



# Right2BCared4 and Staying Put 18+

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The views expressed in this presentation are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

# Background

- Package of measures under Care Matters to improve preparation of, and support for care leavers, included:
- R2BCared4 pilot involving 11 authorities (2007-2010)
- Staying Put 18+ involving 11 authorities (2008-2011)
- Evaluations still underway. Peer researchers involved.

# R2BCared4

## Core principles

- Young people should not be expected to leave care until 18
- They should have a greater say in decisions about when they move to independence
- Improved planning, preparation and support

# R2BCared4

- Additional reviews in response to 'significant changes' of care plan
- Enhanced role for IRO
- Encouraging young people's involvement and ensuring their wishes and feelings are taken into account
- Access to independent advocacy
- Developing young people's independent living skills

# Staying Put 18+

- Opportunity for young people who have an established familial relationship with their foster carers to stay with them up to the age of 21
- Different interpretations (Pure familial model and hybrid model; entitlement to stay and EET)

# Staying Put 18+

- Enable young people to build on and nurture their attachments to their carers so they can move to independence at their own pace (more akin to normative transitions)
- Provide the stability and support necessary for young people to achieve in EET
- Give weight to young people's views about the timing of transition

# Emerging themes and issues

- Evaluations not yet complete: emerging messages are based on findings from a mapping exercise, focus groups and interviews with professionals

# Remaining in care and right to return

- Changes in the way information about moving to independence is presented and expectations about when young people should leave

*They the IROs used to say, rather than say to the young person, 'What are your thoughts', they'd say 'At 16 you can have a training flat' and your like, 'Well, they haven't even expressed any interest in leaving'*

# Remaining in care and right to return

- Willingness to find appropriate accommodation and the opportunity for young people to return to care

*A good parent says you now, 'Well I'm hanging in there with you'...If they make the decision [to leave home] themselves by voting with their feet – a good parent is there saying, 'When you're through this, your home is here'*

# Remaining in care and right to return

- *The Local Authority's response has changed...particularly for the likes of 16, well 17 year olds leaving residential placements, because often those sorts of scenarios are fairly negative ones rather than a positive decision: 'It's I've had enough of this'...In the past the response would have been, 'Well we've found home a B & B if we can't find anything else'...Now we're in a much stronger position to be saying 'Uh-uh, that's not acceptable, 'and at the very least if they're going to go independent then we want a package of support there for them*

# Reflections

- Option of leaving later
- *There's no formal end date frightening them...the young person can leave naturally and move on to something sustainable and positive*
- Improved flexibility
- Role and value of having the choice to stay longer and/or right to return
- Challenges in practice:
  - Rights of young person and rights of carers
  - Resource implications
  - Conditions of entitlement to stay (especially Staying Put)

# Preparation and training

- Importance of preparation not simply postponement

*Young people don't know how to open the washing machine...potentially we could hit [difficulty] if we don't tackle that issue with foster carers...a lot of young people are gonna skip that training flat, they're going to move from foster care or supported lodgings, extended foster care straight into a [council] flat...So I think we're going to hit problems at a later age...they could be 19, 20 and ill-prepared*

# Preparation and training

- Replicating normative parenting?

*Some of these foster households are quite busy places...and need somewhat more in terms of planning...In these environments it is easy to be more protective and not to be having young Tommy...flooding the kitchen. But actually I'm interested that increasingly young people stay at home longer...and I think actually parents are far more protective than they have been before, and so actually carers if they are overprotective are actually reflecting what we're asking them to reflect*

# Preparation and training

- Different perspectives on reasons for 'overprotection'
- Impact on young people will vary

*The altruistic nature of carers [means] they tend to overcompensate...from my experience of meeting up with young people they are not prepared for independence because their foster carers are doing everything for them*

# Preparation and training

- *Carers take their responsibility as a carer seriously...I thin if you're a paid foster carer there are certain rules in place, like checking where [young people] are staying and things like that that perhaps aren't expected in a birth relationships*

# Preparation and training

- R2BCared4 includes extended accommodation provision in some pilot areas: a 'taste of independence' – temporary stay in a training/taster flat
- Authorities have also been seeking to develop foster carers training and/or levels of support provided
- Staying Put pilots have been discussing changes in roles, responsibilities and expectations once young people reach 18.

# Reflections

- Preparation should start early
- Importance of preparation, training and support for young people AND foster carers
- Importance of work around the emotional aspect of moving on and leaving care not just practical skills
- Need to ensure young people have the opportunity to grow and mature and take on more responsibility

# Next Steps

- Eliciting young people's views of the pilots and the role and contribution that they have had on outcomes
- Survey of young people (pilot sites and comparator local authorities)
- In-depth interviews with young people (conducted by peer researchers)
- Interviews with social workers, IROs and foster carers
- Costs of standard leaving care provision, Right2BCared2 and Staying Put
- R2BCared4 evaluation due for completion October 2010
- Staying Put evaluation due for completion September 2011

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