

CARE LEAVER COVENANT

Through signing this document I commit the Department of Health and Social Care 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 of Health and Social Care

Signature 
Name Matt Hancock
Position Secretary of State
Date 24 October 2018



Principles of the care leaver covenant

The Department for Health and Social Care 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 Health and Social Care will demonstrate its commitment to the care leaver covenant through the following actions:

- providing employment opportunities to care leavers, through participating in the Civil Service care leaver internship scheme;
- championing, with NHS England and NHS Improvement, a range of volunteering and work experience opportunities for care leavers in the NHS,

for example through our work with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Health and Wellbeing Alliance;

- securing the voice of children in care and care leavers in forums that influence the way national, regional and local services are designed and delivered, for example through their participation in the NHS Youth Forum;
- through Public Health England, participating in 'Project SEARCH', (a transition to work programme for young adults with learning disabilities); and 'Movement to Work', (a work experience and on-the-job training initiative for young people aged between 18-24 who are not in education, employment or training);
- through Public Health England, working with Barnardo's to offer apprenticeships to care leavers - initially through their hub in the West Midlands;

Mental health support

- working with the Department for Education to respond to recommendations of the Expert Working Group on looked after children and care leavers, including through implementing trailblazer projects following the Children & Young People's Mental Health Green Paper;
- continuing to invest in Local Transformation Plans of every Clinical Commissioning Group area in England, which set out how local agencies will work together to improve mental health, including of vulnerable groups;
- developing a survey on the Mental Health of Looked After Children to help us understand drivers of poor mental health, development of local services and future training needs for professionals;
- working with the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence to improve guidelines on how organisations, professionals and carers work to deliver high quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships for looked-after children and

Local safeguarding arrangements:

- supporting new multi-agency safeguarding partnerships with the NHS, and continuing to work to improve information-sharing between health and children's services;

Building the evidence base:

- building the evidence base for policy and practice, through the Children and Families Policy Research Unit, with a focus on the needs of vulnerable children and families; and
- through Public Health England, convening a special interest group to identify key prevention evidence, relating to children and young people's mental health, drivers of inequality in mental health, application to practice and further research needs.