

CARE LEAVER COVENANT

Through signing this document I commit the Department for Education to support the principles of the care leaver covenant, and to provide the support detailed below to help care leavers in their transition from care to independence in order to improve their life chances.

Signed on behalf of: the Department for Education

Signature

Jan Lids

Name

DAMIAN HINDS

Position

SECRETARY OF STATE

Date

25th OCT 2018.



Department for Education

Principles of the care leaver covenant

The Department for Education supports the key principles of the care leaver covenant, which are:

- that all parts of society have a responsibility to help care leavers to avoid poor outcomes and make a successful transition to adulthood; and
- that action to support care leavers should be in their best interests, promote their health and well-being and secure the best possible outcomes for them.

Demonstrating our commitment

The Department for Education will demonstrate its commitment to the care leaver covenant through:

- providing employment opportunities to care leavers, through leading and participating in the Civil Service care leaver internship scheme;

Children's Social Care

- ensuring that the legislative framework that sets out what statutory support local authorities are required to provide to care leavers - as their corporate parent – is kept under constant review;
- setting up a Junior ISA – with an initial payment of £200 – for every child who has been looked after continuously for 12 months;
- providing funding to local authorities to implement: Staying Put; the extension of Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25; and extra support to care leavers at high risk of rough sleeping (as part of the cross-Government rough sleeping strategy);
- providing funding to pilot 3 x care leaver social impact bonds to help care leavers engage in education, employment or training (EET);
- stimulating innovation in the delivery of leaving care services, through funding projects through the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, for example the Staying Close pilots;
- funding Spectra First to engage organisations from the private and voluntary sectors with a view to them signing the care leaver covenant;
- appointing a national implementation adviser to provide support to local authorities to improve their offer to care leavers;

Schools

- giving looked after children priority in relation to school admissions;
- requiring every school to appoint a designated teacher to support looked after children's educational attainment;
- requiring each local authority to appoint a virtual school head (VSH) to promote the attainment of all children that the local authority looks after;
- providing Pupil Premium Plus funding of £2,300 per year for every looked after child to local authority virtual school heads (VSHs), to support them to improve looked after children's educational attainment;
- continuing to review support available within the schools system, to help achieve the best possible educational outcomes for looked after children;

SEND

- encouraging care leavers with Education, Health and Care plans to take part in supported internship study programmes;

Careers Guidance

- funding pilots to test innovative ways of providing careers advice to looked after children and care leavers, to help them to plan for their future and consider a wide range of further education, training, apprenticeships and jobs/careers;

Post-16 Education

- identifying care leavers as a priority group for the 16-19 bursary, which provides up to £1,200 per annum to help care leavers with the costs of participating in 16-19 education;
- providing additional funding of £480 per care leaver per year to providers of 16-19 education and training to help with the costs of recruiting and supporting these young people;

Apprenticeships

- giving care leavers in their first year of an apprenticeship a £1,000 bursary;
- encouraging employers/training providers to offer apprenticeships to care leavers, through giving them extra funding of £1,000 to meet any extra costs of providing them with support;

Higher Education

- working with the Office for Students to encourage universities to use their widening participation budgets to support looked after children to attend university through, for example, taster days, summer schools and study support;
- working with the Office for Students to encourage universities to clarify and extend their 'offer' to care leavers, through their engagement with the care leaver covenant; and
- working with the Office for Students to encourage universities to provide care leavers with priority access to year-round university accommodation, and mentoring support;