

C4EO for the sector
from the sector

Wright 26 cared 4
Warwickshire's Right 2 B Cared 4

**STAYING
PUT 18+**
Family Placement

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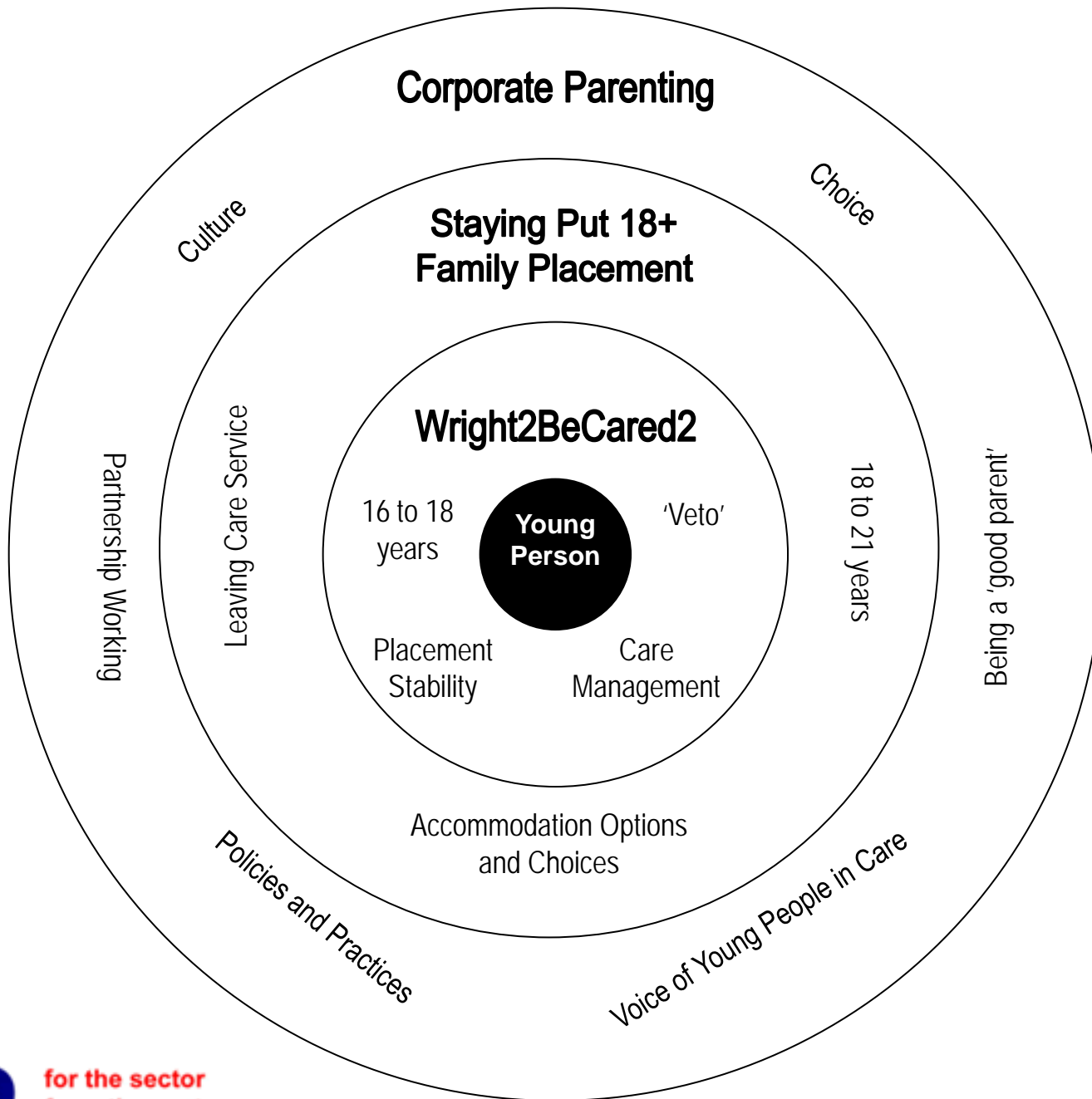


Local Context

‘Our vision is that every young person in our care and leaving care has the greatest possible opportunity to be the best they can be’

Underpinned by:

- Strong emphasis on family placement/fostering practice (no in house residential provision).
- Enhancement in leaving care services and commitment to further improve outcomes for care leavers.
- 307 Fostering Households
557 Children in Care
87% Placed within family placement setting (incl. adoption)
103 Pilot young people in the pilot cohort



Wright 26 cared 4

- 11 National Pilots – all different in size and services offered (Sept 07 to July 10)
- Only West Midlands pilot
- 2nd highest bid 240k
- Veto over care leaving decisions for 16 – 18 year olds
- Dispute resolution process
- National evaluation – Loughborough University

STAYING PUT 18+

Family Placement

- 10 National Pilots (May 08 to March 11)
- Only West Midlands pilot
- 4 Local Authorities awarded both pilots nationally
- To enable young adults to move to greater independence when they are ready and have been properly prepared
- National evaluation by DCSF

Principles/Values

1. Children in Care / Leaving Care Services are **planned in advance** and **properly managed**.
2. Young person is **fully** consulted about their future so that their **wishes and feelings are taken into account**.
3. Young people have access to **Independent Advocacy** during this process of planning their transition to adulthood .
4. Ensure **consistency** and **continuity** of care.
5. Improve the **quality** of transition planning and empowering the young person to take an active part in the process.
6. Young people are supported to achieve a successful **transition to adulthood**.
7. Provide **flexibility** to meet unforeseen circumstances.
8. Children have **right to be cared for** (RIGHT2BCARED4) until they are legally adult at the **age 18**.

Project Governance – both pilots

- Prince2 Methodology.
- Project Board & Project Team.
- Performance Management with Pis.
- Quarterly Reports to DSCF.
- DCSF's centralised Evaluation of all national pilots.
- Warwickshire opted for additional long term Evaluation / Research.

What we did

Mandatory Menu (A)

1. Advance planned and properly managed 'In' and 'Leaving Care' Service.
2. Enhanced and additional Reviews.
3. Improved quality of transitions into adulthood - empowering young person in the process.
4. Young Person have a "Veto" over leaving care decisions.
5. Young person has a Right 2 B Cared 4 until they are legally adult at age 18 (and have access to 'dispute resolution' process).
6. Flexibility of using the additional and enhanced support services in the 'Mix and Match Option Menu'.

Mix & Match Options Menu (B)

1. Training and awareness sessions on Corporate Parenting for social care staff, foster carers, partner agencies, elected members and service providers – delivered with young people.
2. Services of a Placement Support Youth Worker placed within a Children's Services Team.
3. Access to Respite Residential (one off / series of) Activities Schemes.
4. Services from a dedicated Accommodation Partnership Officer for Vulnerable Young People to assist in identifying suitable accommodations.
5. Availability of a named Independent Advisor from Barnardo's.

Impact of

- Improvement in relevant performance indicators
 - i) decrease in the number of placement moves.
 - ii) increase in the mean age of care leavers looked after the 16th birthday.
 - iii) increased participation of young people in their reviews.
- Successful challenge by IRO's of front line social workers on case planning issues in order to secure better outcomes of 16 – 18 year olds (Dispute Resolution Procedure developed).
- Benefits of integrating youth work approach within Children's Teams and value of residential respite and associated activities (i.e. friendships and resilience).
- Greater engagement of young people in the work of the Directorate i.e. training, DVD and evaluation process.

Challenges

1. Additional reviews before moves from regulated to unregulated placements.
2. Change in culture – internal and external communication.
3. Having suitable housing options when and where required.

Implementation – What we did

1. Extended, developed and rebranded our previous Supported Lodgings scheme.
2. Staying Put Carers Recruitment – Targeted Marketing.
3. Awareness raising - communication and marketing with young people – appointment of a care experienced person to create a voice in service development.
4. Recompense any tax, council tax or benefit shortfalls to carers.
5. Training and NVQs for Staying Put Carers.
6. Mentoring Scheme and Staying Put Forum for Foster Carers.

Cont.....

Implementation – What we did

7. Enhanced Foster Care Support Line and Out of Hours Helpline to cater for this cohort.
8. Aligned to Wright2BeCared4
 - * Enhanced Barnardo's Young Person Advisory Service .
 - * Extended IRO and Leaving Care Services for Staying Put to ensure an internal evaluation of the services quality and benefits .
 - * Longitudinal Research – Built in ongoing evaluation into our services to assess the long term outcomes for young people (Contracted to Connexions).

In detail..... Financial Arrangements

- Adult Placement Scheme
 - £245.98 week
(£121.46 payment to carer, £121.56 board, food etc)
 - £121.46 made up of:
 - * £50 rent from housing benefit/income
 - * 10% of wage/income support from the young person
 - * 'Top up' from Leaving Care Teams
- Retainer fee where young adult at University (£100 per month).
- 10% of DLA where payable.
- Parent and Baby placement – young adults claim benefits for the baby.
- Young people responsible for their clothing, toiletries, leisure, mobile phones etc.
- Payment levels reviewed annually.

Recruitment

- Specific 'branded' marketing.
- Bespoke preparation course for Staying Put Carers.
- All current foster carers with children 14+ have been invited/attended Information Groups.
- All carers approved for 14+ years have had a leaflet sent explaining Staying Put – this is to encourage current carers to plan long term for the children/young people in their care.

Support and Development

- All Staying Put carers continue to have allocated Fostering Social Worker.
- Enhanced support from Foster Care Support Line.
- Ongoing support groups.
- Training needs are identified in ongoing supervision and through Support Groups.
- Post Approval Information Pack.
- Specific placement/license agreements in place.

Key Training

- Caring for Teenagers.
- Managing Challenging Behaviour.
- Substance Misuse.
- Preparation for Adult Living.

Impact

- Enhanced payments to Staying Put Carers.
- Teenage placement scheme developed.
- Young adults having greater placement choice at 18 years.
- Early success with increase in Staying Put numbers reported
- Increased levels of satisfaction reported by young people and carers and young person and carer satisfaction.
- Positive impact on young people who are choosing to stay in family placement until they are ready to move.

Challenges

1. Working out the payment arrangements and resolving issues around funding sources ensuring fairness.
2. Need to increase number of fostering households – placement pressures.
3. Work with Adult Services and partners is developing in relation to transitions.
4. Arrangements for children with IFA Placements – dual approval issue, payment issues.
5. Cultural shift in staff thinking and understanding working inside and outside the Fostering Regulations.

Lessons Learnt

- Developments within broader Corporate Parenting Strategy - high level Directorate and political support.
- Project management framework:
 - Engagement of key partners and stakeholders
 - Structure and timeframe
 - Designated lead officers for aspects of the pilots
- Opportunity to experiment and learn – balance between flexibility and discretion within an overall outcomes based framework.
- Levels of ongoing evaluation and feedback – including young people.

What next?

- Decision to mainstream all or aspects of the pilots.
- Change in culture and practices ongoing.
- Policy changes -presumption that young people will have the opportunity to return to request an assessment with the option of returning to a regulated/approved placement.
- Further learning from the local and national evaluations.