

<b><u>MEETING</u></b> <b>CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES &amp; SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</b>
<b><u>DATE AND TIME</u></b> <b>MONDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2017</b> <b>AT 7.00 PM</b>
<b><u>VENUE</u></b> <b>HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, LONDON NW4 4BQ</b>

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
7.	UPDATE REPORT ON THE OFSTED IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS	3 - 80

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES &amp; SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>18 September 2017</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Title</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Update report on the Ofsted Improvement Action Plan implementation progress</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Strategic Director for Children and Young People</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p><b>Appendix 1: Draft Finance Policy for Care Leavers</b>  <b>Appendix 2: Joint Housing and CSC Protocol for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds</b>  <b>Appendix 3: Children in care visit data</b>  <b>Appendix 4: Draft Private Fostering marketing poster</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Officer Contact Details</b></p>	<p>Chris Munday                  Strategic Director for Children and Young People  <a href="mailto:Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk">Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Summary</b>
<p>Ofsted inspected the Council's services for children in need of help and protection and children looked after between 25 April and 18 May 2017, the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) was also inspected. The full Ofsted Inspection Report was published on 7 July 2017; Ofsted gave Barnet Children's Services an overall judgement of 'Inadequate' and the BSCB was also judged to be 'Inadequate'.</p> <p>A draft Action Plan setting out the inspection findings, recommendations and improvement plan was submitted and approved at CELS Committee on 18th July 2017.</p> <p>The authority is subject to intervention by the Department for Education (DfE) until services are improved. This report provides details of the Commissioner appointed by the DfE to review Barnet and its capacity to drive improvement at pace following the Ofsted inspection, for an initial period of three months. The Commissioner is required to update the Secretary of State as to the level of improvement, and make recommendations regarding delivery arrangements with the presumption that services will be removed from the Council's control.</p>

This report provides an update on the progress made and key priorities for improvement. It sets out how the draft Improvement Action Plan is driving activity to address the inspection recommendations, and provides details of the new draft Finance Policy for Care Leavers, developed in response to feedback from young people in relation to wanting to be clear on their entitlements.

### Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee note the Commissioner for Children’s Services appointment for an initial three-month period following the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework (SIF) judgement of inadequate as set out in paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6.**
- 2. That the Committee note the actions that have been taken to respond to recommendations within the Ofsted report as set out in paragraphs 1.20 to 1.31.**
- 3. That the committee note and scrutinise the performance information provided in paragraph 1.32 to 1.63 and Appendix 3.**
- 4. That the Committee agree the draft Finance Policy for Care Leavers set out in Appendix 1 and delegate to the Strategic Director for Children and Young People authorisation to agree minor amendments and approve the final version of the policy.**
- 5. That the Committee agree Barnet’s draft Joint Housing and Children’s Social Care Protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds included in Appendix 2, and delegate to the Strategic Director for Children and Young People for authorisation to agree further expansions to reflect best practice and feedback at the next CELS committee.**
- 6. That the Committee agree the draft Private Fostering poster set out in Appendix 4.**

## 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Between 25 April and 18 May 2017 Ofsted inspected Barnet’s Children’s Services under the Single Inspection Framework (SIF). Overall, Ofsted judged the quality of services provided to children to be Inadequate.
- 1.2 The Council developed a draft Improvement Action Plan for consultation based on inspection findings and recommendations. This Action Plan for consultation was approved at CELS Committee on 18 July 2017.
- 1.3 To enhance scrutiny by elected members and improve the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting children in need and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent, it was agreed at the CELS Committee on 18 July 2017 that an update on the progress of implementing the Improvement Action Plan will be a standing item on future committee agendas.
- 1.4 On 18 August 2017, the Strategic Director for Children & Young People received notification from the DfE about the appointment of the Commissioner appointed to Barnet following the Inadequate Ofsted inspection in line with DfE policy and reported to members on 18th July.
- 1.5 The DfE appointed Frankie Sulke CBE to review Barnet and its capacity to drive improvement at pace following the Ofsted inspection over the next three months. Ms Sulke will make recommendations to the Secretary of State about whether Children’s

Services should remain within the control of the Council. The presumption from the DfE is that services should be externalised when there is systemic failure. Ms Sulke has extensive experience in children and young people's services, having been Executive Director for Children and Young People in Lewisham for 14 years, and more recently, working with the London Borough of Bromley as the Commissioner following the Inadequate Ofsted Inspection in 2016.

- 1.6 Ofsted has confirmed the first monitoring visit will take place on 14 and 15 November 2017. The first monitoring report will not be published in line with OFSTED guidance.
- 1.7 Transforming services for children from inadequate to good or better is a major task and requires the commitment of the whole Council and partnership. The pace of change must be swift and we need to ensure that there is a relentless focus on improvement activity.

### **Recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection**

- 1.8 There were 19 recommendations for improvement made by OFSTED. At the centre of all 19 recommendations is the need to ensure that children's needs are well understood and responded to effectively so that their outcomes are improved. Two core themes arise from the recommendations which are, the need to:
  - improve practice leadership and management, and
  - improve core social work skills
- 1.9 Other areas to improve relate to recommendations for specific groups of children and are outlined below:
  - Improving our response to homeless young people to ensure they are provided with the support that they need
  - Raising awareness of Private Fostering and improving the assessment processes for this group of children
  - Expanding and improving our life-story work to ensure all children in permanent placements have an understanding of their past.
  - Establishing more workshops for Care Leavers on areas like money management helping them to prepare for independence.
  - Improving our approach to connected carers
- 1.10 A draft Improvement Action Plan was developed in response to the recommendations and areas for improvement highlighted by Ofsted, which was approved for consultation by the CELS Committee in July 2017.
- 1.11 The Council had been working to improve the quality of services provided to children over the past year in a collegiate partnership with Essex County Council. This work has focused on achieving 'conditions for success' by securing investment to reduce caseloads, improve systems and tools for staff and to strengthen practice-focused leadership across children's services.

- 1.12 In the light of the OFSTED judgement there is a clear imperative to re-focus our activity on ensuring high quality social work practice.
- 1.13 There are, therefore, three core strategic objectives that cut across our Plans for Children, Young People and Families including the draft Improvement Action Plan. The objectives underpin the systemic and cultural change needed to drive improvement at pace within the borough and align with our corporate commitment to develop services to achieve Barnet's Family Friendly vision and implement a resilience-based practice model:
- Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work assessments and interventions with families
  - Providing Practice Leadership and management throughout the system to ensure progress is made for children within timescales that are appropriate and proportionate to their needs and that practitioners are well supported, child focused, curious and inquisitive about what they are seeing and assessing
  - Ensuring our involvement with the most vulnerable children in the borough positively impacts on their outcomes
- 1.14 In order to maintain focus on where pace and resource are applied, five key themes have been identified initially and are in the process of being communicated to managers, staff and key partners so our efforts are coherent and focused in this period; the three priorities are:
- Leadership, Governance and Partnership (including strengthening the Local Children's Safeguarding Board
  - Practice Leadership and Management
  - Core Practice Skills:
    - Thresholds
    - Risk Assessments
    - Planning
- 1.15 To achieve improvement in these areas, resource is being directed to scrutinise, challenge and support practice to ensure that:
- Improving outcomes for children is at the heart of what we do across the partnership and Council
  - children receive timely interventions at the right level for their needs across the system,
  - risk is identified and responded to swiftly, and
  - children's plans are outcome focused and robustly monitored, to ensure that when change is not being achieved, action is taken to improve their circumstances.
- 1.16 Feedback from staff and partners will be incorporated into the draft Action Plan ahead of the final submission to Ofsted in October 2017.
- 1.17 An important step in achieving the change we want to see for children has been ensuring that the senior leadership and management team have a clear

understanding of what 'good' looks like and ensuring that they have the capacity to drive change in the system and improvements in practice through a combination of high support and high challenge. The Council needs to turnaround the services rapidly and will work with Essex County Council to drive the change.

- 1.18 At the heart of our improvement approach is the strengthened Quality Assurance and Workforce Development activities which have been aligned to ensure that there is sufficient oversight and scrutiny of practice quality, but to also ensure that when gaps in skills and knowledge are identified the workforce development offer is rapid and responsive; to give practitioners the support they need to improve the quality of their work with children and families.
- 1.19 Practice Development roles have been created to get alongside practitioners and managers by sitting with them, joining in assessments, planning meetings, home visits and direct work activities so that there is practical 'hands on' support available where it is needed most. Skills are therefore developed through modelling and practice is enhanced through reflective supervision and robust case management directions.
- 1.20 **Changes since the Inspection:**

#### Structural changes

There have been some immediate improvements made within the MASH following a change of Senior Management arrangements which has enabled the facilitation of coordinated activity within the service to improve information sharing opportunities, timeliness of decisions and threshold conversations through daily MASH meetings.

Similarly, in the Intervention & Planning Service where children in need of longer term social work support are managed the changes made in Senior Management roles has introduced practice leadership that is evidencing a tighter grip on care planning for children, particularly those that require legal proceedings to ensure their safety. This progress, whilst positive is not yet consistent and focused activity in this area will continue.

#### Staffing Changes

In line with the decision from General Function Committee there have been a number of changes in the senior leadership and management team since the Ofsted inspection, with the deletion of the previous Assistant Director roles, and creation of two new Operational Director roles which have both been recruited to. The Head of Service roles in Intake and Assessment and Intervention & Planning have been filled by experienced practice leaders, who have capacity to drive change in the system and workforce.

A new Practice Development, Innovation and Programmes Manager has been appointed to lead Quality Assurance and Workforce Development activity and to manage the new Practice Development Workers, Quality Assurance Manager and Quality Assurance Officer roles. This appointment has led to a stronger focus on reflective learning opportunities for staff and practitioners and the roll out of a new Appreciative Inquiry approach to quality assurance. This approach consists of

creating and sustaining organisation change which focuses on what is working well and builds on this, instead of focusing on problems and issues.

A Life Story Worker has been recruited to work alongside social workers in Children In Care and Onwards and Upwards, to complete later life letters and support social workers to write in a sensitive, in a child focused way. Improved practice in this area is essential, and is an Ofsted recommendation, as Social Workers use later life letters to complete life story work with individual children, to help them understand their histories.

There is also a newly strengthened BSCB (Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board) Business Unit which includes a Transformation Manager, Project Coordinator and Administrator. Recruitment of a Data Analyst and Learning and Development Officer is underway.

### Recruitment Campaign

On 14 September, Barnet will launch a new recruitment campaign to attract experienced practitioners and managers into the borough for a number of new and existing vacancies in key roles across the service. To ensure that there are no gaps in key delivery areas, interim appointments are actively being sought. A total of 19 additional Practice Development posts have been created across Family Services.

Workforce stability remains good; Family Services are continuing to convert more agency social workers to permanent staff, with 10.83% being agency as at 2 August 2017. In addition to this, a turnover rate of 8.13% has been achieved for the 2017/18 financial year to date. This improvement provides the consistency needed to drive systemic and cultural change and embed improved social work practice within Family Services.

### Embedding Workforce Development

A programme of training to equip the workforce with evidence based practice tools such as Signs of Safety and Motivational Interviewing are being delivered and embedded across the service. There is a detailed programme of learning sourced through internal and external providers and this is supported through Barnet's partnership with Research in Practice, Middlesex University and the recently launched Practice Academy.

### Resource Allocation

In June 2017, the Policy and Resources committee approved an additional £5.7million for Family services, some of which is being invested to improve practice, as indicated below:

Demand	2017/18
	£'000
<b>Demographics</b>	
• Placements	733
<b>Health Visitors</b>	
• Links to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Signs of Safety (SoS) and Child Protection (CP).	270
<b>UASCs</b>	260
<b>Special Guardianship Orders</b>	173

<b>Children and Social Work Bill</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional staffing in the leaving care service</li> </ul>	125
<b>Disability</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff and placement costs from adults social care</li> </ul>	1,556
<b>Improvement</b>	
<b>Increase in gang activity and serious youth crime</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioning of Growing Against Violence and Art against Knives to do prevention work in schools. This will be going out for Single Tender in September 2017.</li> </ul>	117
<b>Youth homelessness</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spot purchase arrangements for Outreach Support Packages for young people living in supported accommodation in the community.</li> </ul>	100
<b>REACH service</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing costs for the service.</li> </ul>	510
<b>Children in Care staffing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment in progress of 3 Team Managers – a start date has been agreed for 7 October 2017.</li> <li>1 Life Story worker has been recruited and recruitment for 2 more is in progress.</li> </ul>	190
<b>Practice Improvement and Quality staffing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Practice Development, Innovations and Programme Manager has been recruited.</li> <li>The recruitment of 4 Practice Development Workers has been completed – 1 is now in post, and the remaining 3 have start dates confirmed for October 2017.</li> <li>Recruitment has commences for 4 interim Quality Assurance Officers.</li> <li>1 Interim Quality Assurance Manager is now in post.</li> </ul>	354
<b>Business Support in Performance Hubs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Practitioner Support Assistants are being recruited to support Team Managers in practice.</li> </ul>	183
<b>Others</b>	
<b>Pay inflation</b>	195
<b>Contract inflation</b>	400
<b>Benefits package</b>	200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,705</b>

#### Policy and Strategy development

The MASH Protocol has been refreshed with the multi-agency partnership to provide a clear framework for operational delivery.

The Quality Assurance & Workforce Development Strategy is currently being refreshed to ensure that Barnet Family Services evolve into a learning organisation that uses a broad range of opportunities to engage the workforce in reflective and purposeful learning opportunities and to create an environment where challenge is both expected and welcomed.

### Responding to vulnerable children and young people

A new lead for young people who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing children has been appointed and is having a positive impact on the development of robust tracking systems for children and young people with high levels of vulnerability or risk. This is beginning to lead to improvements in the timeliness and effectiveness of planning to ensure that risk is understood, effectively responded to and escalated when risk does not reduce, or increases.

### Private Fostering Campaign

Within the Children In Care service, there is a dedicated social worker for Private Fostering who, with Barnet's Communications Team, will be leading on a private Fostering awareness raising campaign in Barnet with refreshed leaflets and posters.

### Improving support for care leavers

In July 2017, a Project Lead was confirmed for a Life Skills Project being delivered by The Family Resource Centre, to work closely with Barnet's 16+ cohort and support Pathway Planning and independent living preparation. A targeted independent living skills programme is being developed by the Project Lead, which will be delivered to young people identified as in need of support in areas such as money management and budgeting, understanding risks and cooking.

An advanced practitioner has been identified within the Care Leavers' service and will lead on a review of Barnet's Pathway Plans to improve their quality and ensure the pathway planning process is conducive to the achievement of plan ownership by care leavers.

## **Finance Policy for Care leavers**

- 1.21 Care Leavers need to be fully aware of their entitlements, having greater ownership of their Pathway Plans and possessing tools, such as money management, to cope with life's challenges. The proposed Finance Policy (included in Appendix 1) for Care Leavers has been refreshed to ensure it is up to date, responsive to and able to meet the needs of Care Leavers.
- 1.22 The current financial policy Advice, Support, including Financial Support and allowances, for Care Leavers 2015-2016 provides guidance for leaving care practitioners regarding financial support and allowances available to Barnet's Care Leavers. The policy sets out the type and amount of allowances that young people leaving care are entitled to. The figures outlined within the policy refer to the 2015/16 financial year.
- 1.23 The revision of this policy is one of a number of changes being made to improve the care leaving experience of Barnet young people, in line with Barnet's Care Leavers' Action Plan 2017-2020 and Corporate Parenting Pledge 2017, as well as to deliver progress in line with the draft Improvement Action Plan.
- 1.24 The updated policy provides clarity regarding the allowances payable to Care Leavers that enables allocated workers and Finance Teams to effectively implement the policy, and Care Leavers to understand their financial rights and entitlements.

- 1.25 A series of stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken to develop the new draft financial policy, to understand gaps in financial processes and support, and ensure that the policy effectively addresses inconsistencies in understanding and practice regarding financial support for Care Leavers. Changes to the policy were made on the basis of feedback received throughout the development process, from stakeholders including Onwards and Upwards, the Virtual School, Finance and Children in Care teams.
- 1.26 Some of the key changes to the policy include:
- Clarification on the financial support to be provided to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children with Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE)
  - Updated benefit rates for the 2017/18 financial year
  - Clarification regarding of the financial support provided to Care Leavers in Higher Education
  - Extension of the period for which financial support will be provided to Care Leavers awaiting benefits or salary payments
  - Introduction of the provision of financial support for rent and deposit advances and moving costs for Care Leavers moving home
- 1.27 Once the draft version of the policy has been approved, The Onwards and Upwards service will work with Barnet's Communications Team to develop a young person friendly version of the policy, to ensure information regarding financial rights and entitlements is available and accessible for Care Leavers, and aids increased ownership of Pathway Plans.

### **Joint Housing and Children's Social Care Protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds**

- 1.28 Homeless 16 and 17 year olds will benefit from a refreshed joint protocol which sets out Barnet's commitment, and responsibility, to ensuring that young people receive a good or better service when they ask for help.
- 1.29 In February 2017, a Task and Finish group was established to develop a new protocol for 16 and 17 year olds that present as homeless, as a review of the quality of service to this vulnerable group had been found to insufficiently safeguard or meet their individual needs. The Ofsted inspection report noted that this was an area that the local authority had already identified as in need of development and which was being re-modelled and made a recommendation to ensure that homeless 16 to 17 year olds are thoroughly assessed and that appropriate ongoing support is offered to them to meet their needs.
- 1.30 The new draft protocol sets out Barnet's commitment and responsibility, to ensuring that young people receive a good or better service when they ask for help. The protocol addresses the need for Barnet to ensure homeless 16- to 17-year-olds are thoroughly assessed and that appropriate ongoing support is offered to them to meet their needs by securing good quality, supported accommodation, and a focused plan for homeless young people to help them manage independence and access training, education and employment.

Some key changes introduced within the new draft protocol include:

- The provision of early help services for young people that are not assessed as homeless and remain at home;
- Ensuring young people who are homeless have access to good quality and supported accommodation or comprehensive outreach support whilst their needs are being assessed;
- Using the Placements Team to source emergency accommodation via an approved provider list both in and out of Borough;
- Recognising that young people are 'Children in Need' when they are in need of accommodation and therefore must be provided with s17 support and a CiN Plan that outlines the support they will receive;
- Ensuring that young people are assisted to make decisions about the services they can receive via use of advocates who can help them to understand their rights and entitlements for services.

1.31 The draft protocol, which can be found in Appendix 2, will be rolled out across Family Services once approved, and will result in positive changes within the service when homeless 16-17 year olds present.

### **Our performance in July 2017**

1.32 In this first report since the inspection we are including both quantitative and qualitative indicators for Members to consider. The improvement plan will establish a range of indicators that will be reported regularly for scrutiny

1.33 The quantitative data reported is based on activity in July 2017. Reporting is solely of underperforming quantitative indicators that are subject to additional focus

### **Quantitative**

1.34 In relation to Children in Need and Children in Need of Protection the levels of repeat referrals is at 18.8%. This figure is too high and may indicate that thresholds may be inconsistently applied or that interventions may not be sufficiently effective at dealing with the presenting problem.

1.35 75.1% of assessments were completed within 45 working days. This may mean that children's needs are not being addressed in a timely fashion.

1.36 Visits to children in need and children in need of protection are not consistently in time with 45% of Children in Need visits and 22.5% of child protection visits late.

1.37 68.2% of visits to Children in Care took place within timescales and similarly 69.5% for those who had left care. Some are still being recorded on some occasions 3-4 weeks after the visit has taken place.

- 1.38 The recording of Children Looked After Reviews is poor, although the review may have taken place within timescales, the recording of minutes and care plan details is lagging which affects this indicator. The system is reporting 82% on time.
- 1.39 Looked After Children Health indicators continue to show a positive direction of travel with Initial Health Assessments increasing month on month. Even though this is still below target, we expect to reach a good level of performance by November 2017.
- 1.40 In July the development checks for under fives had deteriorated to 75% and this has been followed up with the LAC health team and will be at 100% by the end of September 2017.
- 1.41 For children in care the quantitative data was presented to Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel. The full data is attached at Appendix 3.

### **Qualitative**

- 1.42 During the reporting period (April – August 2017) a total of 414 audits of children's records were completed, comprising of 108 regular audits and 306 Thematic Audits. The findings from these are detailed below.
- 1.43 There was less than usual regular or thematic audit activity during April/May 2017 due to the Ofsted Inspection. As part of the inspection 20 audited cases were submitted to Ofsted who subsequently downgraded 8 of them advising that the local authority gradings were overly optimistic when considered in context of the child's journey through the system and lived experience.
- 1.44 Family Services developed the Quality Assurance audit tool immediately following the inspection. The new tool brings together the key relevant criteria from Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework evaluation schedule which means it better captures the experiences of children and young people at each key stage of their journey through the system and better supports auditors in recording summative evidence, grading the quality of social work practice and recording clear corrective actions on the child's record. Essex County Council will be scrutinising the accuracy of our audits to triangulate that the cases are being accurately graded.
- 1.45 Between May and July, 31 'Live Audits' were undertaken in which direct observations of practice by auditors i.e observing social workers engaged in home visits and meetings with families. The audits are not graded and are largely focused on the child's plan or process rather than the quality of social work skill in direct work with children and families. The tool is being developed to ensure that observations and feedback are graded and focused on what is observed to ensure workforce development activities are targeted at supporting practitioner skillsets.

### **Inadequate Audits**

- 1.46 The Quality Assurance Team tracked inadequate audits for progress, between April and July 2017, 26 children received audits that were graded as 'Inadequate'. Of

these, 12 were children referred to the local authority as 'Annex H' cases during the inspection.

- 1.47 All 26 children's records have been re-audited on a monthly basis to track and monitor progression for the children towards safe, timely and outcome focussed plans; this level of scrutiny has evidenced that almost half are progressing towards positive outcomes for the children, but the rest are not progressing quickly enough.
- 1.48 To address the lack of progress being made the 4R (Rapid, Responsive, Reflective Review) process is being used as a tool to engage social workers and their managers in reflective discussion to understand why circumstances are not improving for children and further drive activity to achieve positive impact. Three 4R learning sessions have taken in August and a further 13 are planned for September..

### **Annex A Audits**

- 1.49 In June and July, 20 'Annex A' cases were randomly selected for audit by the Quality Assurance Team.
- 1.50 For **children in and out of care**, there is evidence that decisions to accommodate children are starting to show evidence of stronger understanding of thresholds and improved timeliness. There were no cases graded Inadequate in the last 10 children who came in and out of care in both June and July, with 3/10 were graded as Good in June increasing to 6/10 graded as Good in July. There is evidence that decisions are starting to be made earlier in the assessment and intervention process, particularly in respect of unborn babies and that that the Permanency Planning Panel is more effective in monitoring care planning for children at risk of care and/or in need of care proceedings.
- 1.51 10 Open/Closed referrals were audited in July and August of which half were Graded as Good. Three were graded as Requires Improvement and 2 were graded as Inadequate, both of which led to immediate remedial action being taken.
- 1.52 There is emerging evidence that threshold's in MASH are stronger and facilitating more timely progress to assessments of need. There is increasing evidence that managers in Duty & Assessment and Intervention & Planning Teams are increasing their oversight and grip on casework to prevent drift and delay, however, strategy discussions are not being recorded in a timely manner and managers need to improve their rationale for decisions to proceed to child protection investigations with greater rigour.
- 1.53 **Children Missing from Home and Care** audits are not yet consistently demonstrating that the Missing Children Protocol is being followed and Return Home Interviews are not yet supporting robust identification or responses to risk. The Missing Children tracker and Strategic MASE is providing increased oversight of this vulnerable cohort of young people and is prompting timely management review.

- 1.54 **One MASE (multi-agency sexual exploitation) audit** was graded as Requires Improvement owing to an absence of evidence from the MASE minutes to demonstrate the development of a robust multi-agency action plan to address or reduce risk. The Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children Lead has developed a new risk assessment tool, SEAM (Sexual Abuse & Missing) which is going live on 18 September and will support practitioners to consider risk and the actions needed to protect children from harm.
- 1.55 **One MARAC (domestic violence) Audit** was undertaken and graded as Inadequate; the audit was subsequently re-graded as Requires Improvement following a discussion with the Team Manager and Social Worker to progress the child's plan.
- 1.56 **No Private Fostering Audits** have been completed in June/July as there have been no Private Fostering referrals or assessments in this period.
- 1.57 In April 95 audits of children who had recently been subject to **Child Protection Plans** were undertaken, the audit found that the decisions to remove the large majority of the children from Child Protection Plans was correct, however, the subsequent Child in Need planning was poor, with little evidence of SMART outcome focused plans or CIN Reviews taking place.
- 1.58 In July, progress for the 95 children was subjected to a further audit and found that almost half the children had been subject of a CiN Meeting, although SMART plans were not evident.
- 1.59 28 children had been safely closed to Children's Social Care with no evidence of new concerns arising through contacts to the MASH. Two children were placed in care and two others had been re-referred progressing to child protection enquiries being undertaken.
- 1.60 18 of the children (which included one sibling group of 5) were escalated to the Head of Service to review practice and to address safeguarding concerns. All have been tracked and subsequently graded as Requires Improvement
- 1.61 Team Managers are now routinely chairing Children in Need Meetings to ensure that Plans are made in accordance with children's needs and focused on achieving positive change for them within agreed timescales.
- 1.62 116 children (66 siblings groups) who were in the pre-proceedings stage of Public Law Outline (PLO) were subject to audit in June. The audits flagged a number of areas for improvement in practice including the need for earlier intervention, improved rigour and oversight of the process, improved thresholds and the need for increased challenge when progress was not being made for children. A re-audit of children in PLO is taking place in September to track progress against the required areas for improvement.

- 1.63 Overall, the Quality Assurance process has become increasingly robust which is exposing more practice that falls below the raised expectations of the service. The continued cycle of quality assurance, practice development and leadership is driving change. There is a need to improve evidence of management oversight on children's records to demonstrate the rationale for decisions made and actions taken. There is also a continued need to drive the regularity and quality of supervision provided to social workers.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note Ofsted progress updates and actions to ensure scrutiny by elected members and improve the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent.
- 2.2 Authorisation to agree the draft Financial Policy for care leavers is recommended to improve parity and financial support for Care Leavers, and aid the implementation of the Care Leavers' Action Plan 2017 – 2020, Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2017—2020 and ensure the delivery of Barnet's Pledge for Children in Care and Care Leavers.
- 2.3 Members are recommended to agree the Joint Housing and Children's Social Care Protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds to ensure Barnet's duty to assess and appropriately support homeless young people is effectively discharged and progress against Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan (2016 - 2019) and the Family Friendly vision is achieved.
- 2.4 Authorisation to agree the draft Private Fostering poster set out in Appendix 4 is recommended to raise awareness of private fostering to increase the number of private fostering notifications received by Family Services, and enable the effective protection and care of privately fostered children and young people.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 The continued monitoring of actions and impact of the draft Improvement Action Plan is integral to driving the continuation of the Family Services' improvement journey to ensure improved outcomes for children and families. The alternative option of maintaining the status quo will not make the desired improvements or improve outcomes at the pace required.
- 3.2 The completion and publication of the draft Finance Policy for Care Leavers is essential to drive outcome and service improvement for Care Leavers. The alternative option of working to the current policy will hinder social care in delivering an improvement in young people's lives, to become resilient and successful adults.
- 3.3 The implementation of the Joint Housing and Children's Social Care Protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds is necessary to ensure Barnet's duty under Section 17 of the Children Act is discharged. The alternative option of not consistently assessing

and providing alternative support to all young people in need will not support these young people becoming resilient and successful adults.

- 3.4 The completion and publication of the draft Private Fostering posters and leaflets is needed to ensure public awareness of Private Fostering is promoted within Barnet to ensure that arrangements are recorded and monitored by the Local Authority. The alternative option of not promoting public awareness will result in the welfare of children and young people not being known or checked by the Local Authority, thus potentially leaving children at risk.

#### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 The delivery of the draft Improvement Action Plan will continue to be overseen by the Family Service's Social Work Improvement Board, chaired by Independent Chair Dave Hill, with regular updates to the Strategic Commissioning Board, CELS and Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.
- 4.2 The draft Care Leaver's Finance Policy, following approval, will be implemented within Family Services. A young people friendly version of the Finance Policy will be designed and published for Care Leavers by the end of October 2017.
- 4.3 The delivery of the draft Care Leaver's Finance Policy will to be overseen by the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting and Onwards and Upwards Team Manager. Communication promoting the policy will be cascaded via the Family Services newsletter and Heads of Service and Team Managers will share information about the updated policy with their teams. The policy will be updated annually, ahead of the upcoming financial year, with input from key stakeholders such as Finance, Strategy and Insight, Children in Care and Education teams.
- 4.4 The Joint Housing protocol will be overseen by the Operational Director for Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection. Communication regarding the approved protocol will be disseminated to key services and agencies by the Operational Director, Heads of Service and Team Managers in Family Services, Housing Service Manager at Barnet Homes and other key stakeholders within the borough, such as commissioned services.
- 4.5 To ensure that young people are able to access information regarding their rights and entitlements when presenting as homeless, the Voice of The Child Team delivered a series of co-production sessions with service users residing at the commissioned service within the Borough, Centrepoint. The purpose of these sessions was to establish what information young people would have like included in leaflets, to inform and support them when they presented as homeless.
- 4.6 A draft leaflet has been created and will be signed off by the Operational Director for Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection in September 2017. The leaflets will be sent to services within the borough where young people may present when in need, such as Barnet House and Woodhouse Road, once the draft protocol has been agreed.

- 4.7 A Private Fostering awareness raising campaign, with refreshed leaflets and posters, will be launched in September 2017. The campaign will be led by the Children in Care Service and will focus on promotion within Family Services and Community settings.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1 The implementation of the draft Care Leaver's Finance Policy and Joint Housing Protocol and finalising of Private Fostering marketing materials are key mechanisms through which Family Services will deliver the Family Friendly Barnet vision.
- 5.2 Both support the following Council corporate priorities as expressed through the Corporate Plan for 2015-20, which sets out the vision and strategy for the next five years based on the core principles of fairness, responsibility and opportunity, to make sure Barnet is a place;
- Of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
  - Where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- 5.3 Family Services are working with partners to make Barnet the most family friendly borough to ensure a great start in life for every child and prepare young people well for adulthood. Building resilience through purposeful social work practice, enabled by appropriate tools and a high quality workforce so that families are able to help themselves and prevent problems from escalating.

### **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 5.4 In order to meet the housing needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds, £100,000 was secured through Policy and Resources Committee in June 2017, to pay for supported accommodation and packages for this cohort of young people living in the community. This investment has been added to the base budget in Family Services, and will be reviewed annually as part of the Joint Housing Protocol's refresh.
- 5.5 Policy and Resource Committee agreed to invest an additional £5.7m in Family Services, which has been allocated to ensure improvements are made which result in better outcomes for children, young people and families. Further information can be found in paragraph 1.20.
- 5.6 There was no additional resource provided though Policy and Resource Committee for the new Fostering campaign, however, an increase in in-house foster carers should lead to savings in the Family Services Placements budget, where there is currently a forecasted pressure and the need to meet a £1.9million savings target by 2020. Any additional investment required to deliver the Fostering Campaign will be

taken from the Transformation Budget for Family Services. This will be overseen by the Operational Director for Corporate Parenting, Transitions and Safeguarding.

- 5.7 Financial modelling of the Onwards and Upwards budget was undertaken in August 2017, and provided clarity which will enable consistency of cost centre control and parity in Care Leaver allowances to be delivered.
- 5.8 The service is forecasted to remain in budget, and spend will be kept under regular review against the baseline provided below:

<b>Cost description</b>	<b>Sum of 2017/18 Amount (£)</b>
Accommodation	1,384,100
Birthday Allowance	10,900
Clothing Allowance	13,300
Festival Allowance	5,500
Miscellaneous	9,700
Personal Needs	400
Setting Up Home Allowance	29,900
Start up	200
Subsistence	129,200
Support / outreach	25,000
Travel	13,600
University Bursary	6,200
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£1,628,000</b>

## **Social Value**

- 5.9 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

## **Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.10 Local Authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, provided that this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with

the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings. Schedule 8 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on Local Authorities to promote public awareness in their area of Private Fostering notification requirements.

- 5.11 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 outlines specific duties of Local Authorities to ensure provision about children and young people who are being, or have been, looked after by a local authority; to replace section 24 of the Children Act 1989. Local Authorities have a general duty to support Care Leavers until the age of 21, or 24 in some instances, by pathway planning, assessing and meeting needs, providing financial support and a Personal Advisor, ensuring accommodation (including for Higher Education) and maintaining contact and support. The support provided should be identified and provided in conjunction with the young person, and recorded in a Pathway Plan. The Act outlines that as most 16 and 17 year olds cannot claim benefits, the Local Authority has a duty to provide financial support to these young people.
- 5.12 Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides the statutory framework for Ofsted inspections. Section 136 and 137 provide the power for Ofsted to inspect on behalf of the Secretary of State and requires the Chief Inspector to produce a report following such an inspection. Following receipt of the report, the local authority must prepare a written statement of (1) action which they propose to take in light of the report and (2) the period within which they propose to take that action.
- 5.13 Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, in the council's constitution states that the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for powers, duties and functions relating to Children's Services. In addition to this, the committee has responsibility for overseeing the support for young people in care and enhancing the council's corporate parenting role.

## **Risk Management**

- 5.14 The work of Family Services to support Care Leavers entails the management of high levels of risk. Inadequate financial support or poor pathway planning for a young person could lead to a safeguarding incident or their needs not being met, resulting in significant harm. Good quality leaving care services reduce the likelihood of young people being unprepared for independence and unable to cope with life's challenges; instead they improve lives and transitions to adulthood. The implementation of the draft Financial Policy for Care Leavers based on Barnet's Care Leaver and Corporate Parent Strategies and Ofsted's inspection findings and recommendations reduce this risk, and accelerate progress towards a good quality leaving care service.
- 5.15 The nature of services provided to children and families by Family Services includes the management of significant levels of risk. A lack of awareness regarding fostering arrangements or poor decision-making around a child that is in need could lead to a significant children's safeguarding incident resulting in significant harm. Good quality early intervention and social care services, including public awareness promotion of

Private Fostering requirements, reduce the likelihood of children suffering harm and increase the likelihood of children developing into successful adults and achieving and succeeding. The implementation of the Joint Housing Protocol and launch of the Private Fostering marketing campaign based on internal investigations and Ofsted inspection findings and recommendations reduce this risk and drive forward improvements towards good quality services.

## **Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.16 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
  - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
  - foster good relations between people from different groups
- 5.17 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services
- 5.18 Equalities and diversity considerations are a key element of social work practice. It is imperative that help and protection services for children and young are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender, identity, language, race and sexual orientation. Barnet has a diverse population of children and young people. 25% of the borough's population is aged under 19 years old. Of all children and young people in this age group, 14% are aged 16 – 17 years old. Despite the small population, 36% of our children in care are 16 -17 years old, the majority of whom have come into care due to family breakdown.
- 5.19 The average age at which children come into care in Barnet has increased over the past few years, to average age being 16 years old over the past year. There has been an increase in the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and Former UASC in Barnet's care, currently making up 35% of Care Leavers. With this change in demographic of the Care Leaver population, there is an increased need for financial support for Care Leavers who often have higher levels of need due to coming into care during their teenage years, and for some, having no recourse to public funds.
- 5.20 The current Financial Policy for Care Leavers causes disparity in the provision of support to young people, especially 16 and 17 years olds in semi-independent accommodation; the revised policy serves to deliver fairness and equality to all of Barnet's Care Leavers and ensures their individual circumstances are acknowledged and appropriately supported.
- 5.21 To ensure equality of opportunity for all Care Leavers, further assessment of allowances payable to Care Leavers will be undertaken in the coming months in response to points raised by stakeholders regarding draft policy. Feedback regarding

disparities in pocket money and savings for Care Leavers in residential and foster care compared to those in semi-independent provision was received and has been shared with the Operational Director for Corporate Parenting, Safeguarding and 0 – 25 for consideration.

- 5.22 To ensure fairness and equality for 16 and 17 year old young people that present as homeless, the draft Joint Homeless Protocol will be amended by the end of October 2017 to include specific sections on UASC, pregnant and teenage parents and children arriving out of area. To confirm that the protocol reflects best practice, further development will be overseen by the Strategic Director for children and young people who will feedback to a future CELS committee.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.23 Consultation and engagement with children and young people is central to social work practice and service improvement. Barnet has a range of mechanisms to engage and consult with children, young and their families. This includes Pathway Plan meetings, youth forums such as Barnet Youth Board and Youth Assembly; young commissioners to co-design services and Children in Care Council to improve the support children in care receive.

- 5.24 The draft Finance Policy includes information on how children and young people can share feedback, including if they wish to complain. The Policy reinforces that young people will not be penalised should they wish to complain, and provides links and contact details to services that can support a young person that wishes to do so, such as the advocacy service and complaints team. Such feedback will help monitor the impact of the Finance Policy in achieving positive outcomes for Barnet's Care Leavers. There was also engagement, consultation and communication with key stakeholders as part of the development of the draft Finance Policy, including the Finance Team, Virtual School, Children in Care Team, Fostering service and Legal Team to ensure the Policy is fit for purpose and fair for Care Leavers. The draft Finance Policy will need to be noted by all Family Services teams that support Care Leavers, to ensure entitlements and allowances are delivered in a consistent way.

- 5.25 The Joint Housing Protocol for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds was developed in partnership with Housing Options, Children's Social Care, Youth Services and Early Help Services. Young people were also met and their views noted and incorporated within the new protocol, which sets out Barnet's commitment, and responsibility, to ensure all young people receive a good or better service when they ask for our help.

### **Insight**

- 5.26 A large amount of insight was collected and used to develop the Care Leaver Finance Policy and Joint Housing Protocol for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds. This data has been used to develop the documents, and work has been undertaken to ensure Barnet's offer aligns with the [Children and Young People Plan 2016-2020](#), [Care Leavers' Strategy 2017-2020](#) and [Corporate Parenting Pledge 2017](#), as well as entitlements and allowances of other Children's Services.

5.27 Insight data will continue to be regularly collected and used in monitoring the progress and impact of the Ofsted Improvement Action Plan and shaping ongoing improvement activity.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 Family Services Improvement Action Plan

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=692&MId=8736&Ver=4>

6.2 Item 7, Ofsted Report and Action Plan, Children Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee, 18 July 2017

[http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40996/Ofsted%20Committee%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40996/Ofsted%20Committee%20Report_FINAL.pdf)

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<b>POLICY NAME</b>	Financial Policy for Care Leavers		
<b>Document Description</b>	This policy provides an overview of Barnet's commitment and position on provision of financial support to care leavers. A summary of relevant legislation, taking into account the requirements of the Children Act 1989 and 2004 are included.		
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<b>Status</b> (Live/ Draft/ Withdrawn)	Draft	<b>Version</b>	14
<b>Last Review Date</b>	March 2014	<b>Next Review Due Date</b>	January 2018
<b>Approval Chain:</b>	Chris Munday Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Date Approved</b>	

# Barnet Financial Policy For Care Leavers 2017

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## Introduction

In Barnet, we want the same things for our care leavers as any good parent would want for their child. We want our care leavers to be resilient, and by that we mean healthy, happy and feel valued. We want them to grow into well-adjusted individuals who will experience positive relationships, be responsible citizens, fulfil their goals and ambitions, and ultimately provide good parenting to their own children.

In line with our Family Friendly Barnet approach, we want care leavers to be able to bounce back from life's challenges and embrace new opportunities. Our vision is for a society where care leavers have the same life chances and ambitions as other young people.

This desire is reinforced through our [Corporate Parenting Pledge](#), which seeks to support our ambitions for Children in Care and Care Leavers as outlined within the [Children and Young People's Plan 2016 – 2020](#). The Pledge reflects our corporate values of fairness, responsibility and opportunity, furthermore, it promotes our approach to delivering a model of resilience based practice through empowering children and young people to take ownership of their pathways and identify their entitlements.

This policy is for practitioners working with Care Leavers, and covers all aspects of eligibility for financial support available from London Borough of Barnet. The policy sets out the types of allowances that care leavers are entitled to receive based on their status and circumstances, and the current amounts payable.

The local authority will provide an adequate package of financial support for all care leavers that will maintain them up to independence, and support their overall Pathway Plan by meeting their identified needs and helping them to achieve their potential.

All decisions on eligibility and levels of financial support will be based on a thorough assessment of all the young person's needs. An allocated Personal Advisor (PA) or Social Worker will ensure that young people are aware of and fully understand the assessment criteria and how decisions have been made regarding their financial support package.

Decisions on how financial support will be delivered to a young person will be taken by their allocated worker following assessment of their budgeting skills during the pathway planning process.

# 1. Support and eligibility

## 1.1. Pathway plan

Financial support can only be agreed as part of the pathway planning process. The young person's needs regarding financial support should be assessed within the development of a Pathway Plan, and areas of support, amounts to be paid and the frequency of payments, will be set out in this plan. The Pathway Plan should be devised by the young person and their allocated worker and signed by the young person.

Onwards & Upwards prepare a Pathway Plan for all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young people. The Pathway Plan replaces a care plan when a young person turns 16. The initial Pathway Plan will be completed before a young person reaches 16 years and 3 months old. If a young person is aged over 16 when first accommodated, then the Pathway Plan will be within 3 months of the date they are accommodated.

Financial support will be reviewed every 6 months during a Pathway Plan review meeting, but young people can ask their allocated worker to review their support needs earlier, for example, if their circumstances have changed or they are having difficulty managing their finances.

## 1.2. Payments

All care leavers are expected to have a bank account, and payment of all allowances and grants from Onwards & Upwards will be made directly into this bank account, unless there are concerns about the young person's ability to manage their money.

If a young person does not already have a bank account, their allocated worker will help them to open an account. In exceptional circumstances where a young person is assessed as not being able to maintain a bank account or is not able to open one, direct payments can be made via a pre-paid debit card as agreed by the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.

Allocated workers should regularly assess how the young person is managing their money and whether they need extra support in learning how to budget. If payments are to be stopped for any reason, this must be discussed with the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager, and the allocated worker should write to the young person to explain the reasons for this. Discussions around a young person's capacity to manage their finances and the provision of support to develop money management skills, will be discussed as part of the Pathway Planning process.

## 1.3. Eligibility

Eligibility for financial support packages are based on the young person's care leaving status as outlined below:

- **Eligible children** are those aged 16 or 17 who have been looked after by the Local Authority for at least 13 weeks since their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and are still looked after. In addition to the services they are eligible to receive as a looked after child, they are also entitled to an assessment to determine need for advice, assistance and support, a pathway plan and a personal advisor.
- **Relevant Children in non-residential settings (Youth Offending Institutions, Prison or Hospital)** are entitled to an assessment to determine need for advice, assistance and support, a pathway plan and a personal advisor.
- **Relevant children** are those aged 16 or 17 who are no longer looked after, but were eligible children before he or she was last looked after. The local authority will take reasonable steps to keep in touch, will carry out an assessment to determine the need for advice, assistance and support, prepare a pathway plan and appoint a personal advisor.
- **Former Relevant children** are those aged 18 or above and either has been a relevant child and would be one if he were under 18 or immediately before he ceased to be looked after at age 18, was an eligible child. Until the age of 21 (or for as long as a programme of education or training extends if this extends beyond the age of 21), the local authority will take reasonable steps to keep in touch, continue to provide a personal advisor, if the young person's welfare requires it, provide financial assistance for living expenses where he is or will be employed or seeking employment and if the young person's welfare and educational and training needs require it, provide financial assistance to enable him or her to pursue education or training. Where a young person has ceased to qualify for support under s.23C of the Children Act 1989, but has confirmed that he or she wants to pursue or is pursuing a course of education or training, the local authority must carry out an assessment, prepare a pathway plan, appoint a personal advisor and provide financial assistance to the extent the person's educational or training needs require it.
- **Qualifying children** are young people aged at least 16 but under 21 to whom a special guardianship order is in force or was in force when they reached 18 and was looked after immediately before the making of that order or after reaching the age of 16, but whilst still a child was looked after, accommodated or fostered. These young people can be assessed for support needs, including advice, befriending and assistance and financial assistance in relation to their education and training (such assistance can be provided up to 25 if in full time further or higher education).
- **Young People with no recourse to Public Funds**, aged 16 and 17 and over 18 who are looked after or were looked after by the local authority with no recourse to public funds, but have not exhausted all their appeal rights will be entitled to the same level of leaving care services as set out above.

Young people aged 18 to 21 who are excluded from Children's Services support due to being All Rights Exhausted (ARE) will be offered a Human Rights Assessment within three months of being notified that they are ARE.

The assessment will look at their individual needs to establish if support should be provided in order to prevent a breach of their human rights if they cannot return to their country of origin. If the outcome of the assessment is that the young person's rights will be breached then they will be entitled to the level of support as assessed in the Human Rights Assessment.

The financial support offered will be outlined in the young person's Pathway Plan, and discussed at each Pathway Plan review to ensure young people are aware of expectations. The young person will be further supported to engage with their agreement if they are failing to do so. Following support, the plan will be reviewed to establish if the young person has made the necessary changes to prevent subsistence and rent payments being suspended.

## **2. Our approach**

### **2.1. Benefits and income**

#### **2.1.1 Benefits**

Young people, who are eligible, will be expected to submit a claim for benefits on their 18th Birthday. The allocated worker will discuss and plan for this as part of the Pathway Planning process, and provide support with the online application process.

Young people in education are entitled to claim Income Support and Housing Benefit if the course started before the start of the academic year of their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The rate for Income Support is £57.90 as at 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017, and is paid weekly.

From February 2018, a new benefit called Universal Credit will be activated in Barnet to replace means-tested benefits and tax credits in Barnet. Eventually the following benefits and tax credits will all be replaced by universal credit:

- income support
- income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- housing benefit
- working tax credit
- child tax credit

Universal Credit is a new single monthly payment for people in work or out of work. It will be made up of a standard allowance plus other 'elements' - for example for children, childcare, housing and caring. There will also be an element for those with limited capability for work, so what is paid will depend on a young person's own circumstances.

If a young person qualifies for Universal Credit, their monthly payment will cover everyone in their family who qualifies for support. 'Family' could mean them as a single person, or for example they might also be claiming for a partner.

If a young person and/or their partner are responsible for paying rent (including any eligible service charges) for the home they live in, Universal Credit may provide help towards the cost. This is called the Universal Credit Housing Costs. Further details can be found in 2.2.

Young people that are ill or disabled can claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) which provides financial support if they are unable to work or study, and personalised help so that they can work if they are able to. How much ESA a young person is paid depends on their circumstances, such as income, the type of ESA they qualify for and where they are in the assessment process.

Further information about disability related financial support available to care leavers can be found within Barnet's Local Offer: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/children-young-people-and-families/the-local-offer-and-special-educational-needs/economic-well-being-in-the-local-offer.html>

In cases where a young person needs to sign on for a particular benefit, they are able to do so at Woodhouse Road with the dedicated Department of Work & Pensions Care-Leaver Outreach Work Coach. Continued signing on at Woodhouse Road (WHR) is conditional of the young person meeting all the requirements of the DWP.

### 2.1.2 Income changes

On occasions care leavers may change income source and experience a period of time without an income, for example:

- When awaiting to receive welfare benefit payments
- When moving from one benefit type to another E.G. from JSA to ESA if deemed unable to work
- When ceasing to claim benefits due to taking up employment

Onwards & Upwards will provide financial support equivalent to the young person's benefit entitlement for up to four weeks, once proof of a submitted benefit claim or job offer is provided. In some circumstances, this timescale can be extended at the discretion of the Onwards and Upwards Team Manager.

These payments will be reviewed on a weekly basis, whilst there is up to date evidence of a benefit claim being processed, appointment attendance and the provision of any requested information to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Onwards & Upwards will also help care leavers to explore other forms of assistance, such as food parcels, as interim support options.

### 2.1.3 Sanctions

When young people are sanctioned by the DWP, have their payments reduced or experience difficulties in budgeting, their allocated worker will support them to contact the relevant agencies to seek resumption of their benefits, access the food

bank at Woodhouse Road and apply for loans and other assistance from public bodies and voluntary agencies. They will also be supported to access budgeting support as part of the Pathway Planning process.

In exceptional circumstances, a request can be made to the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager for a discretionary payment. In such circumstances, the young person and allocated worker must demonstrate that all possible options have been exhausted, and the young person has been unable to obtain food or financial support from the options pursued. The young person will be supported to plan for such eventualities arising in future.

### **2.1.4 Crisis grants**

Care leavers can access the Barnet Crisis Fund up to twice a year. The grant helps people who:

- need extra help in an emergency
- are working but are on a low income
- have a pending Council Tax support or Housing Benefit claim

Care Leavers should be supported by their allocated worker to complete an application when is needed.

Barnet's Crisis Fund policies are available on the Child Poverty Action Group's (CPAG) [website](#).

Allocated workers should assess the young person's needs and bring forward their next Pathway Plan review meeting if it is identified that finances are a recurrent or long term issue, for which the young person is in need of additional support to prepare them for independence.

Care leavers are also able to apply and have priority status for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) if they experience housing related payment issues.

DHPs can provide extra money to young people or their landlord if they already receive Housing Benefit, and if there is a shortfall between the rent the young person has to pay and the Housing Benefit they receive.

DHPs are usually paid for a few months to help through a crisis or short-term problem, but can pay for longer periods in exceptional circumstances.<sup>1</sup> These payments are helpful for Care Leavers that experience financial difficulties. Allocated workers will support young people in applying for DHPs.

## **2.2. Accommodation**

### **2.2.1 Accommodation costs**

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<sup>1</sup> [DHP information](#)

A young person's accommodation needs must be assessed and planned for in a timely way, and should form part of the pathway planning process to ensure accommodation decisions are made for young people at the earliest opportunity. By aged 17 years and 9 months, plans should be in place for when the young person turns 18, to ensure they are adequately prepared and supported for any moves, and that any special needs are identified.

When Care Leavers reach the age of 18, they are expected to pay for their own rent and accommodation. Young people in Higher Education are expected to apply for available grants and loans and use such funding to pay for their accommodation and living.

Young people in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance can apply for Housing Benefit (Universal Credit from February 2018), to contribute to, or cover the cost of their accommodation.

Young people in receipt of Universal Credit are responsible for paying their rent and other living costs from this income as Universal Credit is paid in one monthly lump sum. Onwards & Upwards can make a request to the DWP to pay a young person's Landlord directly, and the remainder of the Universal Credit across two instalments each month to the young person directly, to aid them with budgeting and managing their tenancy. An allocated worker should discuss such arrangements with a young person as part of the pathway planning process.

Onwards & Upwards will contribute to the costs of accommodation if:

- it is agreed that the young person can remain in their residential placement, or semi-independent placement as a result of their SEN or complex needs, and this is recorded in their Pathway Plan;
- a young person is at university or a residential Further Education establishment, and they require vacation accommodation costs;<sup>2</sup>
- a young person is over the age of 21, in full time education and they are not eligible for any benefits, grant or loan to cover accommodation costs;
- If exceptional circumstances present, and funding is agreed by the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager and is recorded in the young person's Pathway Plan.

The DWP will consider payments for Housing Benefit to young people in Further Education who have their own tenancy and are on a part-time course. Care leavers should liaise with the DWP to find out if they are eligible for this support.

### **2.2.2 Rent and deposit in advance**

Young people who require a deposit and rent in advance, should submit a request to the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager for financial support, so the level of support can be established. This support is only available to young people who are not

<sup>2</sup> This could be part of a payment to a Staying Put carer, rent for their own tenancies or financial support to help find their own accommodation (up to £155/week), or for accommodation sourced by Onwards & Upwards.

intending to take up their permanent housing offer with Barnet Homes. In exceptional circumstances manager's discretion will apply to any decision on rent and deposits.

In most cases, care leavers will be supported with housing by Barnet Homes, and therefore will not be required to pay deposits and rent in advance.

### **2.2.3 Moving costs**

Onwards & Upwards will pay moving costs if they are detailed in a young person's Pathway Plan and approved by the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.

Onwards & Upwards will pay for removal costs for one move per care leaver, with the exception of university students who may need to have a number of moves in the duration of their course. The payments of removal costs in such circumstances are at the discretion of the Team Manager, and will form part of the ongoing pathway planning conversation with the allocated worker.

If a care leaver moves more than once, and this is due to exceptional circumstances such as to protect them, the cost of moving may be covered by Onwards & Upwards at the discretion of the Team Manager.

### **2.2.4 Council Tax**

Care leavers are responsible for paying their utility bills and Council Tax and should be supported by their allocated worker to access adequate support and learning opportunities around budgeting and financial management to avoid arrears.

The Onwards & Upwards Team has developed links with the Revenues Operations Team, who are responsible for Council Tax services within Barnet. For Care Leavers required to pay Council Tax; a Revenues Operations Officer is available to provide dedicated support to those in long term tenancies and residing in-borough on any Council Tax issues.

For Care Leavers experiencing difficulties in paying their Council Tax, in the first instance they should inform their allocated worker who can signpost them to relevant support to prevent the issues escalating. This should include an application for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) where necessary; further information on the DHP can be found in section 2.1.4.

For Council Tax accounts which have been referred to Debt Management Services, the Revenues Operations Team are able to contact bailiffs on a young person's behalf to make payment arrangements, and call cases back from bailiffs while they are being reviewed. It is imperative that young people contact their allocated worker or the Revenue Operations Team if they are struggling to pay their Council Tax to avoid further issues.

The Housing Benefit Team Manager is the first point of contact for all Housing Benefit applications for Care Leavers living in-borough.

### **2.2.5 Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA)**

A SUHA is available for Former Relevant Children aged 18 or over who have recourse to public funds and have moved into long term housing with their own tenancy.

A young person's SUHA is discussed as part of the pathway planning process when planning long term accommodation. The basic grant is £2000, and should be used to cover all setting up home costs.

- 4.1 For each young person's SUHA, individual needs are assessed to identify which essential items and services, up to the value of £2000, are required for to equip and furnish their independent accommodation. All payments are subject to authorisation from the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager and can be paid directly to approved companies or using the Onwards & Upwards payment card. In exceptional circumstances payments by instalments can be made to the young person directly, subject to the authorisation of the Team Manager. All such decisions make part of an ongoing discussion within the Pathway Planning process.
- 4.2 Young people who are placed into temporary accommodation for a period of time until they are allocated their long term tenancy, may need financial support to furnish the temporary accommodation. In such cases, the allocated worker will arrange for a discretionary payment to the young person from their SUHA, to enable them to furnish their temporary accommodation with key items such as a kettle, toaster, duvet etc. All such payments need to be authorised by the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.
- 4.4 Other setting up home related costs such as re-decoration, TV licence, telephone line, broadband, cutting spare keys etc. should be budgeted to be paid out of the SUHA.
- 4.5 Where there are exceptional accommodation-related needs not met by the above points, or charitable funding, an application can be made for further financial assistance from Onwards & Upwards for decision and approval from the Team Manager.

As responsible Corporate Parents, the London Borough of Barnet aims to ensure that all Care Leavers are resilient and able to bounce back from life's challenges. A key way this is achieved is by supporting young people to budget and plan for their SUHA, to ensure that it best meets the need for which it is intended.

A Care Leaver's budgeting needs are identified as part of the pathway planning process, and support will be provided by the allocated worker. The support will vary according to the young person and their needs, but could include attending a budgeting workshop at WHR or signposting them to a Careers Advisor for advice. Developing a young person's financial literacy, and how to be sensible with their grant, is of equal importance to ensure they get the most out of this and their finances in general.

Young people who are detained will still be eligible to receive their SUHA upon release, on condition of them getting their own tenancy.

## 2.3. Young people, education, employment and training

Onwards & Upwards will provide financial support to young people completing progressive levels of education. Onwards & Upwards will not generally provide financial support to young people who complete more than one course at the same level.

If a young person is required to complete more than one qualification to achieve their final qualification, then this will be considered to be a progressive course. This should be included in the Pathway Plan.

### 2.3.1 Further Education Bursaries

Care Leavers attending college are expected to access the college bursary which they are entitled to and from which many essential study expenses can be purchased such as travel, course materials and food. Young people must provide evidence of their course of study, including term dates, and evidence of attendance.

Onwards & Upwards will liaise with the college to ensure that care leavers are provided with the financial support that they are entitled to and to confirm course details. In order for this to take place; young people will need to give consent for Onwards & Upwards to contact their college. Onwards & Upwards will not provide financial support towards Further Education if course details have not been confirmed by the college.

All care leavers are entitled and will be supported to apply for the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund, which is available from their education institution. This is a fund provided by the Government to support students who need financial help to stay in education.

There are 2 types of 16 - 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups.
- discretionary bursaries that institutions award to meet individual needs. For example, for transport, meals, books and equipment.

The education institution is responsible for managing both types of bursary.

Care leavers can get up to £1,200 if studying full time for a minimum of 30 weeks. If their course is only for a few hours a week, or less than 30 weeks, they will usually receive less.

Young people aged 19 or over will be supported to apply for Discretionary Learner Support available from their education institution.

As part of the pathway planning process, an assessment will be undertaken to ensure that a young person has enough financial support to complete their course. Young people that require equipment or materials at a cost or frequency not met by their bursary will be supported by their allocated worker to explore all available

sources of financial support to meet the young person's needs, for example, charities or the education panel which has a small discretionary fund held by the Virtual School which is often used to meet exceptional need. In exceptional circumstances, a request can be made to the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager for financial support towards the cost of essential course equipment.

For 16 and 17 year olds, and some Care Leavers aged over 18, some costs may be met as part of their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

### 2.3.2 Travel

Care Leavers are expected to fund travel to college through their bursary. In exceptional circumstances, Onwards & Upwards may offer short term support during term time. Calculations are based on the cost of travel from the young person's home to their place of study. All travel contributions must be approved by the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.

Young people aged under 18 and based in London, can apply for a Zip Oyster photocard which enables them to travel at half adult-rate on all TfL services and most National Rail services in London. If they live in London they may be eligible to travel for free on buses and trams.

Students aged over 18 and based in London, attending a course at a school, college or university in London can apply for an 18+ Student Oyster Card to get 30% off the price of adult-rate travelcards and Bus & Tram Pass season tickets.

All students can also apply for rail cards and other travel related discounts, and should be supported by their allocated worker to explore what discounts they may be eligible for, especially when studying outside of London.

### 2.3.3 Apprenticeships

Young people who commence employment or training and subsequently are no longer in receipt of benefits, will receive an allowance equivalent to JSA rates from Onwards & Upwards until they receive their first salary payment.

Onwards & Upwards will support young people on apprenticeships or salaries paying less than the Income Support rate, by providing a top up payment, to ensure they receive the same amount of income as if they were in education.

As at June 2017, a young person in education would receive:

- Income Support (£57.90 per week)
- 16 – 19 bursary (£30.77 per week)
- Housing benefit contribution to rent
- Travel costs paid by Onwards and Upwards

Top up payments are conditional on the young person providing consent for their allocated worker to verify details of the apprenticeship status with the provider, and

any other relevant details as requested. All top up payments must be authorised by the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.

## 2.4. Higher Education

Barnet is committed to supporting care leavers to achieve their full potential academically. A key priority within Barnet's 2017-20 Care Leavers' Strategy, is to increase the number of Care Leavers going to university, in order to close the gap with their peers. Providing financial support is therefore instrumental in this being fulfilled.

Onwards & Upwards will support Former Relevant Care Leavers to complete one full-time programme of Higher Education study (Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate degree) as recorded in their Pathway Plan. Support will be provided to the young person until the end of the institution's academic year, during which the young person's 25th birthday falls, for study of a progressive, full-time programme.

Applications for degrees or other Higher Education courses should therefore be planned with this in mind; young people should be aware of what support is available from Onwards & Upwards during their course.

Onwards & Upwards will not provide financial support to a young person if the academic year falls after the young person's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. For example, if the young person's birthday falls in the summer holiday and their course begins in October, the support will not be provided for the coming year.

The young person's allocated worker will ensure this is clearly explained throughout the pathway planning process, and the young people will be signposted to support post-25 if still completing a course at that point.

### 2.4.1 Allowances

Onwards & Upwards will pay a young person's rent during Easter, Christmas and summer holiday periods, to ensure they do not lose their placement due to accruing rent arrears at these times. This is subject to enrolment and attendance confirmation as outlined below.

Onwards & Upwards will pay subsistence at a rate equivalent to JSA, throughout the Easter, Christmas and summer holiday periods.

This will be done for the duration of the Higher Education course until the end of the academic year during which the young person turns 25, as outlined in the Pathway Plan.

If a young person finds that they are required to repeat a year of university, Onwards & Upwards will pay subsistence for one year to allow the retake of the full-time Higher Education course outlined in the young person's Pathway Plan, as long as:

- The undertaking of this year is completed by the end of the academic year during which the young person's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday falls;

- Confirmation of retake term/dates, enrolment and attendance (minimum 90% required) has been provided to Onwards & Upwards from the university directly.

Onwards & Upwards will pay subsistence to Care Leavers that change course after starting a degree. The Care Leaver should discuss with the allocated worker their desire to change course at the earliest available time before the end of their programme of study, so they can be supported and signposted accordingly. A Pathway Plan meeting should be convened by the allocated worker to discuss and record any planned changes. Subsistence will only be provided for one change of course.

When attending university, Care Leavers are expected to apply for all available financial support and bursaries that they are entitled to. This expectation will be explained by the allocated worker as part of the pathway planning process and before enrolment, to ensure young people are fully aware and are supported to do this.

Care leavers can access various grants and loans to assist them with Higher Education costs:

- **High Education Bursary:** Under the Education Act 1989 (Higher Education Bursary) (England) Regulations 2009, all *Former Relevant Children* attending university will be provided with a Higher Education Bursary to the value of £2000 over the life of the course they are attending.
- **Maintenance Grant (Non repayable):** An application for a Maintenance Grant can be submitted to help meet costs while studying. For 2017-18 the maximum amount of Maintenance Grant that can be awarded is £3,354 per year, this includes for care leavers.
- **Maintenance Loan (Repayable):** An application for a Maintenance Loan, in addition to the Grant, can be made to help meet costs while studying. The maximum Loan amount a student can apply for is up to £4,375 (however they will be offered less if they have had the full Maintenance Grant). A student does not have to apply for the loan initially, they can wait until they have started the course and see how they manage financially.
- **Tuition Fee Loan:** Students are required to apply for a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the cost of course fees. A new application has to be submitted for each year of the course. The amount a student will receive for their Tuition Fee Loan will cover their fees and will be paid directly to the university (there are a few exceptions but the university website would say if a course has higher than usual fees).
- **Bursary:** Students are also able to apply for a bursary (a one off payment) from their university - this varies between universities, however, many universities provide additional bursaries to care leavers. Details about whether a university offers a bursary can be obtained from them during enrolment.

More information about bursary payments can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university>.

- **Access to Learning Fund:** All universities have an Access to Learning Fund. This fund provides money to students who are facing financial difficulties, either as a grant or a loan, in a lump sum or instalments. Students need to apply for the Access to Learning Grant via the Student Services Department, or equivalent team, when they have started their course.
- **Disability Student Allowances:** Disabled students can claim additional allowances. These are to pay for additional needs, such as special equipment or a helper. An assessment has to be undertaken before any money is awarded; however, the allowances are grants not loans.

Some universities have a support worker to provide advice and guidance to Care Leavers, to help with the complexities of student finance.

The Student Finance website can be accessed through [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and has useful information about Higher Education, including how to apply for funding.

In order for the Higher Education Bursary and Vacation payments to be authorised, Care Leavers will need to give consent for Onwards & Upwards to contact their university to verify:

- Course name
- Enrolment status
- Term dates
- Attendance (minimum of 90% required)

If consent is not provided or the above cannot be verified, financial support will not be provided from Onwards & Upwards.

Young people must also provide evidence of:

- Loans and grants received
- Official list of equipment or books required for the course
- Proof of tenancy or Licence agreement including weekly or monthly rent costs

All payments from Onwards & Upwards must be authorised by the Team Manager.

### 2.2.1 Graduation Allowance

For students that have successfully completed their course and will therefore graduate, a one off allowance of up to £850 will be paid to cover the graduation costs and transition costs from finishing course to employment. Young people will no longer be entitled to support from Onwards & Upwards once their Higher Education course is complete.

## 2.2.2 Young people with Discretionary Leave to Remain

Young people who have applied for asylum and been granted Discretionary Leave to Remain are not able to apply for 'home' fees and Student Support for a Higher Education course in England. This is because eligibility is restricted to those with Humanitarian Protection and their family members.

As at June 2017, The Educational Grant Advisory Service (EGAS) is an independent advice agency for people wanting to obtain funding for Higher Education who are not eligible for statutory funding.

They can be contacted on:

- Telephone: 020 7251 7459.
- Website: <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/grants/educational-grants/>

Further information about sources of funding can also be obtained from [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

## 2.5. Former Relevant Children returning to education

Onwards & Upwards will continue to support young people in education post 21, as long as:

- The young person furnishes full details of the intended course of study and provides consent for Onwards and Upwards to contact the education provider directly to obtain evidence of an offer of a place on a course and their attendance, if applicable;
- The course is a progression from previous courses.

Former Relevant Children can resume education or training when they are over the age of 21, following an assessment of their case by Onwards & Upwards. If their case is reopened, they will be allocated a Personal Advisor who will develop a Pathway Plan in conjunction with the young person. Support will then be provided to this young person as a Former Relevant Child as outlined in the rest of this policy.

It is important that allocated workers inform young people that if they are intending to undertake a full-time Higher Education programme, support from Onwards & Upwards will be until the end of the academic year during which they turn 25 years old.

## 2.6. Other Allowances

### 2.6.1 Subsistence

Most 16 and 17 year old care leavers will not be able to claim benefits; therefore, for as long as a young person is a Relevant Child, Onwards & Upwards will provide financial support to ensure their needs are met.

Financial support includes subsistence to meet a young person's day to day living costs. Subsistence is paid into a young person's bank account weekly at a rate of £57.90 per week<sup>3</sup>, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed by the Team Manager.

When a young person turns 18, their allocated worker will support them to apply to claim benefits, as outlined in section 2.1.

Eligible Children in non-residential settings (Youth Offending Institutions, Prison or Hospital) are paid living expenses at a rate of £10 a week.

### **2.6.2 Health costs**

For exemption from dental and prescription charges, young people in Higher Education should complete an HC1 form. They may be granted full exemption from charges or partial exemption.

For clarity on dental costs, and exemption, Care Leavers can visit the following website: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Dentalcosts.aspx>  
In exceptional circumstances, the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager will consider requests for financial support towards health costs associated with optical and dental issues, and may authorise one discretionary payment.

### **2.6.3 Clothing Allowance**

Onwards & Upwards provide a clothing allowance to Eligible and Relevant Children who are 16 and 17 year olds. The allowance is £168 and is paid twice a year. If a young person needs additional financial support for clothing, for example to commence employment, their allocated worker can help them to apply for grants or clothing from local charities or the DWP and in exceptional circumstances a further allowance may be payable at the discretion of the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.

### **2.6.4 Social and leisure activities**

Care leavers are provided with one free Barnet leisure pass from the age of 16, which enables them to access swimming activities free of charge.

Access to other Barnet leisure activities can be provided and agreed in the Pathway Plan. Access to similar services will be sought for young people living outside of Barnet.

In exceptional circumstances, sporting activities will be paid for at the discretion of the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager.

### **2.6.5 Birthday gifts**

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<sup>3</sup> This is the rate a young person would receive if entitled to claim benefits.

Birthday gift vouchers or cash will be given to young people by their carer if they are in Foster Care or Children's Home, or by their allocated worker if they live independently. Young people who live in independent living will be paid their birthday allowance, if there is evidence of ongoing contact between the young person and Onwards & Upwards.

For young people in Young Offenders Institutions the birthday allowance is paid by postal order.

The allowance paid to all Care Leavers is as follows:

18<sup>th</sup> birthday - £100  
19<sup>th</sup> birthday - £30  
20<sup>th</sup> birthday - £30  
21<sup>st</sup> birthday - £50

Young people should indicate their voucher or cash preference to their Personal Advisor who will arrange for the allowance to be given.

### **2.6.6 Special Allowance**

Care leavers aged 16 and 17 will be paid a festival allowance of up to £176.50 in December of each year or an alternative date as agreed with the young person, which will support any religious festivals they wish to celebrate.

### **2.6.7 Savings**

Any savings that have been saved for the young person whilst they have been in care will be paid to them on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday from their carer.

If there are concerns about a young person's capacity to manage their money, prior to the young person turning 18, work will be done with the young person to explore how they may best use their savings and consider options about how to spend them. All concerns will be discussed with the young person as part of the pathway planning process

If it is deemed that a young person does not have capacity to manage their finances, the allocated worker should inform the Onwards & Upwards Team Manager regarding at the earliest possible opportunity. Concerns regarding a young person's capacity will be referred to the 0-25 Team who will organise for a Mental Capacity Act assessment to be undertaken, to establish a young person's ability to manage their own finances. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, a best interest meeting may follow to determine who is best placed to manage the young person's finances. Capacity assessments can be completed from the age of 16.

Where a young person has received other monies, either from the Criminal Injury Compensation Board or by way of inheritance, the allocated worker will help them to access support to budget the money and use it sensibly. All such payments should be paid into the young person's bank account.

## 2.7. Young parents

Care leavers who are parents are expected to maximise their income. They may claim the following benefits:

- **Housing costs for 16 to 17 year olds:** 16 and 17 year old Eligible and Relevant children may claim Income Support but not Housing benefit or Universal Credit for housing costs; accommodation costs will be met by Onwards & Upwards for these young people.
- **Housing costs for 18 – 25 year olds:** Care leavers aged 18 and over may claim Income Support if they are a lone parent with a child under the age of 5, and will also need to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for housing costs. The shared accommodation rate for private rented accommodation does not apply to care leavers until they reach their 22nd birthday. Once the child is 5 years old, the care leaver will be expected to transfer to Job Seekers Allowance.
- **Income Support:** Can be claimed by lone parents, and is paid fortnightly at a rate of £57.90 per week as at 13th July 2017. To claim income support, care leavers must be aged 16 or over.
- **Sure Start Maternity Grant:** Young parents may also claim a Sure Start Maternity Grant of £500 on the birth of their first baby (or subsequent multiple births e.g. twins) if they are in receipt of benefits, to help pay for essential equipment. A claim should be made within 11 weeks of the due birth date. In some cases care leavers are also able to submit a claim up to 3 months after the birth of their newborn. Claiming Sure Start Maternity Grant 2017 does not affect other benefits entitlement, and as a rule, Tax Credits remain unchanged. too.
- **Care to Learn Grant:** Young parents who wish to return to or remain in college or university can apply for a Care to Learn Grant of up to £160 per child per week if they live outside London and £175 per child per week if they live in London. This is a grant available from the DWP for help with childcare costs for parents who are:
  - Aged under 20
  - The main carer for their child
  - Studying a publicly-funded course (The school, college or learning provider advise if the course is eligible)
- **Childcare contributions:** For parents that have a dependent child, it is sometimes possible to apply for financial support for childcare costs when attending Higher Education. Information should be sought from the university directly to find out if this applies.
- **Childcare Grant:** Young parents can also claim a Childcare Grant available from the DWP for help with childcare costs. The grant is paid weekly to students in university full-time who have, or are eligible for, a student finance package and have a childcare provider who is registered with Ofsted. The

amount of grant paid is dependent on household income, cost of childcare and number of dependent children, however, for 2017/18 the maximum payable is:

- Up to £159.59 per week for one child;
  - Up to £273.60 per week for two or more children.
  - doesn't have to be paid back
  - is paid on top of your other student finance
- **Child Tax Credits:** can be claimed by Care Leavers that are responsible for their children and are aged under 20 and in eligible education or training. Parents do not need to be working to claim Child Tax Credit; however, only one household can get Child Tax Credit for a child. There are rules regarding who can apply for Child Tax Credit, as usually parents need to apply for Universal Credit instead. Benefits Advisers can provide more information on eligibility.
  - **Parents Learning Allowance:** Full-time undergraduate or Initial Teacher Training students with children may be eligible for help with their learning costs. The Parents Learning Allowance does not have to be paid back, is on top of other student finance, does not require parents to be paying for childcare and won't affect benefits or tax credit. In the 2017-18 year, students could get up to £1,573.

Onwards & Upwards will help young parents who wish to take up education, training or employment opportunities to identify possible funds to cover childcare costs, such as applying for the Vulnerable Children's Fund. Onwards & Upwards will not provide funding for ongoing childcare costs, however, in exceptional circumstances a request can be made to the Team Manager.

Allocated workers undertake an assessment of a young parent's needs, and identify what reasonable contributions are needed from Onwards & Upwards to the cost of education, such as enrolment fees, travel and equipment.

All contributions must be authorised by the Onwards and Upwards Team Manager.

## 2.8. ID, Citizenship and naturalisation

Onwards & Upwards will purchase 1 birth certificate and 1 passport for all Children In Care and Care Leavers, up until the age of 21, or 25 if still supported by the service. If these documents, are lost after being purchased by Onwards & Upwards, then the young person is responsible for the cost of replacing them.

Onwards & Upwards will help Care Leavers to access legal support from services that offer free support for Indefinite Leave to Remain applications. In the absence of legal aid being available, financial support for these applications will be considered on an individual basis by the Team Manager. If legal aid has been refused based on the lack of merit for the claim, financial support will not be provided unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Onwards & Upwards will not pay for young people who have Indefinite Leave to Remain to apply for citizenship or naturalisation.

For UASC young people who are not eligible to apply for a passport but require Home Office travel documents, Onwards & Upwards will pay the cost of this document one time per Care Leaver, equivalent to the passport offer.

Onwards and Upwards will not pay the costs of other travel visas.

## **2.9. Young people needing continuing care**

If a young person has been assessed as needing support from the 0-25 service, a transition plan will be developed, which will include arrangements for accommodation.

The young person will continue to be eligible for travel allowances from Onwards & Upwards (where applicable), and will still be entitled to their Setting Up Home Allowance. Any entitlements will be recorded in their Pathway Plan.

## **3. Making a complaint**

### **3.1. How to make a complaint**

As part of Barnet's 'Family Friendly' approach, we are keen to hear from Care Leavers if they feel we have made a mistake. Young people will not be treated differently if they make a complaint; it is important that young people inform us if we may have done something wrong.

If a Care Leaver wishes to complain, they can:

- Do so themselves by contacting the Family Services Complaints Officer
- Tell their PA or Social Worker
- Tell their Foster Carer or Key Worker
- Talk to an adult or friend they trust

The Complaints Officer can be contacted by:

- Email: [FSComplaints@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:FSComplaints@barnet.gov.uk)
- Online: [www.barnet.gov.uk/family-ccc](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/family-ccc)
- Paper form – available from Onwards and Upwards Team
- Telephone – 00208 359 7008
- In writing – Family Services Complaints Officer, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP

### **3.2. Advocacy support**

If a Care Leaver feels that they cannot complain themselves, or ask an adult or friend, they can ask for an advocate to support them.

Barnet Care Leavers can contact Barnardos for an advocate, who can help with understanding rights and entitlements, submitting a complaint, and understanding the response. An advocate will also try to help with any problems that present along the way.

Barnardos can be contacted by:

- Telephone: 0808 800 0017 (Freephone)
- Email: [advocacy2@barnardos.co.uk](mailto:advocacy2@barnardos.co.uk).

PAs and Social Workers can also provide further information about advocacy support.

### **3.3. Contacting the local MP**

Care Leavers can also ask their Member of Parliament (MP) for help with issues that they feel need more support. An advocate can support a young person to obtain the details of their MP.

## Appendix 1

Table of Allowances 2017-18

Allowance	16-17	Frequency	18+	Frequency
Subsistence	57.90	Weekly	N/A	N/A
Birthday 16	176.50	Once on birthday	N/A	N/A
Birthday 17	176.50	Once on birthday	N/A	N/A
Birthday 18	N/A	N/A	100.00	Once on birthday
Birthday 19-20	N/A	N/A	30.00	Once on birthday
Birthday 21	N/A	N/A	50.00	Once on birthday
Birthday 21-24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Clothing Allowance	168.00	Twice a year	N/A	N/A
Council Tax support / arrears	N/A	N/A	-	Varies
Festival Allowance	176.50	Annually	N/A	N/A
Passports	72.50	Once	72.50	Once
Birth Certificates	46.00	Once	46.00	Once
Travel Documents	72.00	Once	72.00	Once
Glasses	0.00		0.00	
Outreach	-	Varies	-	Varies
Young People in secure settings	10.00	Weekly	10.00	Weekly
Leisure activities	-	Varies	-	Varies
Savings	-	Varies	-	Varies
Accommodation costs	-	Varies	-	Manager's discretion Varies
Setting Up Home Allowance	N/A	N/A	2000.00	One off
18+ in foster placement (Staying Put)	N/A	N/A	181.00	Weekly

Travel while learning - TFL area	-	Varies	-	Varies
Travel while learning - outside london	-	Varies	-	Varies

University vacation	N/A	N/A	-	Varies
Graduation	N/A	N/A	850.00	Once on graduation
HE Bursary	N/A	N/A	2000.00	Academic year

UASC 18+	N/A	N/A	57.90	Weekly
UASC ARE 18+	N/A	N/A	57.90	Manager's discretion
UASC temporary accommodation starter pack	N/A	N/A	85.00	

Apprenticeships, benefits or low wages bridging	57.90	Weekly	57.90	Weekly
Apprenticeships/low wages top up	-	Varies	-	Varies

Crisis payments/financial support	-	Varies	-	Varies
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Rent and Deposit loan	N/A	N/A	-	Manager's discretion : once only
Moving costs	-	Varies	-	Manager's discretion: Once per care leaver Maximum of twice per academic year for those at university Other reasons considered, such as safety.

Citizenship applications	0.00		0.00	
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Indefinite Leave to Remain Applications	-	Varies Manager's discretion (means tested) Application cost as at 31/8/17:: £1,875 Legal fees: Vary	-	Varies Manager's discretion (means tested) Application cost as at 31/8/17: £1,875 Legal fees: Vary
Qualifying Young Person support	-	Manager's discretion	-	Manager's discretion
Other circumstances	-	Manager's discretion	-	Manager's discretion

# Family Services

## Document control

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Barnet Joint Housing and Children's Social Care Protocol for Homeless 16 &amp; 17 Year Olds</b>
<b>Document description</b>	This protocol sets out Children's Social Care and Housing Options joint procedure for responding to 16/17 year old homelessness. It covers what will happen from the point young people present asking for help to longer term support arrangements
<b>Document author</b>	<b>Tina McElligott</b>

## Version control

<b>Document production date</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
<b>Document currency</b>	V2

## Clearance process

<b>Quality approver</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Tina McElligott</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
<b>Release approver</b>	<b>Date</b>
Name of person who approves the document to be added to the Document Bank – this should be the Head of Service or above	Date the document has been approved
<b>Tina McElligott – Assistant Director Social Care</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> July 2017</b>

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## 1. Introduction

Barnet recognises the value that a strong and stable family life provides to young people aged 16/17, particularly in relation to the quality of their relationships, education, financial security, preparation for adulthood and positive health; this is widely supported by research which tells us that children and young people do better when they remain living within their own families.

As such, we will always strive to find ways to help young people remain living with their families by helping to repair relationships with their parents/carers or exploring other members of the family who might be able to offer the security of a stable home into adulthood.

We recognise that for some young people, this type of stability and security may not be available to them within their own families, and when this is the case we will assess their needs thoroughly in order to decide the type and level of accommodation and support that will need to be provided to them.

This protocol sets out Children's Social Care and Housing Options joint procedure for responding to 16/17 year old homelessness. It covers what will happen from the point young people present asking for help to longer term support arrangements.

Our commitment is:

- To ensure that all young people approaching our services for help are treated fairly, with respect and with sensitivity to their age, understanding and individual backgrounds or circumstances
- To thoroughly assess a young person's circumstances without prejudice
- To seek to find the best outcome for young people by listening to what they have to say and working in their best interests and in collaboration with them
- To maintain a professional and calm approach towards young people at all times
- To ensure that it is safe for young people to return home
- To ensure that accommodation provided to young people is of a good quality
- To ensure that young people are escorted to their accommodation and helped to settle in and/or introduced to those that will be providing day to day support to them
- To listen to young people's views and feedback about their experiences

## 2. Out of hours/Emergency referrals

Outside of office hours, young people will need to call the Emergency Duty Team on (0208 359 2000), all young people who contact the service as homeless out of hours will be placed in foster care or in a high support placement until the next working day.

### 3. First Point of Contact

When young people present as homeless and ask for help, our first priority is to ensure that they are safe from harm. We will also make sure, where necessary, they have somewhere safe to stay where there is an appropriate level of support available to help them cope with living away from home, whilst we assess their needs and explore their circumstances fully.

All 16/17 year olds that are homeless or at risk of homelessness will need to present themselves at Barnet House between the hours of 9am – 5pm where they will meet with a Youth Mediation Coordinator who will ask them questions about what has happened and obtain contact information for their parents/carers and any other relatives who might be able to support them.

The Youth Mediation Coordinator will establish if the young person is homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, they will explore with the young person and their family if the difficulties that have led to the young person presenting at Barnet House can be resolved and attempt to enable the young person to remain at home, when it is safe for them to do so.

The Youth Mediation Coordinator will consider:

- The young person's history of involvement with services
- Family circumstances and composition
- Support networks within and outside of the family
- The young person's particular vulnerabilities (i.e. health, mental health and learning needs) and immediate risks (i.e. gangs, safeguarding)
- The young person's education, training or employment status
- The young person's views
- The views of the young person's family, particularly those that hold parental responsibility

If the Youth Mediation Coordinator establishes that a young person can safely return home and is not in need of a statutory assessment of their needs, they will ask for consent to make a referral to MASH to enable early help options to be explored for the young person and their family, including the need for a CAF.

All young people found to be in need of accommodation or at risk of imminent homelessness will be referred to MASH, without the need for consent, to enable the commencement of a single assessment by Children's Social Care and Housing Options.

### 4. Emergency Accommodation

Once a young person has been referred to MASH as homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, the MASH will make a same day allocation to the Social Work Team on duty in Children's Social Care. For young people in immediate need of accommodation the allocated social worker will make an immediate referral to the Placements Service to source emergency accommodation with an appropriate level of support.

The Placements Team holds an approved provider list of supported accommodation options, including out of borough placements. At no time must young people be placed in temporary accommodation in an emergency unless there is also a high level package of support to wrap around them in place. Some young people, particularly 16 year olds and those with a higher level of vulnerability may need to be placed in an emergency foster or residential placement to ensure that they are safe and well cared for.

All young people placed in accommodation in accordance with a Children Act assessment will immediately become 'Looked After' pursuant to s20 Children Act 1989. The social worker must immediately commence 'Looked After' processes including referral for a LAC medical and make a referral to the Permanency Planning Panel.

A young person may also be placed in supported accommodation pending an initial assessment in accordance with s.188 of the Housing Act 1989. Once an initial assessment has been completed and it has been determined that s.20 accommodation will be provided, the housing duty will cease and the young person will be accommodated under s.20. A young person's vulnerability to harm and exploitation and risk to others must always be considered when considering the type and level of placement and support that is needed and provided.

Accommodation provided whilst an assessment takes place, ensures that young people are not left in unsuitable living arrangements before the extent of their needs are known. The provision of accommodation during an assessment does not automatically qualify the provision of longer term housing support for a young person.

#### **4.1. Young People at risk of/involved in Gangs, Offending and Exploitation**

Young people who are engaged in offending or who are gang-involved may be at risk of harm to others and still present with a high level of vulnerability to serious youth violence and exploitation. The Youth Offending Team must always be consulted when a young person is open to their service and is in need of emergency accommodation. This includes young people at risk of homelessness on release from a custodial setting. The highest context is always to ensure a young person will be safe and risk of harm to others is minimized by making adequate checks to ensure that gang-involved young people are not placed in the vicinity of rival or other high profile gang affected areas, or that other very vulnerable young people are not sharing the same placement/accommodation. The same principal applies to young people who are at a high risk of going missing and are vulnerable to child sexual and other forms of exploitation.

#### **4.2. Young people in custody**

Young people who are in custody will require contingency planning for their release on bail into the community and/or following a custodial sentence. Planning for release should commence as soon as a young person is placed in custody by holding a Family Group Conference which will help identify who in the family the young person can expect to receive support from whilst in custody and where they will live upon their release, whether this is planned or unplanned.

Planning for young people leaving who have served a custodial sentence must commence no later than 4 weeks ahead of their known release date. A placement must be identified and an address confirmed in readiness for resettlement support and any community based support or restrictions to be adequately planned for. Young people that have served more than 13 weeks on remand will be entitled to services from Onwards & Upwards as a former relevant care leaver. They must be allocated to Onwards &

Upwards as soon as the 13 week threshold has been met if their release date will occur before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

## 5. Assessment

### 5.1. Section 17, Children Act 1989

All young people placed in emergency accommodation under s20 Children Act 1989, and those at risk of imminent homelessness who remain living at home or with a safe family member/friend will have a full assessment of their needs undertaken by their allocated social worker. It is in the best interests of young people and their families for a full assessment of their needs to be undertaken in order to make timely decisions about what needs to happen next, as such, single assessments will be completed within 45 days unless there are very good reasons to extend the length of the assessment. Manager agreement must be sought by the social worker and recorded by their manager to extend an assessment beyond 45 days.

In accordance with [Barnet's Local Assessment Protocol 2017](#) the assessment will explore the young person's life at home, in school and in the community; it will explore relationships with family and friends to understand what life is like for the young person, it will focus on individual and family strengths as well as any risks that the young person poses to others or may be facing.

A Family Group Conference must be convened to explore alternatives to care arrangements and to mobilise the support family members, family friends and other trusted adults including neighbours community groups and churches may be able to offer support to a young person who is living away from home.

All assessments must be undertaken jointly with the Housing Options team who will assess what duties are owed to the young person under Part VII, Housing Act 1996.

### 5.2. Assessment Outcome

The single assessment will determine if the young person is 'in need' as defined by s17 Children Act 1989, all young people who are found to be homeless will almost always be defined as Children in Need in accordance with the Act. The assessment must also determine whether the young person is in need of accommodation and longer term accommodation and support be provided .

Once a young person has been determined to be 'in need' **and** 'in need of accommodation' they must be provided with information about their rights and the local authority's and Housing Options responsibility for them. Young people must be given written information and supported to access an advocate who can provide impartial advice. Young people can receive housing and support services under:

- **Section 17 Children Act 1989** – will entitle a young person to support provided by the local authority .Any young person who is provided with support services pursuant to s17 will be afforded a Child in Need Plan until they reach 18 years of age. If a young person, having made an informed decision, does not wish to be accommodated under s.20, the young person will be assessed for housing under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. If a young person is able to be accommodated with family members with support, accommodation may be offered under s.17.

- **Section 20 Children Act 1989** – As a result of being provided with accommodation under s20 the young person will become a Looked After Child (LAC) and thereafter will be eligible to receive all the services which the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide to Looked After Children as set out in the Children Act 1989 including regular LAC reviews to ensure that their needs are continuing to be met. They may also be entitled to a range of services once they cease to be looked after as a result of the Local Authority's leaving care duties as set out in the Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010. Young people who are accommodated under s. 20 must be transferred to the Children in Care/Onwards and Upwards Service at the end of the assessment and following ratification at Permanency Planning Panel.
- **Part VII Housing Act 1996** – will entitle a young person to temporary accommodation and placement on to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme for longer term housing options. With the exception of emergency accommodation pending a Children Act assessment, accommodation can only be provided under the Housing Act if a young person is not assessed as in need of accommodation under s.20 or has declined the provision of s.20 accommodation. When declining the provision of accommodation under s.20, a young person must be given advice on the consequences of this decision and the legal tests that Housing will apply in determining whether they are eligible for housing, including whether they are intentionally homeless. All young people who are provided with Housing Act accommodation will be assessed to identify whether they require support under s.17 and if so, will be afforded a Child in Need Plan and an outreach support package. Specific consideration will be given to funding arrangements to cover accommodation costs and affordability once the young person reaches the age of 18 years.

For young people who are found to be homeless and have been living at home or in family/friends arrangements during the assessment period, a referral to the Permanency Planning Panel must be made followed by a referral to the Placement Team to identify suitable accommodation in accordance with their assessed needs and panel decision.

An assessment may also determine that a young person:-

- Is not 'in need' and therefore '*not*' in need of s20 accommodation  
In such circumstances the social worker will ensure that the young person is supported to return home, if they have been provided with accommodation for the duration of the assessment and are referred on for early help services where appropriate. Alternatively if the young person does not wish to return home they may be advised to approach the Housing Department who will determine whether they have a statutory duty to provide them with Housing. This will include an assessment of any identified risks at home and the parents willingness to have them return home. Children's Social Care will have no on-going involvement with the young person, although early help services may be required. If Housing Options, having assessed the child, believes that they may be in need of services, the officer should refer the matter back to Children's Social Care for further consideration.
- Is 'in need' but is *not* in need of accommodation

In these circumstances the young person will be supported to return home, if they have been provided with accommodation for the duration of the assessment, and will be subject to a Child in Need Plan to ensure their needs are met to remain living in the family.

Following assessment the Targeted Youth Service will offer support to ensure young people are supported with education, career paths, managing finances and life skills.

## 6. Support Packages

All young people placed in emergency accommodation will initially receive a high level support package to ensure that they have access to the support they need from the accommodation provider, Targeted Youth Service or other provider. This avoids the risk of young people being left in situations where they are not yet ready to manage the complex task of living independently. The support package must include daily visits to the young person until there is sufficient evidence that the young person has developed the skills and knowledge they need to manage independent living without the need for high levels of support. It is acknowledged that some young people are better prepared for independent living than others and may only require high level packages for a short period. This will be decided on a case by case basis. (See Appendix 2 for checklist)

Youth Workers will also act as advocates at meetings and provide mediation where they are currently involved with a young person in order to avoid unnecessary layering of professional involvement

## 7. Advocacy

An advocacy service is available for young people who need support to attend appointments. Out of office hours a telephone call should be made.

Barnet Family Services has an arrangement with SOVA who can provide support on a spot purchase basis. For further information contact:

### **SOVA**

John McAuslan

07770 640560 [John.McAuslan@Sova.org.uk](mailto:John.McAuslan@Sova.org.uk)

<http://www.sova.org.uk/>

## Appendix 1 -

### Factors to be considered by children's services when assessing 16/17 year olds who may be homeless children in need,

	Dimensions of Need	Issues to consider in assessing child's future needs.
1.	<b>Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the child have access to stable accommodation?</li> <li>How far is this suitable to the full range of the child's needs?</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Family and Social Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the child's relationship with their parents and wider family.</li> <li>What is the capacity of the child's family and social network to provide stable and secure accommodation and meet the child's practical,</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Emotional and Behavioural Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the child show self esteem, resilience and confidence?</li> <li>Assessment of their attachments and the quality of their relationships. Does the child show self control and appropriate self</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Education, Training and Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about the child's education experience and background</li> <li>Assessment as to whether support may be required to enable the child to access education, training or employment.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Financial Capability and independent living skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the child's financial competence and how they will secure financial support in future</li> <li>Information about the support the child might</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Health and Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of child's physical, emotional and mental health needs.</li> </ul>
7.	<b>Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the child's needs as a result of their ethnicity, preferred language, cultural background, religion or sexual identity.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2 - 50 Point Checklist for young people living in supported and independent living arrangements.

	<b>Please consider:</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>What needs to happen? By Whom and when?</b>
1.	Are the young person's independent living skills being consolidated		
2.	Does further work needs to be done and what resources are required to achieve independence		
3.	Is a mentor/advocate engaged with the young person		
4.	Does the young person have copies of the documents they will need as an adult or do they know where to find them if they need them in the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth certificate</li> <li>• NHS Card</li> <li>• Passport</li> <li>• Student card</li> <li>• Provisional Drivers licence</li> <li>• National Insurance Number</li> <li>• Bank Account</li> </ul>		
5.	Does the young person have sufficient identification documentation		
6.	Are the services currently engaged with the young person clearly outlined in their Plan		
7.	Is the young person providing input to the plan? And how are they kept aware of any changes to the plan		
8.	Are all stakeholders, including the young person, aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to tasks outlined in the Plan		
9.	Has a plan for keeping the young person's significant relationships connected and maintained been developed?		
10.	Does the young person have reliable support networks		
11.	Does the young person have regular contact with family or significant others		
12.	What community groups could the young person be linked with to help develop wider social and support networks		
13.	Are there any ongoing safety needs for the young person?		
14.	Does the young person know how to contact relevant people in an emergency?		
15.	Do they have a list of emergency contacts		
16.	What are the accommodation arrangements		
17.	Are all relevant people clear regarding these arrangements		
18.	What services are involved that may be able to provide ongoing or one off assistance to the young person		
19.	Do they currently have stable accommodation? How long is it likely to remain stable		
20.	Can the young person remain in their current living		

	arrangement when they reach 18? If not what is the Plan		
21.	Has contact been made Housing regarding available options		
22.	What are the contingency arrangements should a placement breakdown occur? How will the young person be assisted to enact these arrangements?		
23.	What are the young person's ongoing medical and dental needs and how are they being addressed		
24.	Is the you person engaged with a therapeutic service to support their ongoing mental health		
25.	Does the young person have a GP, Dentist, Optician		
26.	Does the young person need ongoing medication? If yes, do they understand how to manage this, including obtaining repeat prescriptions from a Doctor and going to the chemist to collect these		
27.	Does the young person have a disability or special educational needs		
28.	Does the young person need help to read and respond to letters they receive		
29.	Does the young person understand their sexual health and how to manage this		
30.	Does the young person have alcohol or drug issues? If yes how are these to be managed		
31.	What are the young person's plans for the future in terms of education and employment		
32.	Does the young person have an Education Plan		
33.	Does the young person have a CV, and do they know how to write a job application?		
34.	Is the young person engaged with Education, Training and Employment support?		
35.	Has the young person been assisted to apply for relevant benefits		
36.	What are the young person's financial supports		
37.	Can the young person manage money		
38.	What is the plan if they run out of money		
39.	Does the young person know how to pay bills and rent?		
40.	Does the young person know how to budget for grocery and essentials shopping?		
41.	Can the young person cook		
42.	Can the young person cope with loneliness		
43.	Does the young person have a network of friends		
44.	Are their friends a positive influence, if not has risk that their friends pose been considered		
45.	Is the young person involved in any religious or cultural groups in the community		
46.	What do you know about these and how can they support the young person to live independently		
47.	Is there a risk of radicalisation		
48.	Has the young person been ostracised by their cultural or religious community		

49.	Is the young person engaged in positive social activities with their peers		
50.	Is the young person clear about how and when you will stay in contact with them		

## Children in Care - Data Analysis

- The total Number of Children in Care is 9% higher than the same period last year. Although figures have continued to climb over the previous 12 months, it has plateaued over the last 3 months. Although our figures have increased they still remain below statistical neighbours, London and England per 10,000 figures.
- The % of Children with 3 or more placements is below the target of <11.5%.
- We are finding that visits are still being recorded on some occasions some 3-4 weeks after the visit has taken place. Plans are underway for the systems team to support teams in managing data quality and will be functional from September.
- The recording of CLA Reviews is poor, although the review may have taken place within timescales, the recording of minutes and care plan details is lagging which affects this indicator. Recording will have to become timelier to give a true reflection of work being done.
- Looked After Children Health indicators continue to show a positive direction of travel with Initial Health Assessments increasing month on month. Even though this is still below target, we expect to reach a good level of performance by November 2017.
- Participation in CIC Reviews remains high.
- Private Fostering Numbers have climbed over the past 5 months and the recording of statutory visits remains inconsistent.
- There are data gaps in recording that the Performance team are gathering retrospectively.

Total Number of children in care		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLAI		349	347	347	<270 271 - 279 280 - 350 351 - 379 380>
The number of Children in Care for the past 4 months has decreased back to within Green tolerances when compared to the period between December and March. Barnet continue to exceed the figure of its Statistical Neighbours.		256.5	335		

Children looked after per 10,000 (Delivery Indicator)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLAS		38.1	37.9	37.9	<34 35 36 39 41>
The CLA rate continues to be rated as 'Green' for July		43.5	37.6		

## Children in Care

Number of children coming into care this month		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLAZ		11	14	13	<2 3 to 4 5 to 20 21 - 29 30>

There were 38 children who came into care during the past 3 months in 2017/18, compared to 27 children during the same period in 2016/17

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	13	

Number ceased being looked after		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLAA		4	11	9	<3 4 5 to 16 17 - 19 20>

There were 24 children who ceased being in care during the past 3 months in 2017/18, compared to 22 children during the same period in 2016/17

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	8	

Percentage of CIC who ceased to be looked after due to:		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance	
CLAZ3		SGO Returned Home Adoption Child Arrangement Order Independent Arrangement	2	8	4	Monitor
		0	0	0		
		0	0	0		
		5	2	2		

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score

## Children in Care

Percentage of CIC with 3 or more placements during the previous 12 months		April	May	June	Target/ Tolerance
CLA14		8.6%	8.6%	8.9%	<11.5%

Children in care with 3+ Placements has remained below target for the past 3 months. In July a total of 31 Children had the following placements: 3=18, 4=10, 5=3 . A new report has been written for this indicator.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
11.3%	10.6%	

Percentage of CLA (more than 2.5 years) in the same placement for at least 2 years		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA34a		54.0%	52.3%	53.5%	Monitor

This indicator remains within the 50-60% range

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
66.4%	58.6%	

Percentage of CLA whose last visit was within 6 weeks?		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA9		91.0%	77.0%	68.2%	90-100%

Initial visit data shows a further decrease in percentage, with an LCS trawl this figure increased to 77.5%, which still remains rated as 'red'.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	88%	

## Children in Care

Percentage of CLA whose last review was within timescales? (6 months)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA8		76.5%	79.6%	82.0%	95-100%

This indicator continues to be rated as 'Red', but has increased slightly to within the 80% range.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	93.5%	

Percentage CLA have an up-to-date care plan		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA36		Awaiting Data	100.0%	100.0%	95-100%

July has continued to reach its highest percentage seen (100%) although this indicator has not dropped below 95% since recording began.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	97.1%	

Percentage of CIC under section 20 (new)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA30		39.8%	40.1%	39.8%	Monitor

There has been no significant change for this indicator

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	37.6%	

## Children in Care

Percentage of CIC under section 20 >3 months		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA30b		87.8%	87.1%	79.0%	Monitor
	This indicator can fluctuate but tends to remain within the 75 - 90% range				

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	81.2%	

Percentage of CIC under section 20 >6 months		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA30c		68.3%	74.1%	66.7%	Monitor
	There has been no significant change for this indicator				

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	65.9%	

Total number of remands to custody this month		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CLA3		2	0	0	Monitor
	Numbers for remands to custody remains low, with June and July at 0.				

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	1	

## Children in Care

Percentage of children in care with up to date immunisations		April	May	June	Target/ Tolerance
COP9		95.0%	94.1%	94.1%	85 - 100%
	<p>This indicator continues to remain above 90% and rated as 'Green'</p>				

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	92.7%	

Number and percentage with dental checks in the previous 12 months		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP10		82.8%	78.1%	73.6%	85 - 100%
	<p>Figures for the last 4 months show an increase, from the 50 - 60% seen from September to February, to 70 - 80% which is now rated as 'Amber'. Need to monitor.</p>				

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	71.7%	

Number and percentage of CIC who have had a health assessment in the last 6 months (12 months)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP11		95.5%	96.3%	94.5%	95-100%
	<p>The last 9 months data shows this has remained above 92% and within the 'Green' target for this indicator</p>				

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	92.3%	

## Children in Care

Percentage of CLA who have had a timely initial health assessment in the last 6 months		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP18		39.0%	52.5%	63.5%	95-100%

Although this indicator has remained with the 'Red' rated category, figures show an improvement when compared to the low of 4% seen in November 2016 and also compared to the average of 13.8% for 2016/17. Improved logging has had a significant impact on this figure.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	13.8%	

Number and Percentage of CLA under 5 with an up to date developmental check		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP33		18 81.8%	17 81.0%	17 77.3%	100%

This indicator has dropped below the usual 100% that has been achieved previously, for July, 5 children have a development check out of timeframes

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	99.6%	

Number of Looked after Children seen by an optician in the previous 12 months		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP12		Awaiting Data	96	98	Monitor

There has been a marked increase in this figure for June and July compared to the previous year, this change could be due to a different report being used on a more updated system.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	88	

## Children in Care

Percentage of children in care participating in their own statutory reviews		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP6		94.3%	95.6%	95.9%	80%
	<p>Figures for this indicator remain above the 80% target, and haven't dropped below 90% for the past 2 years.</p>	Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score	
			95%		

Percentage of completed SDQs in the month that had a score of more than 13 (Annual)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP2a		41.6%	36.1%	40.1%	Monitor
	<p>This indicator has been decreasing month on month for the past year, the last 3 months have an average of 39% compared with 50% for the same period last year.</p>	Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score	
			49.1%		

Percentage of completed SDQs in the month that had a score of more than 16 (Annual)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP2b		29.5%	23.5%	27.2%	Monitor
	<p>This indicator has decreased in the past 3 months, with an average of 26.7% compared to 40% for the same period last year.</p>	Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score	
			37.1%		

## Children in Care

Percentage of 5 to 16 year old children in care with a Personal Education Plan meeting completed in the last 6 months		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP13		Awaiting Data	90%	97%	90 - 100%

This indicator has remained above 90% for the last 7 months of logged data

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	89.6%	

The number of CIC with Education provision concerns		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP30		Awaiting Data	39	42	Monitor

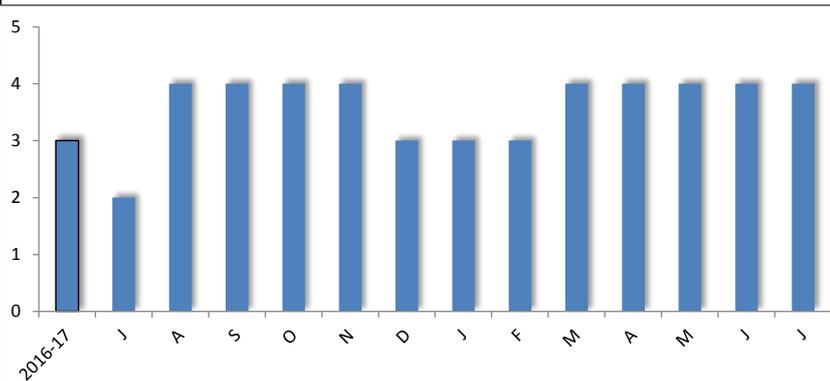
There has been a marked decrease in this figure for June and July compared to the previous year.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	62	

The number of CIC who have attended 2 or more schools in the past 2 years		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP31		Awaiting Data	Awaiting Data	Awaiting Data	Monitor

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	135	

## Children in Care

Number of CLA who have had a substance misuse identified		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
COP34		4	4	4	Monitor

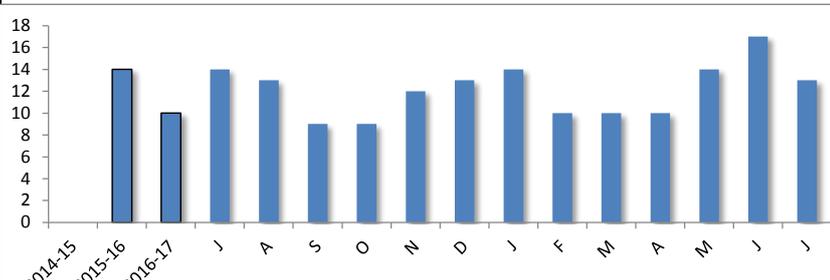
This indicator remains at 4 young people

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	3	

Number of new Private fostering notifications		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
PF3		0	1	0	Monitor

Numbers for this indicator remain low.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	0	

Current number of young people being privately fostered		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
PF1		14	17	13	Monitor

July figures have decreased slightly from June's, numbers usually range between 9 - 16 young people.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	12	

## Children in Care

Percentage of Private Fostering cases that have had visits within timescales		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
		78.6%	58.8%	69.2%	90-100%
	<p>This indicator remains rated as red but has increased in July when compared to June. 4 young people had visits out of timescales.</p>	<p>Statistical Neighbours</p>	<p>2016/17</p> <p>68.3%</p>	<p>Consistency Score</p>	

## Onwards & Upwards - Data Analysis

- The number of Care Leavers remains relatively stable and matched the same period last year. We think due to the influx of Children into Care in a higher age bracket over the past 6 months, the number of young people eligible for leaving care services has seen an increase outside of tolerances. The expectation is for this to impact these figures over the next 12 months.
- Pathway Plans continue to be a challenge as we are still to achieve the target of 90 -100% of all Care Leavers having an up to date Pathway Plan
- Visits for Care Leavers have decreased to sit outside of the target of 80%.
- Former relevant and relevant Care Leavers who have been in touch remains well above target.
- EET continues to show good performance with it being 13% above statistical neighbours and 2% above the same position the previous year.

Number of young people who are currently eligible for leaving care services/Number of Care Leavers		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CYP1		314	313	333	<b>&lt;240</b> 241 - 250 251 – 300 301 -309 <b>310&gt;</b>
		198	196	196	

This indicator continues to remain rated as 'Red', the large volume of children who have been in care is now having an impact on the leaving care numbers.		Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score	
			289		

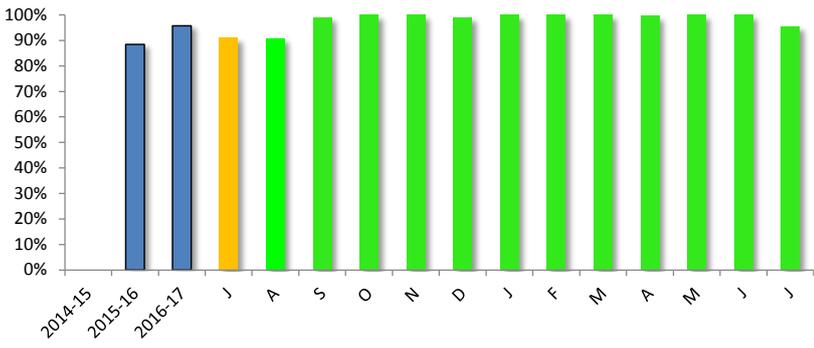
Percentage of Care leavers with up to date Pathway Plans		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CYP3		81.4%	88.0%	84.3%	90-100%

Up to date Pathway Plans have increased slightly over the past few months to over 80%, although this is still below the target of within 90-100%.		Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score	
			80.7%		

Percentage of Care Leavers on a Pathway Plan who have had a visit within 2 months (former relevant and relevant care leavers)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CYP5		89.2%	77.6%	69.5%	80%

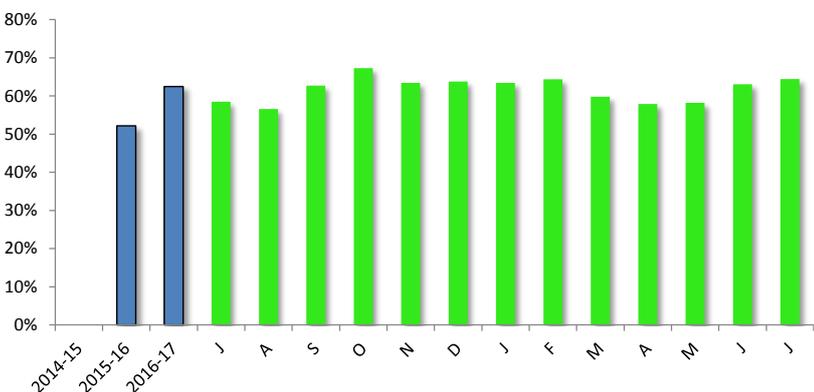
Initial visit data shows a further decrease in percentage, with an LCS trawl this figure increased to <b>77.6%</b> , which still remains rated as 'red'.		Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score	
			78.8%		

## Onwards & Upwards

Percentage of care leavers who have been in touch in the previous 12 months (former relevant and relevant care leavers)		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CYP6		100.0%	100.0%	95.4%	90-100%

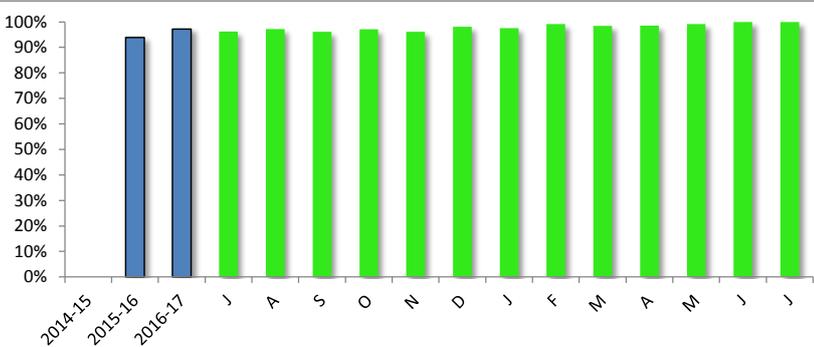
Although July figures have dipped slightly when compared to May and June, In touch figures have remained above 90% over the last 12 months.

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
	95.7%	

The percentage of care leavers (aged 19, 20,21) in employment, education or training		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CYP7		58.2%	63.1%	64.5%	55%

April and May saw a slight decline in figures below 60%, but June and July have increased once more and this indicator is now in line with the average seen during 2016/17

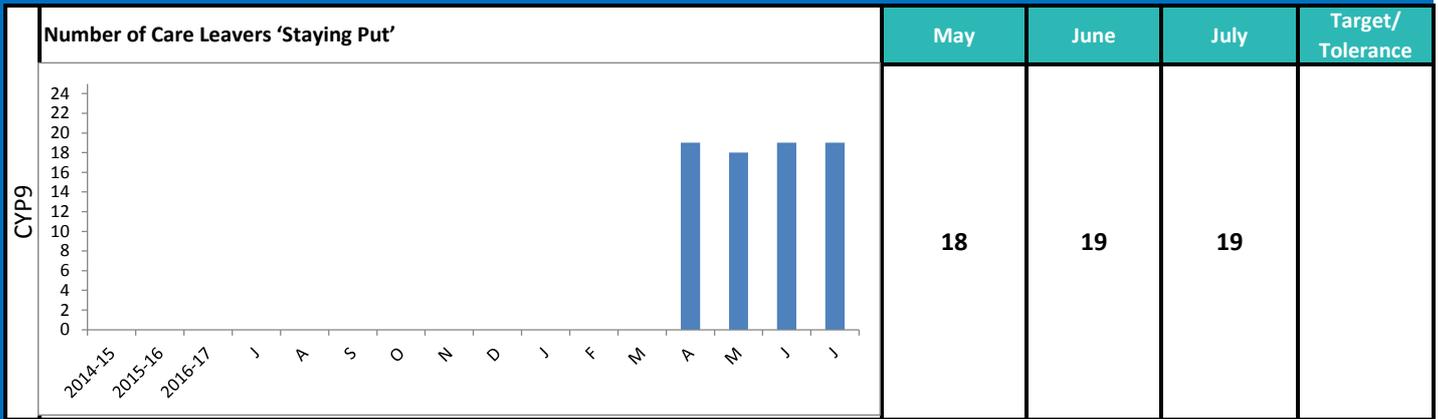
Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
51.2%	62.5%	

Care leavers (aged 19,20,21) in suitable accommodation		May	June	July	Target/ Tolerance
CYP8		99.2%	100.0%	100.0%	90-100%

This indicator has consistently remained above 90% and has reached 100% for the first time in June and July

Statistical Neighbours	2016/17	Consistency Score
80.2%	97.2%	

## Onwards & Upwards

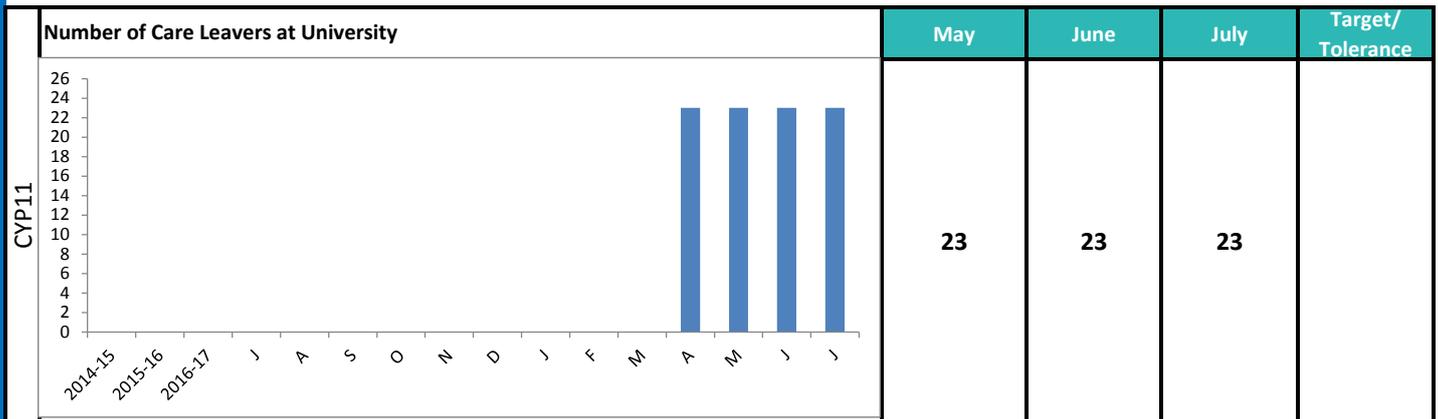


There has been no significant change for this indicator

Statistical  
Neighbours

2016/17

Consistency  
Score



There has been no significant change for this indicator

Statistical  
Neighbours

2016/17

Consistency  
Score



are you a  
Private  
Fostered  
Caret?

Are you caring for a child in your home for more than 28 days  
and you are not their close relative\* or guardian?

#### Aims and our involvement

- Undertaking private fostering assessments to ensure that the placement is suitable
- Making regular visits to the children to ensure that they are safe and well
- Ensuring the child's educational, emotional, cultural and physical needs are being met
- Providing support and guidance to carers
- Informing carers of their responsibilities.

\*Parent, Grandparent, Aunt, Brother Sister, Uncle, Step-parent or Legal guardian



For more information, please contact our MASH team:  
tel: 020 8359 4066 email: [mash@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:mash@barnet.gov.uk)  
or visit [www.barnet.gov.uk/private-fostering](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/private-fostering)

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