



Coventry Safeguarding Children Board

Care Leavers Experience

Audit Summary

Objective

- To determine the outcomes for children leaving the care of the Local Authority as they become adults

Key lines of enquiry

- How well care leavers are safeguarded
- Whether young people feel they were adequately prepared for independence
- Whether improved outcomes for care leavers are achieved as a result of interventions
- Effectiveness of decision making and intervention across agencies
- How effectively the young person's voice has been heard
- How well agency standards are followed
- Strategic planning

Summary of Findings

- Good transition from looked after children services to care leaving services is key to effective safeguarding
- Consistency of professionals, in particular, the personal advisor is key to achieving successful outcomes
- Need to ensure that out of city arrangements for supporting care leavers to stay in employment, education or training are on a par with opportunities available within the city boundaries
- Importance of taking time and building capacity to build strong relationships with care leavers
- Importance of listening to young people and being creative in the way in which they are supported, with a range of options
- Good quality pathway planning and ensuring care leavers understand their entitlements is crucial
- Effective support of care leavers is the responsibility of all agencies involved but there should be clear lines of accountability around who is leading on any given piece of work
- The cohort did not include care leavers involved in youth offending or with mental health issues, so it is not possible to draw wholesale assumptions about the leaving care experience

Recommendations

- The Local Authority should ensure that it is not possible to close a case concerning a looked after child if the case is eligible for care leaving support.
- Effective arrangements should be in place to ensure that there is parity of access to employment, education and training support for out of city care leavers and those resident within Coventry
- Personal Advisor's should be engaged in the support of care leavers at a sufficiently early point, including being part of the looked after children review process prior to the child leaving care
- Improve understanding among practitioners around using leaving care health assessments and care plans, as well as the young person care leavers' health history to inform care leaving plans.
- Ensure that time and space is available personal advisors to carry out reflective and relational work with care leavers