

# Creating New Opportunities for Care Leavers

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# The Department for Education

- New name, new logo, similar structure.
- The Children and Families Directorate remains one of the three policy directorates within the Department.
- The Children in Care division continues to sit in CFD as part of the Families Group.
- Ministers clear that the name change does not indicate a shift in focus away from children's services.

# Ministerial team



**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
Secretary of State for Education



**Nick Gibb MP**  
Minister of State  
for Schools



**Sarah Teather MP**  
Minister of State  
for Children and  
Families



**Tim Loughton MP**  
Parliamentary  
Under-Secretary of State  
for Children and Families



**Lord Hill of Oareford  
CBE**  
Parliamentary  
Under-Secretary of State  
for Schools

# Tim Loughton

- **Responsibilities include: looked after children, fostering, adoption, safeguarding, social work reform, children's workforce, CAFCASS and family law.**
- **Shadow Minister for Children from 2003-2010.**
- **Committed to improving the looked after children system and outcomes.**
- **Won't account his tenure in office a success/ failure if number go either up or down. Very concerned of course that the right children enter care.**
- **A key priority is supporting care leavers**

# Care Leavers - the costs of abrupt exit

**“Within a few weeks I can feel that I’m going to be on the streets and another number”**

- **24% of care leavers were 16 when they left (24 is the average for Population as a whole) (NCAS)**
- **Leaving care at an older age is associated with better career outcomes (*Dixon et al, 2006*)**
- **Savings and better outcomes achieved by diverting care leavers from: dependence on benefits; long term employment; homelessness; offending and custody**

# Care Leavers: 3 Key Priorities

**“being a care leaver has to be the most pressure I’ve been under in my life, one minute I was 12 and living at home then I’m 21 and find myself being homeless.”**

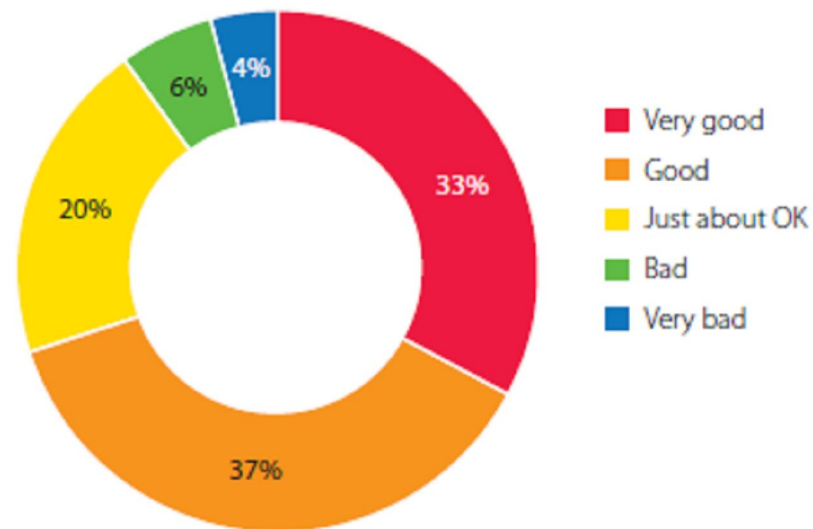
- **Making sure children do not have to leave care before they are ready;**
- **Making sure all care leavers have access to appropriate range of accommodation options; and**
- **Providing the right support for care leavers so they can make a successful transition to independent living.**

# Young People's Views on Progress

**“ I think my leaving care workers are doing a brilliant job. Keep up the good work”**

(Right's Director Report, 2009)

- **How care leavers rate the support they are getting.**



# Progress, but..

**“ I think the support within social services and leaving care varies”**

- **Since Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**
  - Numbers in EET up to 63% in 2009
  - Numbers in suitable accommodation up to 90% in 2009
- **But still too much variability**
  - EET – 15 LAs had over 80%, 13 had less than 50%
  - Accommodation – 17 LAs had 100%, 18 LAs had between 60-80%

# From Care2Work programme

**“ I am aiming to get a good job and earn lots of money”**

- **From Care2Work Programme**
  - 149 LAs involved
  - 27 employers actively engaged
  - Care leavers taken up opportunities
  - Quality Mark and Career planning being developed

# Pilots – Right2bCared4 and Staying Put @ 18+

**“I feel like I’m part of the family and not just a foster child. I think it is important to feel like this.”**

- **LAs in both pilots have developed seamless systems with multi-agency funding and support (esp. housing)**
- **Consider outcomes and then structure should follow - importance of seeing fostering and leaving care as part of the same service sharing common values.**
- **Giving children a right to return to care may represent an investment not a cost.**
- **Strong emphasis on voice of the child in both R2BC4 and Staying Put**
- **Responding to challenges, rather than be turned back by barriers**

# Leaving Care Regulations 2010

**“I wish more people were given more support in the transition of semi independent to independent living”**

- **Extends “former relevant status” to young person resuming education/training up to 25**
- **Makes provision specifying timing of pathway plan reviews.**
- **Prescribes factors LAs must consider to make sure that accommodation for care leavers is “suitable”.**
- **Sets out visiting arrangements for personal advisers.**

# What the Guidance cannot be

**“My foster carer really helped me...I passed my GCSEs and I’m now in college doing a youth work and photography two year course”**

- **Guidance must not be over - prescriptive or go beyond what is statutorily required.**
- **Cannot bind other agencies - therefore importance of local protocol working.**
- **Must support flexible professional solutions – rather than attempt to set rigid impractical frameworks likely to date quickly.**

**Consultation on the draft guidance ended in June 2010**

# What Works

**“ It allows me to grow as an independent person with lots of support, with budgeting, social skills, cooking etc”**

- **DCS and Lead Member have high aspirations**
- **There is a general philosophy that “leaving care” will involve a gradual transition from their care placement for each child.**
- **Local commissioning strategies involve housing agencies and housing related support commissioners**
- **Strategies and plans take account of the DCSF and CLG guidance on Joint Working between housing and children’s services**
- **Pathway plans based on young people’s aspirations and career ambitions and actions and support to achieve this.**
- **Local authority actively takes part in the From Care2Work programme.**

# What Works (2)

**“It’s getting used 2 being independent, but with support so its not just dumpin you on your own”**

- **Strong pathway planning processes build on care planning, put the needs of the young person at the centre so that their views and listened to and acted on.**
- **Particular priority is given to supporting excluded groups such as disabled young people, young people known to youth justice services, young parents and unaccompanied asylum seeking children**
- **Processes and services are routinely assessed against the NCAS national leaving care standards.**