



THROUGH-CARE AND AFTER-CARE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Report by Head of Children's Services/Chief Social Work Officer

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is seeking approval for the revised Throughcare, Continuing Care and Aftercare Policy and Procedures manual and approve an uplift in the leaving care grant for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Throughcare and Aftercare services should be made available to all CEYP who meet the criteria in terms of Section 29 and 30 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, and work from the perspective of the young person. The core principles outlined in the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995 are:
- The welfare of the young person is the paramount consideration,
 - The views of the young person should be ascertained and considered in respect of any significant decision about them,
 - Local Authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance, with a view to preparing the young person for when they are no longer in the care of the local council, and
 - Local Authorities have a duty, unless they are satisfied that the young person's welfare does not require it, to advise, guide and assist CEYP in their area who were care experienced at school leaving age or thereafter up to the age of 26.
- 2.2 Within the Outer Hebrides, Children's Services Social Work will work collaboratively with partner agencies and Corporate Parents to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people, in line with the [Integrated Children's Service Plan](#).
- 2.3 CEYP currently receive £2200 to assist them with setting up their first or new home. This sum of money has not been increased in some years and given the cost-of-living increase in recent years, requires an uplift.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:
- (a) approve the Throughcare, Continuing Care and Aftercare Policy and Procedures; and
 - (b) approve the increase to £2500 for the Leaving Care Grant.

Contact Officer: Jack Libby

Appendix: CNES Throughcare and Aftercare Operational Guidance & Procedures 2024

Background Papers:

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	The number of CEYP leaving care in any given year fluctuates, from zero some years to up to 5 some other years and, as a result, the provision of the Leaving Care grant will vary from year to year.
Legal	Local authorities are responsible for preparing CEYP when in care for when they are no longer in care.
Staffing	n/a
Assets and Property	n/a
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	n/a
Equalities	n/a
Corporate Strategy	The Promise & Integrated Children's Services Plan
Environmental Impact	n/a
Consultation	CEYP have been consulted with in the establishment of the operational guidance and procedures.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The transition towards inter-independence is a gradual and natural process. Individual young people will be ready for inter-independence at varying stages of their life depending on their own unique circumstances.

Preparation towards adult life for a CEYP should be an ongoing process which develops throughout their time in care, especially during early adolescence. Young people should leave care or have their CSO discharged when they are ready rather than at a predetermined chronological age.

DETAIL

- 6.1 The Independent Care Review published [The Promise](#) plan in 2020, which set out what needs to change in the care system to make sure every child and young person feels safe, loved and respected. The Promise reflects the commitments and changes Scotland needs to make before 2030; some of these commitments are related to throughcare, continuing care and aftercare planning and services, including the scaffolding we surround children with.
- 6.2 When young people become adults, the help does not stop. Young people should feel fully prepared for adulthood, know how to ask for help when they need it, and be given this help when they ask. Organisations will support care-experienced children, young people, and their families in a trauma-informed way.
- 6.3 The revised policy and procedures will be an excellent resource for staff across the partnership who work with CEYP, and who are working diligently to help improve the outcomes for CEYP. CEYP continue to be overrepresented in homelessness, mental health, and criminal justice figures.

- 6.4 In October 2013, the Scottish Government published the [‘Staying Put Scotland’](#) guidance, which gave a clear message that young people should not be forced to leave local authority care before the age of 18. The Comhairle has a duty to provide Continuing Care and young people who are sixteen years of age and are accommodated by the local authority (excluding Secure Care) can now request to remain in their existing placement up to the age of twenty-one.

The Comhairle should provide Continuing Care unless to do so would not be in the young person’s interests, or should the carer be unable or unwilling to continue providing accommodation. Providing Continuing Care does not remove the responsibility on the Comhairle to provide Aftercare support.

- 6.5 It is possible that Continuing Care could put pressure on an already pressurised care system. This is particularly so in residential care, were, through efficiency savings, we can only fund three of the four residential beds at Hillcrest. In terms of foster care, Continuing Care has not had much of an impact on service delivery.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Those working across the Children’s Services partnership in the Outer Hebrides will benefit from this policy and procedures in terms of ensuring they are meeting their statutory duties in terms of throughcare, continuing care and aftercare. The document provides a clear framework of which to work to.
- 7.2 The increase in the Leaving Care Grant will assist with for example, deposits for accommodation, white goods and other furnishings and any other incidentals. CEYP need to be invested in both in the time we spend with them but also the money we spend on them.