people in 2024, 288 actively received services (78.5%). Of the 79 not currently receiving a service, 64 young people have expressed they believe their needs have been met and do not currently want a service but are aware they can return when needed. The Service continues to engage with the remaining 15 young people to ensure that they are aware of their entitlement should they wish to utilise it.



*Please note that included in the number eligible are a number of young people who are eligible for a service but might not yet be receiving a service (e.g. those in continuing care placement are eligible for a service but are not classified as aftercare until their continuing care placement ends). There are also young people who are currently closed to services, in the recognition they might not require support at this time, however they are aware they can return for support if required. In addition, these numbers can be affected by changes in the baseline number of young people eligible month to month, with some young people having reached 26 years and no longer counted in the data group. There would also be a number of young people who have refused a service and so whilst they remain eligible, they are not in receipt.

4.4 The positive impact of receiving continued support has helped realise a 10% reduction in the gap between the % of care experienced young people (81.3%) and all young people (90.1%) achieving a positive and sustained destination in 2022/23 (L0IP baseline data 74% CEYP.)

4.5 The impact of the changes is further evidenced in the findings of the Bright Spots survey. 156 young people responded to the survey from a care leaver population of 227: a response rate of 69%. Findings included:

- Two-thirds (66%) of comments about Youth Team Workers or Social Workers were incredibly positive. More care leavers than children and young people (11-17yrs) in care in Aberdeen trusted their worker (79% to 69%) and found it easy to contact them (75% to 58%). Workers came second only to friends as providers of emotional support identified by care leavers.
- More than nine in ten of care leavers (92%) who answered felt that they had a person who they trusted, who helped them and stuck by them no matter what. This is significantly above the proportion for the Bright Spots comparator group (86%). 96% had a person who listened to them. 90% had a person who believed they would be a success. 88% had a person who told them when they had done well.

4.6 Further details on the changes made are outlined below.

A. Improving transitions into higher/further education, employment, and training

Activity was led by the Youth Team in conjunction with young people to revise the transition planning pathways thus ensuring full participation. These plans are in place for all young people and reviewed through the multi-agency Looked after processes which includes the partnership that exists with the virtual school. They contribute to supporting young people to consider their options in relation to employment or education and how best they might be supported to achieve this. Partners have developed a coordination role to include young people being physically supported to attend information session/induction days or making links with the Care Experience Liaison Worker at the various education settings in order to raise awareness of supports available to help CEYP enter full time further education, access to employability support/ work placements or the ACC guaranteed interview scheme.

4.7 The Care experience bursary has helped increase the number of young people enrolling in further education. Young People have indicated that they feel more supported to attend further education due to the quality of relationships that exist from those staff supporting them but also being better financially supported. Over the years, the table below from NESCOL shows there has been a general increase in CEYP attending further education.

Year	Total CEYP	Full Time Further Education CEYP	% of Total CEYP in Full Time Further Education	CE Bursary
2023/24	756	334	44%	187 (56%)
2022/23	643	375	58%	186 (50%)
2021/22	680	420	62%	211 (50%)

(eligibility for a bursary is dependent on attending a full-time course)

4.7 Whilst a reduction in access to bursaries is shown, there is a 6% increase in the % of CEYP in Full Time Further Education accessing a bursary (50% in 21/22 to 56% in 2023/24). This number only reflects full time NESCOL students, however as referenced above and below, the range of positive destinations most applicable to each individual young person is explored through their pathways planning.

4.8 ABZ Works have developed a range of initiatives to help remove barriers and provide support and opportunities to help CEYP feel confident and ready for employment. In 2024, 74 CEYP were supported, a steady increase from previous years (42 in 2022 and 63 in 2023). Opportunities include paid work experience programmes with guaranteed interviews for those who complete, aligned to sectors where we know there are skills shortages).

4.9 Aberdeen City Council introduced guaranteed interviews for Care experienced young people and the developments of apprenticeships specifically towards this group. Young people have voiced they have welcomed this opportunity. Feedback from young people who have been interviewed has been that they would appreciate receiving supportive feedback on their interviews, highlighting both the positives and areas where they could be further supported. Learning would also highlight that the application process perhaps should be clearer in advertising the guaranteed interview scheme, in that this does not mitigate the need for the relevant qualifications/requirements.

B. Review/refresh the multiagency welfare assessment process.

4.9 The welfare assessment process has been developed to ensure foster carers have an increased understanding of the significance of their role in preparing young people for the transitions into and out of continuing care. These sessions take place biannually and the response has been welcomed to build confidence in an area whereby preparation was noted to be an area for improvement.

Developed and launched awareness raising material for CEYP on their rights/access to services.

4.10 A process is now in place for contact to be made with all care leavers who are eligible for compulsory aftercare, who have been closed to services, so that they are reminded and know they can still access support and how to access this. Care leavers are signposted to the Youth Team Facebook page, the freephone number and the Children and Young People Rights Service. This process has also seen all current CEYP provided with information on the range of supports available and discussed at their pathway planning sessions. A web page is currently being developed.

C. Developed material/run information session/training for professionals on CEYP rights to increase professional's awareness.

4.11 To support transition and involvement by all relevant services/partners, regular Throughcare and Aftercare information sessions were established to raise awareness of services responsibilities and continue to be delivered on a regular basis. Across the 39 Children Social Work teams, inclusive of 340 members of staff, 198 staff have attended sessions in relation to throughcare and aftercare. Feedback would show that this has been an area that prior to attending they had a limited awareness of, but that the sessions have supported in providing them with an understanding of the rights care leavers have and the various support to which they are entitled. These sessions continue to be delivered to support new members of staff, with specific sessions being delivered to those who are Newly Qualified Social Workers.

D. Reduced the number CEYP being closed between the ages of 16-19 years.

4.12 Feedback previously sought from young people presenting for services had shown there were a number of care leavers between the ages of 16-19 years that had been closed to social work services despite this not being in line with legislative guidance (Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014). In order to address this, the improvement activity has ensured the workforce are aware of their legal responsibilities and duties towards care leavers. The data referenced in 4.2 illustrates a positive improvement in this position.

E. Increased Pathway Planning, with housing colleagues being present where appropriate.

- 4.14 Since the increased planning around accommodation for care leavers, there has been a general perception of a greater sense of ownership for young people in relation to their tenancies. The involvement of a Housing Support Officer who is located within the Youth Team has been a welcome addition in supporting care leavers navigate systems that they may find overwhelming or complicated, young people have indicated having access to housing support in a location where they feel familiar is positive. The housing support officer has been able to develop the interface with wider housing colleagues and increase knowledge in regard to CEYP. Care Experienced marker has been included on their housing application. These changes have contributed to an increase in the sustainment of tenancies resulting in a high level of positive stability.

In 2024, there were 27 homeless applications received from this group and tenancy sustainment rate was 82.9% (34 of 41 sustained). Of the 7 not sustained here are the reasons given for termination:

Not Sustained - Reason for Termination

Refused to give reason

Homeless - Cannot return home

Moving from Aberdeen

Not Now Going

Relationship breakdown.

Transfer

Total: 7

- 4.15 There has been an overall reduction in the number of care leavers being presented via a Homeless Route, with an increase of collaboration between colleagues to ensure the best accommodation option if provided to care leavers in a planned manner. However, it remains that young people can continue to independently access these services should they wish to do so in their own right without the support of professionals. Housing data collection does not lend itself to immediately record this reduction, however on looking at Care Leavers individual records it would demonstrate the decrease in care leavers accessing the homeless route.

5 HOW HAVE OUR COMMUNITIES/PROTECTED GROUPS PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT AND THE IMPACT OF THIS

- 5.1 Care Experienced Young People have shared their views on the access to services and support and this has been used to develop the information and resources detailed above as well as the services required.
- 5.2 The Bright Spots Survey [Bright Spots Programme \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com) sought the views of Children and Young Peoples experiences of care and leaving care. The findings have recently been shared at multiagency events and the reach and uptake of care experienced young people taking part was noted to be remarkably high at a 94% (including declines) completion rate from this group.
- 5.3 The activity to date suggests that Young People are positive about engaging and accessing the supports they require. They are willing to participate regardless of whether their experiences are positive or negative. Feedback from young people has suggested that they consider the collaborative approach from services is helpful for them to navigate through systems.

5.4 The services have an increased level of confidence in knowing how to reach young people who might have been out of touch. The Bright Spots survey has also helped with identifying some of these young people who have been out of touch.

5.5 Children and Young People are already supported by and have access to the Young Persons Rights Service. This service has an extensive role supporting children through to adult who have Child protection and/or care experience. The service provide advocacy, support, and promote participation. ([Aberdeen Young Person's Rights Service \(sharepoint.com\)](#)).

6 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

6.1 The system and process changes noted above have been embedded into business-as-usual activity and will enhance our growing capacity to track and support the partnerships continuing efforts to improve the outcomes for care leavers.

6.2 Improving the outcomes of care experienced young people remains a local and national priority. At the end of 2024 the Care Inspectorate published the Thematic Review - Transitions for care experienced young people ([Transitions for cyp thematic review final.pdf](#)). This review highlighted the need for a continuing and strong focus for all Corporate Parents to improve the planning for young people transitioning from care. In addition, Promise Scotland are actively supporting the development of a 'Route Map for Moving On' aimed at supporting the planning for young people leaving care. The work of this charter will actively support our collective planning to ensure a sustained focus on improvement for this group of young people. The Corporate Parenting Improvement Group will be considering the Thematic Review at forthcoming meetings with a report coming to the Children's Services Board.

6.3 The Promise Plan 24 – 30 places an emphasis on the need to continue to improve the outcomes for care leavers. Building on our Bright Spots report, an improvement plan has been developed to take forward the areas highlighted by our young people. Again, there is alignment with this improvement plan and the areas of change in this charter. This plan will be taken forward in collaboration with care experienced young people and multi-agency partners.

6.4 In December 2024 The Promise Progress Framework was [published](#). This framework has been agreed as a national reporting tool to assist Scotland to evaluate the extent to which it is #KeepingthePromise. An annual report will be published by the Scottish Government which will support benchmarking at a local level and ensure we prioritise change activity and learn from other areas. A number of key indicators in the Framework fully align to the activity of this Improvement Charter – Pathway Planning, Positive Destinations, Economically Active. This will support continued attention to sustaining the change and improvement noted.

7 HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

7.1 Reports will be used from the social work data recording system (D365) to identify and forecast care experienced young people approaching their sixteenth birthday. This also applies to continuing and after care. This earlier identification allows for support and guidance to be put in place to ensure that positive transitions take place as far as possible and shared with partners.

7.2 As a result of the Bright Spots survey, a reviewing process is currently being developed to monitor those enrolled or applying to NESCOL. This will include a representative from the college finance team, social work service, tutor (where allocated) and student support services.

7.3 A Care Experienced Young Person marker has been included on the Housing Application system. This allows Housing to collate data in relation to how many applications have included those from a Care Experience background, should this have been disclosed.

7.4 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will continue to be monitored and reported to the Children's Services Board, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

7.5 The Youth Team have a focus on transitions through care, they have a monitoring role and will continue to work with professionals involved in a young person's plan to increase the knowledge and understanding of services available to young people that promote a positive destination.

8 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

8.1 The Promise Progress Report which CSB has adopted as a data set to track improvements will be developed to promote activity.

8.2 The Bright Spots Survey identified a group of eligible care experienced young people who were not receiving services. Work will be undertaken to reach out to this group to offer them a service and to ensure that they are aware as to how to seek support should they require it.

8.3 Use reporting for local monitoring and identification of training needs. Establish a calendar of training in relation to Care experience and After care Services. Continue to promote the importance of Partners having an awareness of care experienced young people and training that is available in relation to this group of young people.

8.4 The Corporate Parenting Improvement Group will continue to have an assurance role in multi-agency corporate parenting training activity to promote workforce development.

8.5 The work placement and Guaranteed Interview Scheme could be spread and adopted by other organisations. Aberdeen City Council has already increased the number of Guaranteed Interview Scheme options for other groups, including people with disabilities and young people educated in Aberdeen City Council schools.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Management Group:

- a) Agree to recommend to the CPA Board in March 2025 that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is ended on the basis that the aim has been achieved with a 68% increase in the number of eligible young people receiving aftercare (171 to 288 in 2024), with 78% of eligible young people receiving support in 2024 and that the changes tested have now been embedded as business as usual and
- b) Note that the dataset for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the Children's Services Board and through the annual outcome report to ensure progress is monitored

Opportunities and Risks

Understanding of recording systems allow us to produce accurate data being held within the recording systems.

- Shared recording system provides an opportunity for Children, Adult and Justice social work to improve aftercare access and information where an adult is referred, or self refers after a gap in service provision.
- Both Health and Education also record care experience on individual records which contributes towards more robust planning and responsiveness. This contributes towards uptake of financial resources and opportunities.
- Different services utilise differing electronic monitoring systems/ data collection. This may result in some care leavers/ care experienced young people being overlooked should systems not be maintained accurately or if there are inconsistencies in the collaboration.
- In terms of the Housing Support Officer role, it is acknowledged that this is a wide group of young people for one worker to oversee and be part of their planning process.

CONSULTATION

6.1 Project Team
Stretch Outcome 6 Subgroup
Children's Services Board

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