

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH CHILDREN'S SERVICES

'STAYING PUT ARRANGEMENTS'

1. Introduction

1.1 Transition into adulthood can be a challenging time for any young person and increasingly there is evidence of young people remaining with their families longer. In reflecting on this national picture and the specific needs of care leavers, who may be unable to live with their own families, Staying Put provides a framework for supporting this within young people's previous foster families.

1.2 In recent years Government policy, Care Matters – Transforming the Lives of Children in Care and The Children and Young People's Act 2008 , Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leaver 2010, all emphasise the need for a more graduated approach for supporting the transition to adulthood for Care Leavers. The potential for some young people to remain with their current foster families until they are prepared for adulthood provides an opportunity to progress in a similar manner to their peers rather than prematurely.

1.3 Each local authority is required to sets out its 'Staying Put' arrangements, whereby the authority will promote the extension of care arrangements beyond a young person's eighteenth birthday.

1.4 The Royal Borough of Greenwich is committed to minimising social exclusion amongst Care Leavers and Staying Put arrangements are an important aspect of this. As good corporate parents this is seen as one option depending on the individual assessed needs of a young person to support the transition to independent living at a pace that suits their needs.

1.5 The 'Staying Put' guidance has also been developed to address the requirements of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 and related Guidance and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Fostering Services (2011) to set out the service standard relating to the local authorities 'Staying Put' arrangements.

1.6 This guidance document sets out the Royal Borough of Greenwich's commitment and responsibilities for young people post their 18th birthday, offering them continued stability during which young people can be further supported to acquire the necessary skills required for living independently in the future.

1.7 The 'Staying Put' guidance should be considered when planning for transition for all Greenwich looked after children. This is applicable for young people placed both in and out of Borough and within placements provided by both Greenwich and Independent Fostering Agencies.

1.8 Consideration to the potential appropriateness of Staying Put, should be considered as early as the first Pathway Plan and continue to be explored with both the carer and the young person through the reviewing process.

2 Key Aims

2.1 To improve outcomes for young people in care and care leavers through providing a more flexible approach to achieving independence.

2.2 Provide the stability and support necessary for young people to achieve in education, training and employment, and support longer term positive achievement in all areas of the young person's life.

2.3 To ensure we are supporting the aspirations of young people in planning for their future.

2.4 To empower young people within the planning processes ensuring their views and wishes are fully considered.

3 Objectives

This guidance in respect of 'Staying Put' arrangements is consistent with the requirements of The Children Act 1989 and Leaving Care Act 2000. The main aims of which are:

- 3.1. To provide continuity of placement until young people have been prepared and feel ready to progress to more independent living.
- 3.2. To improve the assessment, preparation and planning for independence.
- 3.3. To provide clarity in relation to financial arrangements for Staying Put.
- 3.4. The Staying Put policy also provides a framework to allow care leavers attending University or young people in the forces to have a stable base to return to.

4. Planning and Support

- 4.1 The Leaving Care Assessment of Need (Pathway Plan – Needs Assessment) which begins prior to the young persons' 16th Birthday should identify the timescale required for young people to move into independence and should consider all options.
- 4.2 The allocated worker needs to ensure that they have clearly ascertained the views of both the young person and the carers in respect to 'Staying Put' and provide them with the information to make an informed decision.
- 4.3 To ensure sufficient time is available to progress the necessary planning arrangements for extending a placement beyond the young person's 18th birthday are in place.
- 4.4 Good practice, see helpful links attached. A 'Staying Put' meeting should be held involving the young person, foster carer and social worker/personal advisor to clarify arrangements and expectations. (See appendix A)
- 4.5 'Staying Put' plans should continue to be discussed within the Pathway Planning process and LAC review where applicable.

4.7 The carers may in some circumstances continue to be supported by their supervising social worker. The young person will continue to access support from their allocated worker in line with Care Leaver legislation and guidance.

4.8 'Staying Put' carers should continue to provide support and services to the young person. The level and type of support should be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan and should focus on developing independent living skills.

4.9 When considering plans for young people post 18, consideration should be given to whether the current fostering arrangements need to be extended until the conclusion of the academic year the young person turns 18, i.e. end of Year 13 Summer term. This could be an alternative to Staying Put in the short term, after which Staying Put could still be considered, however there would need to be appropriate advance planning as set out in this document.

4.10 Where a young person has disability issues which require consideration in respect to transitions to adult services, it is expected that full consideration and progression of planning takes place as early as possible, i.e. from the first Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan. Assessment with partners involved in transitional arrangements may wish to consider the eligibility for the 'Shared Lives' scheme. It is important to remember that young people leaving care, who are subject to transitional arrangements to adult services, continue to be eligible for a leaving care service from children's services.

4.11 Where a Staying Put carer is continuing to foster there may be requirements in terms of fostering minimum standards which need to be considered, for example DBS check of young person.

5 Financial Arrangements

5.1 In preparation for a young person's 18th birthday, the carer and allocated worker should be supporting them to consider how they will be supporting

themselves financially and where appropriate to make the relevant benefit claim as early as possible. Advance claim for job seekers can be made up to 6 weeks prior to a young person's 18th birthday.

5.2 When formal fostering arrangements cease, at either age 18, or following an agreed fostering extension to conclude Year 13 Statutory education or training (apprenticeships); the pocket money, clothing allowance and personal allowance element will cease to be paid to the foster carer due to the young person's eligibility for benefit or bursaries if not in employment.

5.3 The weekly payment to the 'Staying Put' carer will be made up of funding from:

- Housing Benefit based on the single room allowance, which will vary according to the local authority in which the young person is residing. Most of Royal Borough of Greenwich comes under inner South East London, and the rate is £91.52*, while the outer South East London rate is £81.03*. (Correct January 2015).

- The pathway plan should explore the young person making a £25 contribution from their income or entitlement to grants, allowances or benefits. OR, where a young person is in paid employment consideration will need to be given to them making a greater contribution in line with what would be considered reasonable.

- The Royal Borough of Greenwich will make up the balance of the cost up to:

£209, in line with our core fostering allowance for 16 + (in line with NMFA, from April 2015) This figure may be subject to increase as the fostering allowance rate increases.

EXAMPLE

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Royal Borough of Greenwich Staying Put Rate | £ 209.00 |
| Single Room Rate Housing Benefit (Inner SE London) | - £91.52* |
| Contribution from care leaver | - £25.00 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Outstanding amount payable by Greenwich | = £92.48 |
|---|----------|

5.4 Where a young person is unable to access benefits Royal Borough of Greenwich will make a decision in respect to covering the whole amount. However, where a young person does not comply with what is required of them in order to secure their benefit entitlements (with the support of their allocated worker or carer), they will jeopardise their eligibility to be considered for 'Staying Put' arrangements.

5.5 Where a young person is awaiting receipt of benefits, the local authority will consider covering that entitlement for up to a maximum of 6 weeks.

5.6 In the planning stages consideration will be given to whether the Housing Benefit component should be paid directly to the Landlord ('Staying Put' carer), the Local Authority or the Young Person – dependant on local housing benefit practice and ability of young adult to manage their own finances.

5.7 If the 'Staying Put' arrangement is with a carer who was previously providing care through an Independent Fostering Agency, payments will be made directly to the 'Staying Put' carer and no agency fee will be paid, the agreement is between the care leaver and the ex-foster carer, facilitated by the local authority.

5.8 The lodging provider ('Staying Put' carer) is responsible for ensuring they are paying the relevant National Insurance and Income Tax payments in line with HMRC guidelines. (See helpful links below).

5.9 Royal Borough of Greenwich will not pay additional administration or support fees to fostering agencies under the scheme.

5.10 Where our young people are away at University or in the armed forces and they wish to return to their previous carer during holiday periods, consideration will be given to financial support for these periods, through discussion in the pathway plan.

6 Monitoring and reviewing

6.1 In line with requirements, the social worker or personal advisor must review the pathway plan six monthly to ensure that the young person's needs are being met.

6.2 The young person, lodging provider (previous carer) and young person's social worker or personal advisor, must be involved in the review and discussion about progress of the arrangement.

6.3 Plans need to clearly reflect work to prepare for future independence and this should be reflected in the written record (Pathway Plan).

6.4 'Staying Put' arrangements should actively promote a young adults engagement in education, employment or training.

Appendix A

'Staying Put' Agreement

This is a Contract/ Agreement between a care leaver who has attained 18 years and their previous foster carer/s who have agreed for the young adult to continue to live with them on a 'Staying Put' basis.

We understand that a young person cannot be legally fostered under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 after they reach their 18th birthday. We accept that due to the change in the young person's status, the arrangement is now a 'Staying Put' arrangement, whereby we are entering into a private lodgings arrangement, which is being facilitated by Royal Borough of Greenwich who retains care leaver responsibility. We agree to continue to work together to support and encourage the transition to independence, within an agreed period.

We agree to the following house rules and principles to run concurrently alongside areas agreed in the pathway plan.

Agreement regarding financial arrangements

| | |
|--|----------|
| Royal Borough of Greenwich Staying Put Rate | £ |
| Single Room Rate Housing Benefit (Dependant on Local Authority) | – |
| Agreed contribution from care leaver | – |

| | |
|--|---|
| Outstanding contribution payable by Royal Borough of Greenwich, Children's Services | = |
| Who will Housing Benefit be paid directly to? | |
| Date rent/financial contribution will be paid? | |
| Proposed start and end date? | |

Areas for discussion/house rules

1. Arrangements for agreeing visitors to the young adult in the 'Staying Put' placement.

2. Are guests allowed overnight?

3. House rules regarding smoking

4. House rules regarding alcohol or drug use?

5. What is expected in term of keeping in touch if young adult is not returning to the address overnight?

6. What is expected from the young adult in respect to contribution to the home i.e. washing up, keeping room clean?

7. What if you want to keep a pet?

8. What if something is broken or lost?

9. Arrangements regarding use of the house phone and or internet.

10. What is expected in terms of preparation for independence?

11. What are you expected to fund out of your own money and what will the 'Staying Put' provider fund from rent?

12. How will issues be raised and resolved?

13. Entitlement to privacy?

14. How might contact arrangements be safely managed/

Agreements

Young adult/care leaver

I agree to pay my rent contribution on time.

I understand that if my earnings change that my contribution may be reassessed.

If I want to move out I will provide at least 4 weeks notice.

I know that my 'Staying Put' carer can serve me with 4 weeks' notice if I fail to keep to the agreement.

I understand that I need to make the appropriate claims for benefits, grants and bursaries otherwise I could jeopardise my eligibility for 'Staying Put'.

If at any time, the carer is worried about my safety, I understand that they have the right to enter my room to check on my welfare.

If the carer is concerned about my behaviour or the current arrangement they may contact the social worker/personal advisor.

'Staying Put' carer

I/we agree that we will continue to offer a home to our former foster child under the above 'Staying Put' arrangements and recognise this is not a fostering arrangement.

I/we agree to continue to work with the Pathway Plan and support young adult to make positive choices and achieve as an adult.

I/we will promote independent living skills in order to support future independence.

I/we agree to provide at least 4 week notice period if we need to end the 'Staying Put' arrangement prior to the agreed term.

I/we understand that we are responsible in respect to our own personal financial and contractual arrangements. (i.e. with landlord, housing provider and tax agency).

Young adult/ care leaver:

Name -----

Signature -----
-----Date-----

'Staying Put' Carer (s):

Name (s) -----

Signature -----
----- Date-----

Signature -----
----- Date-----

Representative of Royal Borough of Greenwich:

Name -----

Signature -----
----- Date-----

Appendix B

Helpful Links

HMRC Self Employed National Insurance Contributions Helpline on 0300 200 3504

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifying-care-relief-foster-carers-adult-placement-carers-kinship-carers-and-staying-put-carers-hs236-self-assessment-helpsheet>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-put-arrangements-for-care-leavers-aged-18-years-and-above>

