



CONTINUING CARE POLICY

Report by Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to recommend to the Comhairle the adoption of the Continuing Care Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 It was recognised at the Inspection of the Comhairle's Fostering, Adoption and Continued Care services by the Care Inspectorate in 2023/24 that there were significant policy and practice gaps. The Care Inspectorate made various requirements of our services of which the creation of a Continued Care Policy was one such policy.
- 2.2 The formation of this Policy has sought best policy and practice guidance from other authorities and adapted this to our own needs and practice. The need for better Continued Care support in Scotland has been a theme of research for some time. This was highlighted by the Independent Care Review (2020) and as the Promise was adopted five years ago and resulted in the framing of rights for Care leavers and the placing of duties on Authorities to provide enhanced rights and support to remain within a care placement.
- 2.3 The Policy notes the relevant rights and legislation, the philosophy of care underpinning the policy, who is eligible, the procedures to be followed and the financial supports that will assist better outcomes.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 of this Report notes and attaches this draft policy for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle approve the Continuing Care Policy appended to the Report.

Contact Officer: Max Smart – (Interim) Chief Officer for Children's Services)
Appendix: Draft Continuing Care Policy
Background Papers:



IMPLICATIONS

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

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	As set out above
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	Financial – there is already an agreed continued care fee arrangement in place
Equalities/Child Rights	None
Corporate Strategy	To support children, families, and young people
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 It is recognised that care Leavers have long had poorer life outcomes compared to their non-looked after peers, in terms of education, employment as well as in poorer physical and emotional health. This is due to backgrounds of loss and trauma, disruption and instability. This Continued Care Policy formalises the arrangements required by the Comhairle to be compliant with national standards in this area of supported caring.
- 5.2 The Comhairle has duties, powers and responsibilities to support young adults to enable continued caring support whether that be via continued care in placement and or financial support to enable a stable and secure platform for starting adult life.
- 5.3 This policy and practice guide has three main objectives
- To address the inequalities between looked after young people and non-looked after peers.
 - Improve assessment, preparation and planning for young people leaving care.
 - To provide better personal support for young people after leaving care.

DETAIL

- 6.1 This policy statement seeks to state and inform our practice intent in this care support area. Whilst our numbers of young people receiving Continued Care support might be small, it is important that the Comhairle makes helpful provision to not only address inequity, but to actively state that we can help and will help young adults who need our corporate support.
- 6.2 This Policy will endorse wider policy commitments in Scotland such as the Care Leavers Covenant 2014. Social Work and other helping professionals will therefore be required to assess and plan to anticipate and meet the young person's needs post care.



- 6.3 The policy will place expectation on seeking the young person's views on what they might need later in life and through support and planning throughout their care journey be enabled to envisage a future beyond being looked after. This means that helping professionals will need to ensure that the young person has received and understands information on decisions made concerning their future.
- 6.4 Within this context the Comhairle commits to ensuring advocacy support throughout the care and support processes that young people encounter in our care services. In doing so the Comhairle will seek to ensure young people's participation in all processes that affect their lives. This is in line with commitments to fulfilling The Promise. As a young person progresses towards age 16 the Comhairle commits to commencing Pathway Planning towards preparing for the future.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Policy would bring the Comhairle in line with Regulator expectations in respect of our policies and practices, however it is envisaged that we would take further steps to enshrine our commitment to fulfilling the Promise.

