



ANDERIDA ADOLESCENT CARE

STAYING PUT POLICY & PROCEDURE

This 'Staying Put' procedure is adapted from the Staying Put Good Practice Guide 2014.

'Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority responsible for their care should make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need, which will include offering them more than one chance as they grapple with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood.'

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.

Staying put is about care leavers continuing to live within their foster home post 18. Whilst the legislation does not currently apply to residential care homes Anderida believes that young people living in residential care should be offered the same opportunities as those within fostering and more conventional family homes.

Anderida homes are registered for young people up to the age of 19 and the organisation offers out-reach support in the community up until 25 years of age. Local authorities have significant statutory obligations to support care leavers, and these are explained in the Children Act 1989 statutory guidance, already referred to. A former relevant child who is pursuing further education or training may be entitled to support until the age of 25.

PURPOSE OF EXTENDING THE ANDERIDA CARE PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Many care leavers have a more difficult start to adulthood than their peers as a consequence of their past experiences, coupled with the absence of a supportive family base. Staying put/extending arrangements help to mitigate against these factors so that care leavers are better equipped to do well in life. The individual aims of staying put arrangements/extending care will be specific to each young person concerned and should be made clear in their pathway plan and the written agreement covering the staying put arrangement. In general, however, extending care arrangements past 18 is designed to:

- Ensure that young people can experience a transition to adulthood similar to that of their peers, within a supportive family environment;
- Ensure that young people are not obliged to leave their home before they feel ready to move into greater independence;
- Help care leavers to maximise opportunities for education, employment or training;
- Reduce the likelihood of periods of homelessness;
- Ensure that care leavers develop the necessary emotional and practical skills before they are required to live independently;
- Reduce the likelihood of social exclusion.

Early planning

Preparation for the transition to adulthood is not a one-off process to be thought about at the age of 16, but a continuous part of growing up. The young person's carers, and other members of the team around the child, will have been helping them throughout childhood to develop the life skills they will need. As the child gets older their care plan should begin to consider their future beyond the time when they are looked after, and this will be reflected in the pathway plan and placement plan.

Whenever a long-term placement is being considered, there should be discussion between the home's manager and child's keyworker, the child's social worker and the supervising social worker regarding the possibility of it leading to an extension in the home post 18 or an outreach support package.

A decision in principle about whether or not extending the young person's care package is possible should be made as early on as possible, although a young person should not be expected to decide whether they will want this until they are ready to do so. Even when a young child is placed long term it is important that everyone understands the options from the outset, whilst recognising circumstances may change over subsequent years. Independent reviewing officers should ensure, through the care planning process, that looked after children are aware of the options, and that their care and pathway plan clearly set out expectations for when the placement ends.

MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

The changes from looked after child in a residential home, to adult member of the home where different laws apply to the other young people within the home, need to be carefully and sensitively planned to ensure that all parties understand the nature of the ongoing care arrangements, and that the positive aspects of care are not diminished. It will be important for the young person and the carers to understand as fully as possible the nature of the proposed arrangement. This will usually be best achieved by way of an initial individual discussion with the manager, social worker and with the young person separately to establish their own position, followed by a meeting of the key people concerned. This will be thoroughly risk assessed at the point of planning.

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Extending care provides an opportunity for young people to learn from their experiences and mistakes in a safer environment. In common with their peers living in their own families, this can sometimes mean making decisions which they later regret. This could include moving out into a bedsit, or lodgings and finding the reality of living alone harder than anticipated. It would be appropriate in such circumstances for the carers to continue to give support. This may be a time when the young person is particularly vulnerable, and the local authority will continue to provide support to the young person under the leaving care regulations. Good practice would be to continue to support the young person within their residential home or in a new home in the community for an agreed period. Anderida take their responsibilities to help young people to transition into community settings upon their discharge from Anderida seriously and see this is an integral part of maintaining gains made in therapeutic care. As such the Local Authority are committed to a minimum of 45 hours outreach with 25 hours travel time at end of placement.

(Please see Outreach Policy)