

DHR Bulletin

Focus:

Following a recent DHR recommendation, it has been highlighted that the importance of communicating with Leaving Care Workers is not always recognized, and the profile and understanding of the Leaving Care Service needs to be increased amongst professionals.

Key Recommendations regarding the above:

- Work needs to be undertaken to raise the profile of care leaver services, including the role of the leaving care worker and how they should be included in discussions around safety planning, attendance at MARACs, and utilised by other services to facilitate conversations with the care leavers.

What is a care leaver?

- A care leaver is a young person aged 16-25 who has spent time in care. This might be foster care or residential care.

Please see the below table for information regarding the different stages in support for care experienced people.

16 – 18yrs	18 – 21yrs	21-25yrs
Supported by both a leaving care worker and social worker. LCW will then take over once the Social Worker has ended their support (this would be once the care	Full service support from the leaving care worker.	Advice and guidance given to the care experienced person, however they would not have access to the full care leaving service.

Key terms of language:

There has been a change in the name of the role in leaving care services across Lincolnshire. Personal Advisors are now known as **'Leaving Care Workers'**. The term personal advisor is no longer used in Lincolnshire.

Many young people have told support services that they don't like the term 'care-leaver'. It is preferable to use the term **'care-experienced person'**.

Care leaving service do not use the term 'closed'. Instead, they use the terms **'step up'** and **'back down'** to signify if a person is still open to the service.



experienced person reaches 18).		
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What support do services provide:

- Contact every 8 weeks, however it is not limited to this. It may be multiple times a week dependent on the level of support needed.
- Offer 'Support, Guidance and Advice'.
- Can be an advocate for the care experienced person.
- Provide annual contact letters to those who have 'stepped down' from the service, so they know support is still there if needed.
- Each care experienced person will have a named worker.

Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service - Provided by Barnardos

- Lincolnshire Barnardo's have four main offices, but cover the whole of Lincolnshire as well as Peterborough.
- The four offices are based in Lincoln, Louth, Sleaford and Peterborough.
- Barnardo's have a data sharing agreement with the local authority.



Advocacy Support

Leaving care workers are there to support the care experienced person and be an advocate for their needs. The Barnardo's website explains advocacy support as the following:

- Respecting and honoring identity
- Believing in you, taking your views into account, and never giving up on you
- discussing your needs with you and listening to your views
- giving you the information, you need in every aspect of life, including opportunities and rights
- supporting you with your needs and the decisions you have to make
- enhancing your life skills to help you find and manage a home
- listening to you and being available when possible

Links to Domestic Abuse

An organization in Manchester looked into the relationship between care experienced people and leaving care workers. The found that:

'90% of care leavers trust their workers all or most of the time' (CoramVoice 2021)

By having this level of trust, it is vital that leaving care workers be involved in the multi-agency meetings within Lincolnshire to advocate on behalf of care experienced people who experience Domestic Abuse. Due to the relationship that leaving care workers may have with those most vulnerable, it is vital that partners link in with the leaving care workers to facilitate conversations with care experienced people to better understand their situation.

Leaving care workers should be involved in the following:

- Safety Planning
- MARACs
- Other professional meetings
- Support meetings – to connect partners with those who are care experienced.

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