



HM Government

# Care leaver strategy

One year on progress update

October 2014

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## Foreword

The Care Leaver Strategy, launched a year ago, set out the actions that government departments would take in order to improve the support care leavers receive during their transition to adulthood and independence. This one-year-on document reports on progress made and sets out how we intend to further improve support for care leavers.

As the original strategy document made clear, our ambition is to give care leavers the same level of care and support that other young people receive from their parents. The strategy built on a substantial programme of work to improve care leavers' lives that had been put in place over the last 4 years, including the development of the Care Leaver's Charter, the introduction of over 54 thousand Junior ISAs for children in care, bursaries for care leavers participating in further and higher education, and the introduction of a new inspection framework which now requires Ofsted to make a specific judgement on the support provided to care leavers as part of its inspections of children's social care.

Since last year's strategy was launched, we've continued to improve support for care leavers, in particular by introducing the 'Staying Put' arrangements which will allow thousands of children in foster placements to remain with their foster carers until age 21, improving monitoring of the care leaver's journey through to adulthood through the collection of enhanced data, and providing care leavers with Personal Adviser support until the age of 25 (if they remain in education) or training, or have plans to return to education or training.

The 2013 strategy illustrated the priority that government as a whole gives to improving the lives of care leavers. Its implementation is overseen by the Social Justice Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith, which invited care leavers to attend one of its meetings to discuss the issues that most affect their lives. This provided a unique opportunity for Ministers across government to consider the barriers that prevent care leavers from achieving their full potential, and the support that is available to overcome them. Ministers also committed to spend time shadowing a care leaver and to provide care leavers with work experience opportunities in their departments.

Much has been achieved over the last year and I remain resolute in my determination to secure further improvements for care leavers in the year ahead.



**Edward Timpson**

**Minister for Children & Families**

## Introduction

The following sections of this document set out how departments have been and continue to work together to help improve services and support in the following areas:

- Education
- Employment
- Financial support
- Health
- Housing
- Youth Justice
- Access to advice and support
- Harnessing social action
- Data collection

It includes case studies that document the experiences of care leavers and describes how the strategy has affected their lives. It also shows how departments have embedded support for care leavers in their policies and programmes. A summary of progress on the specific commitments made in the strategy is provided at annex 1.

## Education

The government's commitment to improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and care leavers remains as strong as ever. We want schools, colleges, universities and local authorities to give care leavers support and encouragement to succeed, whatever stage of education they are in.

In January this year, North Yorkshire launched a corporate mentoring scheme for care leavers thinking about going into higher education or who were already at university. The council's chief executive volunteered to be a mentor and has given his full backing to staff who wished to take part by giving them paid time off to act as volunteers. North Yorkshire has twice the national average of care leavers attending university and the aim of the scheme is to enhance their employment after graduation by helping them to access work experience and internships. Over time, the intention is to extend the scheme to all care leavers.

The government has a legal duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, which extends to young people aged 16 and 17 preparing to leave care. There is now a statutory requirement for all local authorities to appoint a Virtual School Head, responsible for promoting the educational attainment of all looked-after children in their area.

The pupil premium now covers children from their first day in care, and the amount of funding for each eligible looked-after child has increased to £1,900 - up from £900 in 2013-14. Virtual School Heads will be responsible for deciding how pupil premium funding will be spent, in order to maximise its impact on the attainment of looked-after children.

In May 2014, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) published a guide to the opportunities that exist in the further education sector. Care leavers and those who support them now have all the information they need in one place on courses, careers, eligibility for free training, grants and the range of other support available. You can view the guidance at [care-leavers-skills-support-guide](#).

Since its launch in 2006 the Buttle UK Quality Mark has raised awareness among higher and further education institutions about the barriers to success experienced by looked-after children and care leavers. With the Quality Mark coming to an end in 2015, Buttle UK has been working with relevant partners, who have signed a [statement of commitment to looked-after children and care leavers in education](#), to ensure that the principles underpinning this award continue to transform institutional culture and practice.

“Quality Mark principles have shaped the University’s provision and support for care leavers. We actively target young people who have experienced care to take part in our widening participation activities, and when a student’s UCAS application flags they are a care leaver, this forms part of the contextual data we use at the point of admission to the University. Through the Greater Manchester LAC Forum, we work closely with designated teachers and local authority colleagues to gain a better understanding of care leavers’ needs.” (University of Manchester)

“The Buttle UK Quality Mark transformed the way we support students from care. It helped us focus on what we could do and also gave us advice on best practice. The most significant thing for us was to take the recommendation of the quality mark to have a designated person with responsibility for these students.” (Uxbridge College)

As part of its commitment to improve the on support for young people beyond age 21, the Department for Education (DfE) has strengthened its statutory guidance for local authorities supporting care leavers aged 21-24 who wish to return to education or training; making it clear that local authorities should support care leavers to overcome barriers that might prevent them from returning to education or training, up to age 25<sup>1</sup>. It also made clear that local authorities should support care leavers to remain in their placements until the end of the academic year after a young person’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if they are in education or training – to avoid disruption at this critical point in their learning.

In Torbay, all carer leavers regardless of their status (eligible, relevant or former relevant) have a Personal Education Plan compiled by South Devon College. The virtual head and teacher liaise with the Integrated Youth Support Service leaving care team to address issues of concern, to share information and to raise the profile of care leavers and their needs in schools and colleges for example working with the virtual head and South Devon College on the PEP delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE: [Transition-to-adulthood-guidance-for-care-leavers](#)

## **Next Steps**

DfE is exploring how data from the National Pupil Database can be matched with the Individual Learner Record, to get more detailed information on how care leavers progress within further education. This will help to identify what more could be done to improve the experience of further education for those leaving care.

## Employment

Ensuring that care leavers have the same opportunities and support as their peers to prepare for and access employment is a priority for this government. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is working innovatively to support care leavers into employment and is funding Drive Forward, a charity supporting care leavers, to deliver its intensive 1-2-1 employment programme.

“When I met my Jobcentre Specialist Adviser, Patricia, I met a very lovely lady who was willing to help me find a job and believed in me. It is such a wonder to have someone like Patricia from the DWP work so closely with you and so much better having her be so accessible and in the leaving care team building, a place that isn't hostile and somewhere I'm familiar with. When I left care, Patricia made sure I received my benefit on time so I wasn't worrying I'd have no money and that allowed me to focus on getting a job. She asked me what work I'd like to do and I told her I wasn't sure and didn't feel confident I could get a job. She told me not to worry and that together with Mick from Drive Forward they would help me. I joined the Drive Forward Programme and Mick made me realise I could find a job and do anything if I put my mind to it. Mick helped me with a CV and showed me where to look for jobs and what to do in interviews. I've now been working for Sainsbury's for the last 2 months in their admin department and I love it, I feel so proud of myself. Patricia still keeps in touch with me every week to check that work and everything else is going ok.”

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith recently saw this innovative work in action when he visited the Care Leaver hub in Barnet. A specialist Jobcentre plus adviser is co-located in local authority Leaving Care Services premises along with the care leaver charity Drive Forward to offer more holistic 1-2-1 support to care leavers. Whilst there, he talked personally with care leavers about their experiences. The care leavers all praised staff in the hub for helping them turn their lives around.

DWP has recently announced a new commitment, giving care leavers the chance to join the Work Programme from the start of their benefit claim, to ensure they receive tailored, locally-appropriate employment support at the earliest opportunity.

Since October 2013, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) has introduced a 'marker' to identify care leavers on its information database. To date 3,162 care leavers have been identified. This is a significant step forward in ensuring care leavers receive priority employment/benefit support and in allowing DWP to track and evaluate how effective this support is in delivering work outcomes. The activity around the marker continues to encourage closer working relationships with local authority leaving care teams, Jobcentre Plus and leaving care organisations to provide the additional support care leavers may need in looking for and finding work.



DfE is funding Catch 22 to deliver the '*FromCare2Work*' programme, which provides care leavers with work opportunities such as apprenticeships and full-time jobs. In 2013/14 the '*FromCare2Work*' programme had partnerships with 60 local authorities and since its inception has created over 700 employment opportunities, including 175 jobs and apprenticeships<sup>2</sup>.

A number of government departments have participated in the Whitehall Internship Programme which provides opportunities for students from low-income backgrounds and gives special priority to children in care and care leavers. Interns this year have included at least one care leaver on placement with BIS.

### **Next Steps**

Through the employer-led Movement to Work initiative, government departments are looking to provide work experience opportunities for care leavers aged 18-24 who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

DWP's Care Leaver Policy Team will provide a care leaver work experience opportunity through Movement to Work. The work will include informing policy development and raising awareness amongst DWP staff of care leaver issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Catch22 (NCAS): [From-care2work-programme](#)

## Financial Assistance

The government has arranged for all looked-after children to have a special savings account called a Junior ISA. The government has allocated £200 to each account, which the local authority and other organisations can add to throughout the young person's time in care. Young people are able to access this account once they turn 18.

'Firstly, can I thank you for the Junior ISA investment, which is what responsible parents do for their children. I'm currently working hard at school and want to get onto an apprenticeship in the building industry when I leave school. My Keyworker tells me that I will need books, tools, work clothes and safety boots. He tells me that these things are expensive and I have decided to save for them now. Once I qualify, I want to set up my own business and become independent. These are the plans I have for my ISA when it matures along with me at 18!'

DfE amended its 'Transitions to Adulthood' guidance in May 2014, to encourage local authorities to provide at least £2,000 as a 'setting up home' allowance for their care leavers. Three local authorities from the New Belongings project have committed to providing their care leavers with up to £3,000 setting up home allowance while others have provided the suggested £2,000.

DWP continues to ensure all Jobcentre Plus districts using current legacy systems can, using dedicated named advisers, allow care leavers to make a claim to benefit in advance of leaving care, in order to prevent unnecessary delays in the payment of benefit and hardship.

### Next Steps

DWP already offers benefit support to care leavers up to age 21 when returning to full time non-advanced education. In addition, DWP will explore what more can be done within the benefit system to support those wishing to return to education beyond age 21.

DWP will ensure all existing mechanisms for supporting care leavers in the benefit system will be incorporated in Universal Credit. This will include ensuring care leavers can make a claim to Universal Credit in advance of leaving care at the point that Universal Credit service is established across Great Britain, which will be complete by 2017.

DWP will ensure care leavers claiming Universal Credit who need help managing their money and paying bills on time will have access to personal budgeting support. This will include the option of being paid via alternative payment arrangements for a transitional period, including having their Universal Credit payments paid more frequently than monthly; and for any housing costs being paid to their landlord directly as a managed payment. DWP also intends to exempt care leavers from serving waiting days in Universal Credit, to ensure the smooth financial transition from care to independent living.

## Health

“It was sometimes a bit of a shock having to do things for yourself when you have been used to having things done for you. We’re lucky though because even now we can call our nurse and ask for help”. Care leaver from Salford.

The Department of Health (DH) has awarded a grant to the Care Leavers Association (CLA) for three years (2014-2017) to deliver its “Caring for better health” project. This is intended to improve the physical and mental health of care leavers of all ages by using feedback from care leavers to develop resources to inform the commissioning and delivery of services.

“The social worker referred me to mental health and substance misuse support; they helped me get off drugs, been clear for 6 months now. They reassured me that I could do it. I can’t go back to them now as I’m 18, but I can go to Turning Point if needed – they offered to transfer me to Turning Point but I knew that I didn’t need it then, I want to use will power. I know that the future will be good, it’s boring doing drugs, you lose your family and friends; it’s a dark place to be”. Care leaver from Gloucestershire.

In July, the Minister of State for Care and Support, Norman Lamb, announced a ‘Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Well-Being Taskforce’, which will bring together experts on children and young people’s mental health and those with knowledge of wider system transformation from across health, education and social care. The Taskforce will consider what changes and improvements are needed to improve outcomes for children and young people with mental health difficulties. It will include a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable groups, such as those who have been in the care system. The Taskforce will report to Ministers in spring 2015.

“Health support for care leavers with babies is massive and children’s centres are really good with lots going on.” Care leaver from Yorkshire.

### Next Steps

DH and DfE are currently working together to revise statutory guidance on promoting the health and well-being of looked-after children and, in doing so, looking at how to strengthen what it says about the importance of improving support for care leavers. The updated guidance will be finalised in spring 2015.

## Housing

“The Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) after care provision has worked with the Housing Department in Torbay to create joint working on many initiatives including the creation of an 18+ Protocol and Housing Pathway regarding the Southwark Judgement. The IYSS After Care provision incorporated its own Supported Lodgings provision within a joint contract with housing to increase capacity, access and availability, to allow young people to be more ‘socially mobile’ across the county. This means they can get closer to other colleges, schools and Universities or can move for safety reasons.”

DfE has introduced a new legal duty on local authorities to support care leavers to continue living with their foster families once they turn 18. Now all young people in foster care can remain with their foster family until age 21, if both the young person and the foster carer want this.

In Staffordshire, 24 care leavers are currently benefiting from its Staying Put scheme and they report having clear, safe choices about where to live. As a result, Staffordshire has an above average proportion of care leavers aged 19 who are in accommodation that meets their needs. And in North Derbyshire, 110 care leavers have been helped to remain in their foster placements since 2008, making it easier for them to continue their education.

The DfE has worked closely with Ofsted on their revised inspection framework, which now has a specific judgement on the quality of support provided to care leavers. Local authorities will be judged on the accommodation they provide to all care leavers and will only receive a ‘good’ judgement if they can demonstrate they provide accommodation that *“is appropriate for each young person to safely develop their independence skills”* and where they *“are safe and feel safe”*.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued revised guidance in December 2013 on social housing allocations. The guidance recommends that local authorities, when adopting a residency test, consider the position of those who might be particularly disadvantaged, such as care leavers who are in ‘out of borough’ placements. DCLG has also developed a number of programmes targeting youth homelessness. These include the Positive Transitions programme, which explores how local services can work more effectively together to support young people, including care leavers, before they reach crisis point and become homeless.

Despite these measures, the government remains concerned that a small minority of care leavers are placed in unsuitable ‘Bed & Breakfast’ (B&B) accommodation, in a few cases for an extended period of time. Statutory guidance is already clear that B&B accommodation is not considered to be suitable accommodation. In response to the findings of the Education Select Committee, following its review of post-16 care leaver

support, DfE will amend guidance to make clear that emergency placements in B&B should be exceptional and limited to no more than two working days. We believe this strikes the right balance - setting clear expectations about the quality of support for young people, while retaining the flexibility necessary to ensure that B&B can be used if it the best way to meet a young person's needs.

### **Next Steps**

The £15 million Fair Chance Fund is a 'payment by results' scheme jointly funded by DCLG and the Cabinet Office (CO), designed to support the most vulnerable homeless 18-25 year olds into accommodation, education and training. The programme will start from January 2015 and will support approximately 1,600 young people. DH is also delivering 'Platform for Life', a low rent shared accommodation programme for homeless young people so they have a stable platform from which to work, study and live a healthy life.

## Youth Justice

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has issued guidance to staff in probation and prison services to support better identification of care leavers, and is working closely with other government departments to help improve the support received by young adult offenders who are care leavers. For example, MOJ is represented on the Transitions Forum hosted by the Youth Justice Board and NOMS, to explore ways of improving the transition of young people from youth to adult services.

MOJ has also appointed a new Care Leavers Champion, Teresa Clarke, Governor at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall.

“At Swinfen Hall we are developing how we work to ensure that care leavers and prison staff are aware of any entitlements to support that care leavers are entitled to. We want to ensure that care leavers are supported by staff, have a voice through their own peer support network/group, can access any entitlements/support while in custody, and are properly prepared for release.

On arrival at Swinfen Hall, Offender Supervisors identify care leavers, who are then made aware of staff who can assist them in accessing these services. To date we have had two support network meetings and feedback from the care leavers who have attended is extremely positive. We are offering awareness training for all staff so that they are confident in signposting services to prisoners who are care leavers. In partnership with our care leavers, we aspire to provide an environment where care leavers are supported, can support each other and have a positive experience of being in custody.”

### Next steps

MoJ has further committed to include new identifiers on custodial databases to identify care leavers in custody, so that they can be signposted to the range of support that is on offer.

## Access to advice and support

It is critical that care leavers have access to support and guidance. There will be times that they will need informal friendly advice, and other times when they will need a professional skilled person to advise and represent them (for example at meetings).

‘Jane felt that she was not being considered in local authority plans for her unborn baby. She felt her living options were being limited so that an Interim Care Order could be taken out on her baby at birth. She wanted a NYAS advocate to help voice her concerns and establish accommodation options. The advocate supported Jane in key meetings, pre-birth assessments and safeguarding discussions. She was helped to present her wishes and feelings constructively to the social workers. Jane has been able to keep and care for her new baby while a new assessment is being considered. The advocate also helped ensure that Jane received Healthy Start vouchers and made an application for Income Support.’

DfE is continuing to fund both the National Youth Advocacy Service and Coram-Voice to provide a telephone advocacy helpline service for looked-after children and care leavers. The service includes the allocation of an independent advocate if a care leaver requests this.

DfE has been funding the Care Leavers’ Foundation to run the New Belongings project since April 2013. This important project draws on the skills and knowledge of care leavers working with nine local authorities to help identify barriers and find solutions, to improve services for care leavers. The project will develop a ‘gold standard’ model that all local authorities can use to assess the quality of the service they provide for their care leavers. The DfE will be exploring with the Care Leavers Foundation how to build on the learning and good practice identified during the project. The final report from the project on the findings from phase 1 will be published at the end of November 2014.

A number of voluntary organisations and young people told us of the difficulty care leavers can experience in obtaining records about their time in care. It is important that people who have been in care receive comprehensive information about their family background to help them to make informed decisions about their lives. DfE has worked with relevant organisations and young people to strengthen the ‘transition to adulthood’ guidance, which outlines the principles and processes that should be in place when requests for care records are made.

## **Harnessing Social Action**

The Vulnerable and Disengaged Young People (VYP) Fund provides more than £2.5m to enable 26 volunteering programmes. These give crucial support to young people in vulnerable circumstances, including young offenders, young people who are NEET, and young people with disabilities. Six programmes support young people in and leaving care. The programmes bring together volunteers and community organisations to support vulnerable young people to achieve their potential.

### **What we have done**

The Centre for Social Action (a partnership between Cabinet Office and NESTA) has awarded grants to the six organisations listed below to deliver programmes to improve outcomes for young people in and leaving care between February 2014 and March 2015. Programmes include young people in care being supported and mentored by adult volunteers and other care leavers, in order to prepare them for the transition to independent living. Other programmes support young people in and leaving care to participate in social action or volunteering projects to develop skills such as communication, team work, organisation, confidence, and leadership.

### **Greater Manchester Youth Network**

The Boom project offers young people in and leaving care a social action-based activity programme whereby they carry out activities in the service of others or communities, including group volunteering activities (e.g. gardening at local parks, learning about and fundraising for charities), identifying their own social action opportunities and promoting social action to others. The young people record the activities they are involved in, the skills they have learnt, and their next steps.

### **Care Leavers Association**

This programme trains and supports volunteer care leavers to draw on their experiences and mentor and befriend younger care leavers. The volunteer care leavers develop and deliver a course aimed at better preparing the younger care leavers for independent living. In addition, an online forum is used to create a peer network.

### **Lancashire County Council**

Access to information, advice and support (particularly out of hours) is often an issue for care leavers. Funding will extend the existing outreach service for care leavers, developing a package of support that includes out of hours support. Local hubs will provide opportunities to socialise, get support from peers and adult volunteers, develop skills (such as budgeting and cooking), and access support from agencies such as the



Citizen's Advice Bureau, health providers, job centres, further education settings and charitable organisations.

## **Catch22**

This programme engages young care leavers through Catch22's Young People's Benchmarking Forum with the aim of improving perceptions of care leavers. Care leavers are supported to develop and lead their own social action projects using Catch22's social action app - 'Plan. Do' - which in turn supports other care leavers and promotes improvements in services.

## **NYAS**

Volunteer care leavers are given training and support to become accredited peer mentors. As peer mentors they will be matched with and provide supervision to a young person in care. Care leavers can use their experience of growing up in the care system to benefit other looked-after children, while growing their own confidence and skills.

## **North Music Trust at Sage Gateshead**

Adult volunteer mentors are equipped to support care leavers. Mentors will help young care leavers to engage with opportunities provided by Sage Gateshead, including volunteering opportunities (e.g. the Young People's Action Group), work experience, programmes of study, sign-posting to FE and HE courses, music classes and workshops, gigs and performances, and festivals and events.

## **Social Impact Bonds**

The DWP's Innovation Fund and the upcoming cross-governmental Youth Engagement Fund aim to reduce the number of young people who become NEET (not in education, employment or training). They are targeted at supporting the hardest to help young people, including care leavers.

## Data Collection

Having good quality data is essential to inform future policy initiatives. DfE, as part of its commitment to understanding the journey of young people who are or were in care, has this year begun to collect data on the circumstances of care leavers at the ages of 20 and 21 years old in addition to the existing data collection on the circumstances of care leavers at age 19<sup>3</sup>.

“To address the need to inform service provision and future needs and the increasing demand on Freedom of Information requests, the IYSS (After Care) Torbay Practice manager has developed a monthly supervision recording mechanism, which tracks and measures care leavers’ progress on a range of performance measures”.

### Next Steps

From September 2015, DfE will also be collecting data at age 18 and from 2016 will collect data on the circumstances of those 16 and 17 year olds who leave care. By consolidating the data we have on young people as they leave care we will be able to track their progress in accommodation and education/employment and use this information to support the development of interventions that address their needs.

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<sup>3</sup> DfE: [SFR- Data collection for care leavers aged over 19](#)

## Conclusion

A core aim of the Care Leaver Strategy is to ensure that support for care leavers is embedded in all relevant departmental policies. This report shows how this is being achieved. The government's commitment to improving services for care leavers remains as strong as ever and departments will continue to work together to consider what more can be done to improve the day to day experiences of young people leaving care.

Another example of how we are continuing to explore better models of service is the Children's Services Innovation Programme. The government has established the Innovation Programme to support local authorities to rethink their services for vulnerable young people, and to encourage the spread of effective practice. More information is available at [Innovation-programme](#).

## Feedback from Care Leavers

We would welcome feedback from care leavers on what issues and themes they consider we should address over the coming year. As indicated earlier in the document, a working group will continue to review care policy which will include monitoring progress of the actions to be taken by each department. Please send suggestions to: [careleavers.feedback@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:careleavers.feedback@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## Annex A

Department	Commitment	Progress
DfE	DfE will strengthen its statutory guidance on local authority duties to support care leavers aged 21-24 who wish to return to education or training, so that those with ongoing problems receive support to return to education.	<b>Met.</b> We strengthened our transitions to adulthood guidance in May 2014.
	DfE will continue to fund Catch 22 to expand the FromCare2Work programme to increase the numbers of care leavers given employment opportunities.	<b>Met.</b> We continue to fund Catch 22's FromCare2Work programme.
	DfE will amend statutory guidance to encourage all local authorities to provide at least £2,000 as part of their Setting Up Home Allowance (leaving care grant) to their young people when they leave care, and to review this annually with their local Children in Care Council.	<b>Met.</b> We amended our transitions to adulthood guidance in May 2014 to encourage LAs to pay £2000 setting up home allowance.
	DfE will fund Catch22 (NCAS) to run a residential children's homes project over the next two years, with a particular focus on supporting care leavers.	<b>Met.</b> We continue to support this area of work.
	DfE will amend the Care Planning Regulations for 16 and 17 year old looked-after children. A new rule will mean that a decision to cease looking after a young person of this age is not put into effect until it has been approved and signed off by the Director of Children's Services. The intention behind this proposal is that young people do not leave care until they are properly ready.	<b>Met.</b> We have amended the care planning regulations accordingly.

Department	Commitment	Progress
	DfE will continue to fund the Care Leavers' Foundation to run the New Belongings project. Nine local authorities in England have signed up to this project that - aims to create the gold standard in supporting care leavers, which can then be replicated in other areas to improve the lives of vulnerable young people leaving care.	<b>Met.</b> We continue to fund New Belongings. There was a 2 day conference in Manchester in October 2014 to disseminate lessons from the project
<b>DWP</b>	DWP will introduce a 'marker' to routinely identify care leavers on their information database.	<b>Met.</b> This is a very significant step forward to recognise care leavers within Jobcentre Plus (JCP). This has enabled DWP to track both the support care leavers are receiving and how effective this is in delivering employment outcomes. Since October 2013, 2,761 care leavers have been identified on our system and we have worked with local authority Leaving Care Teams and Jobcentre plus Advisers to raise awareness of the marker so that care leavers get the necessary support they require.
	Linked to the launch of the marker, DWP is also raising awareness of JobcentrePlus Advisers of the issues care leavers face in their transition to independent living/adulthood and work.	<b>Continues to be met.</b> DWP is also considering a training proposal from Drive Forward to deliver group training sessions to JobcentrePlus staff on care leaver needs and issues
	DWP will announce a new commitment to give care leavers the chance to join the Work Programme at the earliest opportunity.	<b>Met.</b> From 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2014 care leavers have the opportunity to access the Work Programme from day one of their benefit claim.

Department	Commitment	Progress
	DWP will ensure care leavers who need help managing their money and paying bills on time in Universal Credit will have access to personal budgeting support. This will include the option of having their Universal Credit payments paid more frequently than monthly.	<b>Met.</b> DWP will ensure care leavers who need help managing their money and paying bills on time in Universal Credit will have access to personal budgeting support. This will include the option of being paid via alternative payment arrangements for a transitional period; including having their Universal Credit payments paid more frequently than monthly and for any housing costs being paid to their landlord directly as a managed payment.
	DWP will ensure care leavers can make a claim to Universal Credit in advance of leaving care.	<b>Met.</b> DWP will ensure care leavers can make a claim to Universal Credit in advance of leaving care at the point that the Universal Credit service is established across Great Britain, which will be complete by 2017.
<b>DH</b>	Statutory guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of looked-after Children (November 2009) highlights the importance of care leavers being able to continue to obtain health advice and services. In updating it in 2014, <b>DH</b> and <b>DfE</b> will set out how organisations in the reformed health system should work with local authorities to improve support for care leavers.	<b>On Track.</b> DH and DfE are currently revising the statutory guidance, engaging informally with a range of key stakeholders. A short formal consultation is planned for late autumn. The updated guidance will be published in spring 2015.
	The Royal Colleges and other health professional bodies will shortly update the intercollegiate framework, <i>Looked-after children: knowledge, skills and competences of health care staff</i> (May	<b>On Track.</b> The Royal Colleges are currently working to update the intercollegiate framework. They expect to publish the revised version by the end of

Department	Commitment	Progress
	2012), in light of the NHS structural changes in England. It covers responsibilities to support care leavers.	2014.
	The Care Quality Commission (CQC), Ofsted and the other inspectorates are developing plans to commence multi-agency inspections of local arrangements for safeguarding children and for looked-after children in 2015. In the meantime, in September 2013 CQC introduced a new programme to inspect local health service arrangements for these groups, including care leavers.	<b>Met.</b> In June 2014, the inspectorates published for consultation their proposals for integrated inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked-after and care leavers, and for joint inspections of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. They plan to launch the new inspection programme in April 2015.
	DH will launch interactive e-learning programmes to support children and young people's mental health, via an e-Portal, in 2014. This will help extend the skills and knowledge of NHS clinicians, teachers, social workers, counsellors and supervisors working in a range of health, educational and youth settings. The e-Portal developers will invite care leavers to help shape its content and presentation.	<b>Met.</b> DH launched the MindEd ePortal in March 2014.
<b>BIS</b>	BIS will publish a brief guide to the further education and skills system, aimed at care leavers and those that work with them. Sector bodies will help make sure the guide clearly gives the information care leavers really need about careers advice, eligibility for free training, grants and other support available.	<b>Met.</b> We published our care leaver booklet in May 2014.
<b>MoJ</b>	MoJ will appoint a new Care Leavers Champion, who will act as an internal advocate for this group, and will ensure effective dissemination of the published	<b>Met.</b> Teresa Clarke Governor at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall has been appointed as Care Leavers Champion. Guidance

Department	Commitment	Progress
	guidance to staff and relevant staff groups.	on working with care leavers for prison and probation staff has been developed and disseminated.
	MoJ will develop clear ways of identifying care leavers in adult services both in custody and in the community so we can better ensure they receive the right support. This builds on improved identification in Asset for young people who are under 18. It will be coupled with guidance for practitioners who are completing assessment tools so that they understand better who qualifies for care leaver status.	<b>Met.</b> Guidance has been issued to staff in probation and prisons on ways of identifying care leavers. Community databases now contain identifiers for care leavers and there is agreement to include identifiers on custodial databases from Autumn 2014, as changes have required sequencing with other technical amendments.
	MoJ will work with other government departments, particularly with DCLG, to help ensure local authorities improve their links with young adult offenders who are care leavers, particularly in custody.	<b>Met.</b> MoJ, including NOMS, is represented on the Transitions Forum, hosted by Youth Justice Board and NOMS, which brings together government departments to explore ways of improving the transition of young people from youth to adult services. The main focus so far has been on improving communication between Youth Offending Teams and Prisons/Probation about care leavers and on raising awareness of the importance of local authority care leaver services having access to care leavers in custody.  MoJ has also been grateful to the Care Leavers Association who has facilitated regional workshops on these issues with representation from a spread of public services.



Department	Commitment	Progress
<b>DCLG</b>	DCLG is consulting on proposals to issue new statutory guidance on social housing allocations encouraging local authorities to adopt a residency test as part of their qualification criteria for social housing. The guidance will recommend that local authorities, when adopting a residency test, consider the position of those who might be particularly disadvantaged, such as care leavers who are in out of borough placements.	<b>Met.</b> Revised statutory guidance published 31 December 2013
	DCLG is currently developing proposals for tackling youth homelessness including looking at models offering affordable shared accommodation options for homeless young people and a programme aimed at improving the integration of local services for young people, including care leavers, who are at risk of homelessness.	<p><b>Met. Positive Transitions -</b> Seven local authorities (Positive Transition areas) are working with us on a pilot scheme to explore how local services can be better joined up so that young people are supported before they reach crisis point and become homeless.</p> <p>The authorities signed up to work with us are Birmingham, Brighton &amp; Hove, Blackpool, Greenwich, Southwark, Stoke and NE Lincolnshire.</p> <p><b>Fair Chance Fund –</b> A £15m ‘payment by results’ scheme jointly funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Cabinet Office. This will support high needs homeless 18 – 25 into housing, education and work and will attract social investment into this area through Social Impact Bonds. 18 organisations submitted bids the due diligence process is underway with preferred bids.</p>

Department	Commitment	Progress
		<p>An announcement of winners is expected in early December.</p> <p><b>Platform for Life</b> - £1.5m programme which will create a new type of low rent shared accommodation for young people aged 18 to 24 who aspire to long-term employment and to living independent and healthy lives.</p> <p>We expect to publish the prospectus shortly.</p>
<b>CO</b>	<p>The Cabinet Office will work in partnership with <b>DWP</b> and <b>DfE</b> to explore innovative ways to support care leavers. The Cabinet Office's Centre for Social Action aims to tackle social issues by making the most of community resources and individuals, for example by promoting volunteering, mentoring or peer-to-peer support. There are some strong examples of projects using social action to support young people through the transition to leaving care: the Centre for Social Action will lead this cross-departmental project to understand what works and build upon it to improve outcomes for care leavers.</p>	<p><b>Met.</b> Through the Vulnerable and Disengaged Young People Fund, the Cabinet Office Centre for Social Action is funding six VCSE organisations using varied social action models to support young people in or leaving care. The design of the fund and selection process was carried out with the input of DfE and DWP. To increase our understanding of what works to improve outcomes for care leavers, each VCSE organisation will carry out an independent evaluation to look at the outcomes of their programme.</p>
<b>HO</b>	<p>Through the Home Office led National Group we will ensure that the risks to particularly vulnerable groups, including care leavers, are included in our work.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



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