

# **Progress Report on Care Leavers Internal Audit Recommendations:**

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## **Background:**

A care leaver is defined as a person aged between 16 and 25, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date. Such care could be in foster care, residential care or other arrangements outside the immediate or extended family.

An internal audit was undertaken regarding the work being completed with care leavers within Gloucestershire. The audit reviewed a sample of care leavers to ensure that pathway plans were in place that are being regularly reviewed and amended.

## **Findings:**

Extract from the Internal Audit Activity Progress Report 2018/19

“The service is endeavouring to provide as much support to care leavers as possible by producing Pathway Plans that are relevant and tailored to care leaver needs. However, the testing of a random sample of care leavers found that, in some cases, the record-keeping in Liquid Logic has not been robust. Whilst that is partly due to the logistics and levels of training to fully utilise the benefits of such a system, there were also clear oversights and delays in Pathway Planning. These gaps were corrected after being identified as part of the audit.”

## **Actions Taken:**

As a result of the audit findings a robust action plan was developed (see appendix 1). The report was designed to address issues raised.

This report gives an update on progress against the report and the subsequent action plan.

## **Issues Identified:**

### **1. Inconsistent levels of information being recorded on Liquid Logic**

#### **Actions:**

- a. Up to date training regarding LL to be provided to the Leaving Care workers
- b. A bespoke training package for Leaving Care workers to be developed and delivered which mirrors the essential training provided by GCC to social workers

#### **Update:**

- a. Liquid Logic support has been provided to individuals who have been identified through supervision and dip sampling as needing additional support.
- b. A training course mirroring the essentials training programme for Social Workers was developed. At the time of writing, three of the four sessions have been delivered with the workers feeding back that they have found the training useful. Issues identified during the training by practitioners and trainers have been passed back to the Head of Service in order that they can be addressed, discussed and solutions found.

**Evidence of Impact:**

- a. There is improved evidence of input and recording. This is shown through monthly data reports, audits, dip sampling and supervision reflection.

**2. Cases closed within appropriate timescales****Actions:**

- a. A bespoke training package for Leaving Care workers to be developed and delivered which mirrors the essential training provided by GCC to social workers
- b. Team Managers to proactively check cases are closed within supervision sessions.

**Update:**

- a. As above the training is being delivered currently
- b. Team Managers are regularly checking in supervisions that cases are being appropriately closed

**Evidence of Impact:**

- a. Dip samples are showing that the timeliness of closure is improving. In addition, supervision notes are detailing discussions around this.

**3. Completion of Review Involvement forms****Actions:**

- a. Up to date training regarding LL to be provided to the Leaving Care workers
- b. Team Managers checking completion in supervision sessions

**Update:**

- a. As previously mentioned, the training has been developed and is being delivered
- b. Team Managers are checking that completion has taken place during supervision sessions and are noting this in the supervision notes

**Evidence of Impact:**

- a. The training is impacting on practice as evidenced through supervision, care file audits and performance surgeries
- b. Completion of review involvement forms is improving as evidenced through dip samples and case file audits

**4. All Care Leavers to have in date Pathway Plans which are signed by both parties****Actions:**

- a. Track pathway plan completion through performance surgeries
- b. TM's to track that the plans are signed by both parties

**Update:**

- a. The 11-25 permanency team's performance surgeries have highlighted pathway plan completion on a regular basis and tasks are set for individuals to improve if problems are identified
- b. Supervision sessions and case file audits check that the plans are being signed by both parties

**Evidence of Impact:**

- a. In March 2019 pathway plan completion within the 11-25 permanency teams was 90%
- b. TM's are reporting that a higher number of plans are being signed and that practitioners are being set time scales when they are not

## 5. Brightspots feedback proactively acted upon by Senior Management

### Actions:

- a. Bespoke training package for leaving care workers
- b. Develop of Pathway planning practice standards
- c. Implementation of the Sufficiency Strategy
- d. Development of a Care Leavers Protocol with the six District Councils in Gloucestershire
- e. Social Workers and Leaving Care Workers develop a one page profile
- f. Clear communication with Care Leavers and encouragement to use MOMO to share their comments and views

### Update:

- a. Training underway
- b. Pathway planning practice standards have been developed and now need to be rolled out to staff.
- c. The Sufficiency Strategy has been formally signed off and plans for its implementation are underway. This is a complex strategy with many strands and will take time to come to fruition
- d. HOS is working with colleagues from district councils to develop a joint protocol for care leavers to look at better access to accommodation, development of alternative provision to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast and prevent the need for homeless applications. We have had 3 meetings to date to agree representation and work on the framework we wish to populate.
- e. One page profiles for all workers within the YST were introduced in 2018 (see appendix 2). These are used to introduce new workers and to begin the process of building relationships with young people, setting out expectations of both parties etc.
- f. Posters and information regarding Mind of My Own are clearly displayed in all offices where Care Leavers visit. In addition, staff have been reminded to encourage engagement in its use

### Evidence of Impact:

Pathway planning practice standards have been completed but now need to be rolled out to staff before we will be able to evidence impact.

Housing leads from the district councils are fully committed to developing a joint protocol for care leavers this is having the impact of strengthening our partnership work. Consideration is also now being given regarding other ways district councils can be more involved in supporting care leavers.

Feedback received via Mind of My Own stated that young people found them valuable. The below is the quote received.

*I have received a new social worker for this month: until it's my 18th birthday which is in under 3 weeks. Even though I haven't met my new social worker she's send me her own version of my life my plan... this for me is such a positive move after not having the best experience with previous social worker. I've found out what Megan like to do and what she dislikes. This for me is a good start on what a social worker looks like! I wish every social worker done this before!!*

### Conclusion:

Improvements are evident in dip samples and case file audits. The development and delivery of the training programme has been well received by practitioners and they report it is having

an impact on practice, this is mirrored through supervision discussions and case file audits. Monthly data shows improving figures in terms of pathway plan completion.

There are however still improvements to be made and the momentum that is underway will be continued. The training programme has identified other areas which the leaving care workers would appreciate further training in. Discussions with other teams within the YST who also provide support to Care Leavers including the wrap-around team have identified challenges around availability of placements, financial issues particularly for young people in supported living arrangements and timely mental health support. This all impacts on the pathway planning and reviewing process.