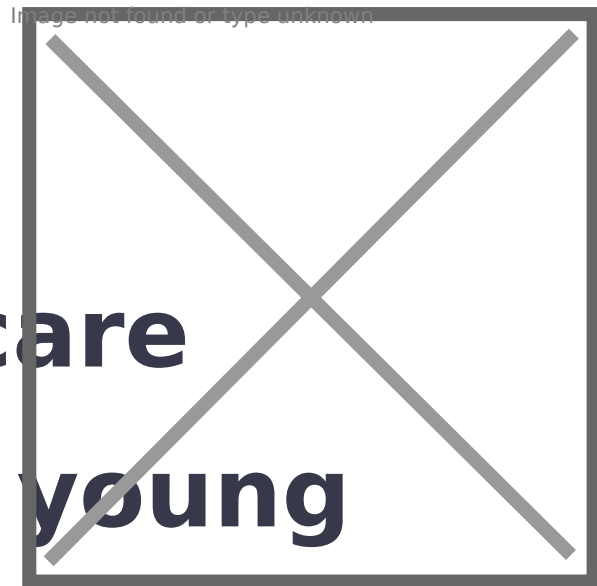


Supporting care experienced young people to achieve successful futures and independent living



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Find out more about how the MAG is supporting care experienced young people to achieve successful futures and independent living

What are the challenges facing care experienced young people?

All young adults need support and direction to help them achieve their goals and ambitions.

We know that care experienced young people often make the transition to independent living earlier than most children and then face barriers that prevent them achieving their goals, such as a lack of stable housing and finances.

This in turn makes it challenging for them to take up further or higher education, apprentices or job opportunities.

What are the duties to care experienced young people under Welsh legislation?

Social services, welfare benefits, training providers, housing, health and education departments must work together to plan each young person's move to independence.

[Sections 105 to 115 of the Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

place duties on a local authority to provide support for children and young people when they cease to be looked after (care leavers).

The support is intended to be equivalent to that which a child who has not been looked after might reasonably expect from his or her parents.

The purpose is to assist these young people to live independently when the time is right for them and to achieve their full potential.

How has the Welsh Government supported care experienced young people?

A report by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, [Hidden Ambitions One year on: A follow up report on local authorities' progress and good practice in supporting care leavers](#), shows good results are being achieved.

These examples need to become Welsh standard practice:

- providing training and apprenticeship opportunities
- more accommodation options
- clear information and financial support
- opportunities for care experienced young people to develop and monitor the support they are offered
- ways of reducing poverty among care experienced young people.

The Welsh Government has also:

- established the St David's Day Fund to support care experienced young people to make a successful transition to independent living
- given funding to local authorities to establish or enhance schemes which offer training and job opportunities within the council's own workforce

- extended the right to have a personal adviser for care experienced young people aged 21-25
- committed to introduce legislation for care experienced young people to receive the maximum level of maintenance support to attend higher education, as recommended by the Diamond Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales.
- Introduced monitoring to ensure that bed and breakfast accommodation is a last resort for young people leaving care: [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway and the Care Leavers Accommodation Framework to support vulnerable young people to find suitable and appropriate accommodation.](#)

However, access to supported housing for care experienced young people does not meet demand.

Between 20-30 per cent of all young homeless people have been looked after.

Supporting engagement and participation from children and young people

[The Children and Young People's National Participation Standards](#) provides a framework for engagement and participation by children and young people.

The Welsh Government, supported by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, has commissioned a [pilot survey measuring the well-being of care experienced children in six local authorities.](#)

The study aims to:

- improve the care experience for every child who is looked after

- give children a voice on their own well-being
- highlight the 'bright spots' of practice that contribute to children flourishing in care.

686 children and young people completed the survey, which produced important insights.

Most children in care in Wales are settled in their placements and happy with their lives overall. However:

- 36 per cent of children (4-7yrs) did not understand why they were looked after
- around a quarter of the children and young people wanted more frequent contact with a parent
- nearly one in five (19 per cent) of young people (11-18yrs) and 15 per cent children (8-10yrs) had no contact with either parent
- a third of young people (11-18yrs) felt they had too little contact with their siblings
- a quarter of young people (11-18yrs) had three or more social workers in the previous year.

The MAG is commissioning an all Wales children's survey to support implementation of the children's performance framework.

Useful resources

[Meaningful Participation of Children and Young People in Decision about their Care - Exchange Webinar](#)

PDF 1MB