

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 16 January 2025

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review

1. Summary

- 1.1. Renfrewshire children's services operates a Throughcare & Aftercare Service for care experienced young people.
 - 1.2. In November 2024 the regulatory body which oversees this service, the Care Inspectorate, published '*Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review*'. Renfrewshire staff contributed to the review.
 - 1.3. This report provides an overview of the Care Inspectorate thematic review and considers the current provision of throughcare and aftercare from a Renfrewshire perspective.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note:
 - (a) how Renfrewshire's Throughcare & Aftercare Service compares with the key messages identified through the thematic review; and
 - (b) the development plans of Renfrewshire's Throughcare & Aftercare Service to continually drive forward the service.
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3. Background

- 3.1. The Scottish Government asked the Care Inspectorate to undertake a thematic review of the experiences for care experienced young people in and leaving care in Scotland.
- 3.2. This request was result of recommendations made in the *Way Home Coalition's 2019 publication 'Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway: Improving*

Care Leavers Housing Pathways and the Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection's 2022 publication, *'CELCIS Continuing Care: An exploration of implementation'*. In these the need for equality in the provision of aftercare services, of pathway planning, and of reducing risks and crises for young people in Scotland were noted. Furthermore, recommendations were also made about hearing young people's views and experiences of continuing care, as well as considering the impact of continuing care on the outcomes for young people.

- 3.3. The review by the Care Inspectorate was completed under Section 53 of the Public services (Scotland) Reform Act 2010. Through this they were able to interview staff and young people, read records, and reach evidenced based conclusions which could offer opportunities for learning and development.
- 3.4. The Care Inspectorate's 2024 publication *'Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review'* was based upon the experiences of 38 young people between 16 and 26 who were, or had been, formally looked after, and were leaving care in the sample local authorities of Shetland, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway.
- 3.5. It also took account of publicly available data and reports, undertook a review of relevant published literature, incorporated the findings of a national survey completed by 31 local authorities about the theme, evaluated 20 case records, 273 staff survey responses and incorporated the views of 85 staff leaders and/ or corporate parenting groups from the sample population.
- 3.6. The review was completed between April 2024 and the publication date of November 2024.
- 3.7. The key messages from the report will now be detailed, along with an overview of Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service's current position and aspiration around these.
- 3.8. **Key message 1: Almost all young people reported positive relationships with trusted staff who supported them through the stages of moving on from care.**

Renfrewshire position

Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service currently have 165 open allocations of young people eligible for a service. This does not include the cohort who have opted out of engagement, or for whom an active allocation has been assessed and agreed with them as not required at this time. These young people are aware of their right to request a service, and this would be responded to through the Throughcare and Aftercare duty workers. This may determine, short or longer-term interventions depending on the young person's need or want.

Young people who are actively working with the service have an individualised welfare and pathway plan. This details their assessed needs, wants, and views, including that around their allocated worker as well as the assessment of any other involved professional agency. The documented feedback around the young peoples' relationships with their allocated workers is predominantly very positive. The recent Renfrewshire Children's Service Inspection by the Care Inspectorate in October 2024 highlighted a strength

and noted evidence of positive relationships between staff, young people and their families.

- 3.9. **Key message 2: There was evidence of practice being rights and relationship based as well as trauma informed. Overall care experienced young people's rights were found to be upheld in relation to them moving on from care.**

Renfrewshire position

The Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service have been proactive in developing their knowledge and skills around relational and trauma informed practice. The team have completed evaluations and training which supports trauma proficient practice, including participation in the Scottish Government and NHS recognised Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training. These efforts by the service and the impacts of them were noted in the Care Inspectorate evaluation which included Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service.

Young people, as evidenced through their Welfare and Pathways assessment and plan are supported to be aware of their rights around them moving on from care. They are also assisted to access independent advocacy and or legal assistances as has been relevant to them and their situation.

- 3.10. **Key message 3: The meaningful involvement of young people in service design and planning proved to offer services which were innovative, creative and effective in positively impacting the lives of care experienced young people.**

Renfrewshire position

Young people in Renfrewshire are continually encouraged to offer any views they may have about the service and support they receive. This is done through individual direct work with them, as well as periodic consultation events and the outcome of these has been recorded on the case management system, in assessments and fed into service development considerations and planning.

The views of care experienced young people informs service delivery and development, however in the spirit of continuous development we recognise that this could be developed further. We would seek to do this through an explicit engagement strategy, with clear ways in which to we would look to combine the views and experiences of care experienced young people with other data gathered (as per 3.12). This is something that the new Team Manager of Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service is looking to take forward in their 2025 service development plan, with the oversight and support of the Social Work Senior Manager and Children's Services Manager.

- 3.11. **Key message 4: Through there being variable approaches to keeping in touch, not all young people had access to the necessary information to support their transitions. This means that the vision set out by the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (SCLC) is yet to be achieved for all young people.**

Renfrewshire position

Renfrewshire Council is not a cosignatory of the SCLC (although individual officers are cosignatories) and does not have a published Local Offer in accordance with Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017; an English piece of legislation within which the Local Offer element has been adopted in some other areas of the UK as good practice. This is something which will be addressed in 2025 as part of the Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service development plan. Whilst these are not mandatory through Scottish legislation, it would allow Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service to be explicit in its commitment to and support of care experienced young people. Noted within the Care Leaver Local Offer website is that Renfrewshire is committed to and meets almost all possible practical opportunities to support care experienced young people. This includes, but is not restricted to, council tax exemption, priority access to council housing, offering a setting up allowance and financially supporting care experienced young people to access education and training.

- 3.12. **Key message 5: The benefit of gathering the stories, views and experiences of care experienced young people to enrich complimentary gathered data was noted. Where this occurred and was combined, it offered insight into what was important to them and assisted in informed service design and delivery.**

Renfrewshire position

The Renfrewshire position is detailed in paragraph 3.10.

- 3.13. **Key message 6: The most significant challenge for partnerships was the availability of suitable housing. This limited partnership's capacity to deliver on young people's aspirations and plans.**

Renfrewshire position

Like almost every area of the UK, Renfrewshire is having to closely manage a limited supply of general housing stock; resulting in a challenge to meet demands. This has implications upon care leavers in the area, and their wants. Despite this, very good relations have been fostered between Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service and counterparts in the Housing directorate. This has supported the development and implementation of our housing protocol which directs that young people leaving care receive priority status for social housing allocation. Staff across the directorates work collaboratively with the young people to understand and try to meet their needs around community, connections, shelter, safety and security.

Care leavers in Renfrewshire are also fortunate to have access to the Council's Charleston Square supported living service. This offers 10 individual flats for care experienced young people for a short to medium term period, with the aim of assisting them to become equipped for independent living. This resource is regularly inspected by the Care Inspectorate, who in May 2024 rated it Very Good. Similarly, in partnership with Barnardo's, care leavers have access to two Gap houses, opportunities to develop the partnership with Barnardo's and offer additional resources are currently being explored. Renfrewshire Council offer ten satellite flats offering Renfrewshire's

care experienced young people opportunity to take up a tenancy, with assistance from outreach staffing to work on their emotional, practical and social skills to support their aim of sustaining positive independence.

- 3.14. There remains opportunities for development within the service, particularly about formalising the engagement strategies and publicising the extent of assistance the service can and will offer. There is awareness of these areas of development potential, and they will form the basis of the service development plans moving forward; ensuring that Renfrewshire's care leavers have access to the best possible supports.
- 3.15 As is evidenced above, Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service is exceeding the level of its peers in some areas within the sample group evaluated by the Care Inspectorate in their 2024 publication '*Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review*'. Positive efforts are being made to engage, effectively support, and create opportunities for Renfrewshire's care experienced young people to assist them on their journey towards independence.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

3. Community/Council Planning

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| Our Renfrewshire is thriving | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including support for employment.</i> |
| Building strong, safe and resilient communities | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including development of safe plans.</i> |
| Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including challenging discrimination against those with care experience.</i> |
| Working together to improve outcomes | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including support for employment, access to health, access to housing and access to further education.</i> |

4. **Legal**
None.
 5. **Property/Assets**
None.
 6. **Information Technology**
None.
 7. **Equality and Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.
 8. **Health and Safety**
None.
 9. **Procurement**
None.
 10. **Risk**
None.
 11. **Privacy Impact**
None.
 12. **Climate Risk**
None.
 13. **Children's Rights**
As Renfrewshire encourages all children who are looked after to retain that status until their 18th birthday, the Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service operates within the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child.
 14. **Cosla Policy Position**
None.
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List of Background Papers

- 3.15. Care Inspectorate: '*Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review*'. <https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/7820-transitions-for-care-experienced-young-people-a-thematic-review>
- 3.16. Way Home Coalition: '*Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway: Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways*'. <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/youth-homelessness-prevention-pathway>

- 3.17. Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection: 'CELCIS Continuing Care: An exploration of implementation'. <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/continuing-care-exploration-implementation>
- 3.18. The Scottish Government: *Public services (Scotland) Reform Act 2010*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/8/contents>
- 3.19. Care Inspectorate: Report of a joining inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Renfrewshire community planning partnership. [www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/7797/CARH%20report%20for%20Renfrewshire%20Oct%202024%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/7797/CARH%20report%20for%20Renfrewshire%20Oct%202024%20(1).pdf)
- 3.20. TURAS: *Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training*. <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37902>
- 3.21. Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (SCLC): <https://mycovenant.org.uk/about/>
- 3.22. Care leaver local offer: <https://www.careleaveroffer.co.uk/organisations/32116-renfrewshire?term=renfrewshire>
- 3.23. Legislation.gov.uk: *Children and Social Work Act 2017 (section 2)*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/section/2>
- 3.24. Care Inspectorate: *Renfrewshire Council Throughcare Team Housing Support Service*. <https://careinspectorate.com/berengCareservices/html/reports/getPdfBlob.php?id=320158>.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Kevin Smith, Childrens Services Manager. 0141 487 4280

Children's Services

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