

Response ID ANON-3XZA-3MUD-Y

Submitted to Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard
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Privacy Notice

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:
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2 What is your email address?

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3 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?

Other (please state)

If 'Other', or you want to provide more details, please state below:
Representing National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum - made up of 130 local authority leaving care teams.

4 We know that some individuals will respond on behalf of their organisation.

Yes

Organisation:
National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, Catch22

5 As government analyses the consultation findings and develops and publishes a response, we may want to quote you.

Yes, by organisation

Yes

6 In processing your data and meeting legal duties, government may be expected to share information about your consultation response.

Please explain why you wish your response to be kept confidential:

General National Framework and Dashboard questions

7 To support local authorities in delivering the outcomes and enablers set out in the National Framework we have sought to make the document user-friendly and easy to understand. We have tried to be concise, use plain language and provide clear explanations of what is required of leaders and practitioners.

Agree

8 What do you think of the expectations for practice described in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on the expectations in the Framework:

At times, this framework feels very focussed on 0-18 year olds. We need to ensure the focus is across 0-25 year olds as:

1. We have a statutory obligation to support young people up to the age of 25,
2. We will be unsuccessful in supporting children and young people in care if we only focus on excellence up to the point where they technically 'leave care.'

Including the needs of care leavers aged 18-25 necessitates:
- Different partnerships Eg. Adult mental health, adult safeguarding
- A commitment to other groups of workforce Eg. Personal Advisers
- Bespoke indicators – the current 4 indicators for care leavers are extremely limited

We have included comments throughout to give this perspective, but please contact us (National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum - made up of 130 LA leaving care teams) if you would like to discuss this further with leaving care professionals & care experienced young people.

9 The National Framework describes the role of children's social care in achieving outcomes for children, young people and families. Existing statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), describes the expectations for how other agencies, such as education, health and the police, should meet their duties to work with local authorities, and safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It would not be appropriate to duplicate content across both pieces of guidance, but it is important that the National Framework reflects the importance of multi-agency working.

Please provide your thoughts on the expectations for multi-agency working:

Guidance for partner agencies should include:

- A focus on coproducing plans with people with lived experience & with social care professionals.
- A commitment to publish plans, so that there is transparency about what support/provision can be expected.
- A feedback loop for accountability & review of these plans.
- The inspecting bodies for the different agencies should inspect whether this guidance is being followed.

10 The Dashboard is being created to support learning and bring transparency to the system so that the impact of what happens in practice can be understood. It will contain a series of indicators providing information on what is happening in practice and how the outcomes and enablers described in the National Framework are being achieved.

Please provide your thoughts on the ways the Dashboard can support learning:

We support the thinking of the Esmee Fairbairn Learning Programme:

1) Until a more rounded data set relating to care leavers is available, conversations around the Dashboard should draw on other sources of information about what matters to young people leaving care, such as the Coram Voice Bright Spots surveys.

2) The Dashboard data should be collected in a way that reinforces anti-discriminatory practice, including enabling understanding of the experience of care leavers who:

- Arrived as unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Are from different racial/ethnic groups
- Have an Education, Health & Care Plan
- Have a mental health disorder/ are being treated by CAMHS
- Identify as LGBTQ+
- Are/have been in custody

And we would add to this list:

- Young parents
- Identify as having a disability
- Live out of area
- Type of accommodation prior to turning 18
- Type of accommodation currently – so that we can differentiate the experiences & issues young people are facing

It would be useful to see how we can use existing networks (like National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, Fostering Network) to understand and learn from the data – including hearing from care experienced children and young people. There may be other areas of practice where similar networks would be useful.

11 How often should data be published to support learning and understand how practice is making a difference to children, young people and families?

Quarterly

Outcome, enabler and indicator questions

Outcome 1: children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need

12 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please describe your views and limit your response to 200 words:

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

Outcome 2: children and young people are supported by their family network

13 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this outcome:

We support the thinking of the Esmee Fairbairn Learning Programme in this area:

We think it would be clearer if there was a separate Outcome and Indicator set for care leavers. This would complement the new separate Ofsted judgement.

If this is not taken forward, then this section should include reference to care leavers being supported by their family network. A study by the University of Bedfordshire (Munro E et al (2022) 'CCTC Final Report: Care Leavers' transitions to adulthood in the context of COVID-19'. Luton: University of Bedfordshire) indicated that 9% of care leavers returned to birth family after care, and the Bright Spots survey referred to in Q10 reported that 46% of care leavers received emotional support from a family member (including parents, siblings and grandparents).

However, the issue is complex, as some care leavers may feel they have to return to family members because of the financial challenge of renting a home of their own, or because they do not feel safe in their care leaver accommodation.

Supporting care leavers to build, or rebuild, positive relationships with their family network should be a responsibility of leaders and practitioners, and should form part of listening to the voice of children and young people.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

We would like to see an indicator on:

- % of siblings placed together, where children are taken into care – this is a key priority area for care experienced young people from the Young People's Benchmarking Forum who have spoken to us repeatedly about how staying with their siblings was or would have been extremely important to them.

We also support the thinking of the Esmee Fairbairn Learning Programme in this area:

The planned development of care leaver indicators for loving relationships should include a basket of indicators relating care leavers' relationships with their family networks. This could include the number & proportion of:

- Care leavers living with a family member, for whom this was a positive accommodation choice
- Care leavers in touch with one or more members of their family network
- Care leavers for whom a family-finding service such as "Lifelong Links" has been made available since their 18th birthday
- If and when available, care leavers with a lifelong guardianship order.

Outcome 3: children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes

14 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this outcome:

The issues around Transitional Safeguarding need to be highlighted which can include risks around modern slavery, county lines and exploitation in its different forms. We would like to see included:

- Leaders recognise the challenges around transitional safeguarding as children turn 18, but may still be at risk and work with adult services and partner agencies to ensure that these young people are supported effectively.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

% of care leavers 18-25 who the LA is contact with who have been referred for safeguarding support to other agencies.

Outcome 4: children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

15 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this outcome:

We would like to see the following added:

- Leaders identify and engage with needs of specific groups of young people Eg. UASC, young parents, those in custody etc.
- Leaders ensure that care leavers placed out of area are not disadvantaged in the support they receive.
- Leaders establish a joint plan with their local Integrated Care System to support the health of care leavers and this offer is included in the Local Offer
- Leaders secure a strong local offer for care leavers, through consulting with young people and securing the support of partners.
- Leaders should work with housing partners to ensure suitable, safe and affordable housing provision is in place for young people leaving care.
- Practitioners should build develop networks across housing providers to ensure that young people leaving care can secure suitable, safe and affordable housing provision that meets their individual needs.
- Practitioners identify and engage with needs of specific groups of young people.

We also support the thinking of the Esmee Fairbairn Learning Programme in this area:

- Up to 27% of care leavers are former UASC, so the leaders' and practitioners' sections should set expectations to know the immigration status of their care leavers, have plans to resolve insecure status, and ensure continued support for care leavers with unresolved status.

- The sections for leaders & practitioners could include a positive statement about promoting care leavers' wellbeing, as well as addressing mental health concerns.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

- % of siblings placed together, where children are taken into care – this is a key priority area for care experienced young people from the Young People's Benchmarking Forum who have spoken to us repeatedly about how staying with their siblings was or would have been extremely important to them.
- % of children and young people living out of area - Again, this is a key issue raised by care experienced young people and leaving care professionals that we know affects the quality of support that children and young people receive.

We also support the thinking of the Esmee Fairbairn Learning Programme in this area:

A priority should be to include "subjective wellbeing" indicators such as those used in Coram Voice's Bright Spots survey. These ask:

- Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
- How happy did you feel yesterday?
- How anxious did you feel yesterday?

These questions are included in the ONS wellbeing survey, so the data collection methodology is already well established, and results can be benchmarked against the general population.

Indicators on employment should be wider than just apprenticeships. Our experience in supporting young people towards employment is that apprenticeships are not appropriate for every care leaver.

Enabler 1: the workforce is equipped and effective

16 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this indicator which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this enabler:

Personal Advisers are the main supporting professional for 18-25 year olds leaving care – supporting them for up to 8 years – this role needs to be better valued and recognised, with recognised training, qualification and progression routes developed.

We would like to see this included:

- Leaders recognise & celebrate the value and contribution of all members of the social care workforce.
- Leaders ensure that specialist training and progression routes are in place for Personal Advisers to support them in their role.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

Indicator:

Recognised training and qualification in place for Personal Advisers?

Future indicator:

% of Personal Advisers who have achieved a recognised qualification within three years of starting as a PA.

Enabler 2: leaders drive conditions for effective practice

17 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this indicator which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this enabler:

We would like to see this included:

- Leaders create opportunities for innovation and encourage creativity of approach across their teams.
- Leaders promote a culture where the needs of different groups of children in care and care leavers are recognised and responded to.
- Leaders work across their services, regularly engaging with children and young people aged 0-25 and the professionals that support them - across different settings
- Practitioners build relationships across partner organisations and can make the most of services and support available.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :