

**What Makes The Difference?
GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

This example of good practice relates to criteria 1.4 of the National Leaving Care Standards contributing to ECM outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

Name(s) and region of agency/organisation in which this piece of work was developed
Tower Hamlets Leaving Care Service

Target group(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled young people | <input type="checkbox"/> Young people 19+ years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people with mental health needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Girls only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) | <input type="checkbox"/> Boys only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people from black and minority ethnic groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Young people as trainers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people not in education, training and employment (NEET) | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior management |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Older looked after children 15+ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people leaving care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster carers | <input type="checkbox"/> Researchers/evaluators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Girls and boys | <input type="checkbox"/> Trainers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people involved as researchers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service managers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive and lead members/councillors | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lead professionals (social workers/personal advisors) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other support/care workers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth workers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information workers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people in custody | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young parents | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people 16+ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people involved in services(SUI) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) | |

<p>Purpose and intended outcomes of this work</p> <p>For contact to be established and maintained with all young people who are entitled to a Personal Adviser service.</p>	
<p>Description of what was carried out in this piece of work (the intervention/s)</p> <p>There is a contact policy in place which sets out levels and methods of contact for young people. Young people agree methods and level of contact as part of the pathway planning process according to their needs, within the guidelines of the policy. A freephone number is available for young people to call the service. Contact is monitored through supervision.</p>	
<p>Service structures and processes that were set up (e.g. posts, partnership groups etc)</p>	<p>Contact policy developed (attached)</p>
<p>Type of agency/organisation in which this work was developed</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority department - unitary <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority department - metropolitan <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority department - borough council <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority department - county (shire) council <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority department - city council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local authority department - London borough <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-agency (please specify agencies involved) <input type="checkbox"/> Health agency (e.g. PCT, NHS Trust) <input type="checkbox"/> Education agency <input type="checkbox"/> Youth justice agency <input type="checkbox"/> Youth service <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) </p>

Region where work was developed	<input type="checkbox"/> National (please specify UK nation i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland) <input type="checkbox"/> NW England <input type="checkbox"/> NE England <input type="checkbox"/> SW England <input type="checkbox"/> SE England <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> London <input type="checkbox"/> East Midlands <input type="checkbox"/> West Midlands
Name(s) of tools/resources developed as part of this work	Contact Policy (attached)

In what sense is this ‘good practice’? The evidence	
<i>Underlying evidence used to develop the interventions in this piece of work</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> None - new exploratory/developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Not known <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practitioner knowledge/experience only <input type="checkbox"/> Published research evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Local research / evaluation
Source of evidence available to show the <i>impact</i> of the interventions used in this work What this evidence/information suggests	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Internal / self-evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal / impressions <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not known <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Other impact <input type="checkbox"/> Not known

<p>Type of evidence about the 'process' of delivering the interventions used in this work</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Positive impact (if any)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact (if any)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other impact</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not known</p>
<p>Feedback/evaluation report available on this site?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, click here to view</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Contact details for further information about this piece of work and the evidence of its impact</p>	<p>Name: Jo Bird</p> <p>Address: Leaving Care Service, Kitcat Terrace, Bow, London, E3 2SA</p> <p>Tel: 0207 364 1140</p> <p>Email: Jo.Bird@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p> <p>Fax:</p> <p>Mob:</p>

LBTH / Leaving Care Service Contact Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Leaving Care Service has a duty to promote contact with all care leavers aged 16-21 years old and up to 24 years old if they are in education.

1.2 Tower Hamlets Leaving Care Service will offer minimum contact on a four to six weekly basis. Deviation to this will only be agreed to either in supervision or within the young person's Pathway Planning process.

1.3 Attached to this policy is the 'Standards for communicating with looked after children and care leavers which was produced in consultation with managers and staff in the children's division and the RAP group – Jan 2003. This gives contact guidelines on the following areas:

- Telephone Calls
- Absence from work
- Social workers leaving
- Contact with social workers

2.0 Contact

2.1 It is Important that contact is at agreed, regular intervals. This allows the Personal Adviser & young person the opportunity to establish a close, trusting relationship. Within which the PA can provide advice, support & guidance based upon the wishes & needs of the young person.

2.2 Contact with a personal advisor can take many different forms:

- Face to face contact (may include office visits not including collecting monies)
- Telephone contact
- Letters
- 'e'-Mail, voice mail and text messaging

2.3 The frequency of 'face to face' contact will be at a minimum of every six weeks. This will be monitored via supervision, difficulties in achieving this will be recorded within supervision notes.

3.0 Standards of contact

3.1 Home Visits

It is important to visit a young person in their home environment to assess their living conditions. This includes:

- Health and Safety / Security
- Quality of furnishings, kitchen equipment etc
- Occupancy
- Observations of improvement or deterioration in living environment

3.2 Cancellation

- There should be agreement at all times with regard to cancellation of contact.
- Should either party be late they should telephone as soon as possible in advance.
- If Y/P does not make a contact in the first instance a telephone call should be made, followed by the P.A. writing a letter offering a new appointment.
- Cancelled appointments should be followed up immediately to ensure a new date and time is agreed.

3.3 No Response

- If above attempts prove to be unsuccessful then you must involve a third party, i.e. Line manager, Social worker, Probation worker, Health worker, Key worker etc.
- Failing all the above attempts then proceed with an unannounced visit.
- If no contact is made after unannounced visit and this is out of character, and if the y/p is considered vulnerable or under stress, then consideration should be given to reporting the young person as missing to the police.

4.0 Young People in Bed and Breakfast/Hostel accommodation

4.1 When a young person is placed in bed and breakfast or a hostel environment it is very important to assess the following:

- Health and Safety
- What if any cooking facilities are provided
- Laundry provisions
- Rules and regulations -does the young person have to sign in, fire drills/arrangements etc.
- Overall suitability of B&B or hostel

5.0 Young People with Disabilities

For young people with disabilities in residential homes or young people in children's homes contact will allow an assessment as to whether their needs are being met. The young persons' understanding of need should be respected.

5.1 Young People in Foster Care

In foster care settings it is important to ensure that the contact is focused around the young person, allowing the young person to have discussion away from other 'family' members.

6.0 Young Person 'on licence' to Leaving Care Service

Contact with young people held at Leaving Care on 'licence' must take place in accordance with Department of Health guidelines – every 6 weeks, within the young person's home, after which the Personal Adviser will complete a Statutory Visit form.

7.0 Health and Safety

For all workers individual safety is of paramount importance, the following policy documents and practice guidelines must inform all contact:

- The working alone policy
- Hazard status
- Use of mobile phones
- Risk assessment policy

- Completion of whereabouts sheets
- Office contact when on late visits

8.0 Monitoring and Recording of Contact

8.1 All contact with young people must be recorded on a 'Young Person Contact Recording Sheet' which will be kept at the front of the young person's file.

8.2 Contact will be monitored via supervision, file audits and at Pathway Plan Review meetings.

9.0 Minimum contact arrangements (by age / current circumstances)

- 9.1 Young People 16+
1 x 6 weekly minimum 'face to face' contact / visit. More frequent contact agreed in supervision / Pathway Plan review. This contact would be separate to the field work social worker's contact
- 9.2 Young People 17(+) 'on Licence' to Leaving Care Service
A statutory visit must be undertaken at a minimum of every six weeks
- 9.3 Young People 18(+) and 'settled'
Telephone contact on a 3 weekly basis, if there is no response from the young person, the PA will write, text or email
If there is still no response the PA will call & leave a card or note, further 'no contact' should result in immediate discussion with line manager.

Face to face meeting should take place every 6 weeks.
- 9.4 Young People 18(+) and not settled
e.g Homeless, vulnerable, Child Protection issues
Separate contact arrangements will be agreed in supervision in accordance with the individual circumstances of the young person
- 9.5 Young Person in Higher Education (21 – 24 years)
Minimum of 6 weekly telephone contact, frequency of 'face to face' contact to be agreed with the young person
- 9.6 Young people in prison / YOI
1st visit will take place within the first 4 weeks of prison sentence / remand.
Subsequent visits by mutual arrangement, no less than 6 weekly.
Contact should also be maintained in writing.
- 9.7 Young People in any emergency / short-term accommodation
e.g B&B / Hotel
Accompany young person to B&B to settle them in (&
1st visit within first week of placement
(i) To meet young person & ensure they are safe & well
(ii) To take opportunity to check living environment and relay concerns to Homeless Persons Unit if appropriate.
(iii) To agree future planned visit.
- 9.8 Section 24 Young People
If Personal Adviser service is being provided contact should be as '18(+) and settled young people, or 18(+) and not settled young people'.

If Personal Adviser service not needed, young person will be informed about how they can access future advice / assistance via duty system.
Contact maintained by birthday / seasonal card – sent via duty admin worker.

