

The Baker & Dixon Leaving Care Services Self-Assessment Framework (January 2020)

What is the Baker Dixon self-assessment?

It's a tool to help you review your services for care leavers across your organisation. It was originally developed to evaluate the previous New Belongings Programme¹. It has been updated to include new legal duties or policies that local authorities should have in place.

What will it show?

The framework is based on the New Belongings 10 'gold standard' areas which reflect young people's pathways to adulthood (Stein, 2012²). In each of the 10 areas there are a number of statements relating to what might be expected in a 'gold standard' service to care leavers.

Completing the self-assessment can highlight strengths (areas of good practice) that are making an impact on the lives of care leavers within your system, in your structures and with staff. It can also show gaps, or areas to develop or change (priorities for action).

Department of Education (as part of their role on the New Belongings advisory group) commented on the self-assessment:

"It is comprehensive and covers all the main things that you would expect an excellent leaving care service to provide" (Nov, 2019)

How do we complete it and score it fairly?

It is the responsibility of each local authority taking part in New Belongings to decide *how* the self-assessment is completed and *who* will be involved in this (discussed and agreed at their New Belongings visit 2).

- Coram Voice suggests that as part of the completion of the self-assessment local authorities hold a **discussion group** during which the self-assessment is reviewed.
- It would be beneficial if participants have each (or as a team) completed a copy of the self-assessment prior to the discussion group.
- Representatives from a range of roles (e.g. senior management team, corporate parenting panel members, front line service staff etc.) and partner organisation should all be invited to take part in the group discussion.
- At the meeting each area can be debated and each person or group provide evidence to support their scoring.

Some form of moderation will be needed to bring all the answers and evidence together for consideration, deliberation and agreement so you can submit one completed version that you have agreed together to Coram Voice (deadline to submit tbc likely May 2020).

The process of completing the self-assessment (having the discussion and debate) is just as important as the results

¹ The self-assessment was created by Dr. Claire Baker and Jo Dixon in 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-belongings-programme-evaluation>

² Stein, M. (2012) Young People Leaving Care: Supporting pathways to adulthood, Jessica Kingsley, London

What about young peoples' involvement?

You can invite young people individually or as part of groups to complete this version of the self-assessment. However, please note the tool was designed as a self-assessment for services and therefore has only been tested for use by staff. As part of New Belongings visit 2 young people will get the opportunity to discuss what they feel about services in relation to the 10 'gold standard' areas that the Baker and Dixon is based on and their feedback will be recorded.

What happens once we've filled it in?

- The completed self-assessment will form part of the evidence (along with the results of the *Your Life Beyond Care* survey) to help inform your New Belongings action plan.
- Coram Voice will analyse your self-assessment and return results to you (visit 3 will review findings from both the survey and self-assessment).
- Your self-assessment will also be used to inform the evaluation of the New Belongings programme by Coram.

How does this relate to our Ofsted self-evaluation?

“Each year, Ofsted asks LAs to share a self-evaluation of social work practice. The voluntary self-evaluation plays an important role helping Ofsted to understand how LAs are working - including the extent to which leaders and managers have a grip on practice. LAs participating in New Belongings should be able to draw on their work on the project to provide up-to-date, robust evidence of progress and management oversight for their annual self-evaluation and engagement meeting”

(Matthew Brazier, Her Majesty's Inspector, Specialist Adviser (Looked After Children), member of New Belongings advisory group, Nov 2019)

How do we rate our services using the self-assessment framework?

A range of rating scales were tested with experts in social care when designing the framework, but there was little consensus on a preferred scale. We have opted for a scale that indicates the extent to which you agree that your service has in place the relevant approaches and provision listed across the 10 gold standard areas.

How you rate your service will depend on **how confident you are that your local authority has the relevant approaches and provision in place and the strength of evidence to support your response**. When completing the framework use this guide:

- **Agree** – there is strong evidence to suggest this is in place
- **Mostly agree** – although not implemented across the board, there is some evidence to suggest this is in place
- **Mostly disagree** – there may be some work in this area but insufficient or limited evidence to show this
- **Disagree** – there is little or no evidence that this is in place

The comment boxes will expand, so please provide as much information as you would like

This is your self-assessment so use the tool in the most useful way for your local authority.

Name of Local authority:

Date self-assessment completed:

Name:	Date:
-------	-------

Describe how the self-assessment was completed

Who was involved in completing the self-assessment? (number of people, types of roles of people involved etc.)

Any questions and to send your completed self-assessment contact newbelongings@coramvoice.org.uk

1. Gold Standard Area: Listening and responding to care leavers' views (as individuals and collectively)

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support <u>at present</u>, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p align="center">Agree at present 4</p>	<p align="center">Mostly agree 3</p>	<p align="center">Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p align="center">Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
a. Strategic leaders are committed to improving leaving care services in line with the Children and Social Work Act (2017) corporate parenting principles ³						
b. Care leavers actively shape services and influence how support is delivered.						
c. We regularly get feedback from care leavers about the support they receive.						
d. Elected members often meet, listen to and work alongside care leavers.						
e. Our care leaver forum (or other representative group) has had an impact on our services.						
f. Our local authority celebrates care leavers' achievements.						
g. Where complaints identify failings or gaps in services, we change the way we work						
h. Care leavers are involved in the recruitment, selection and training of staff and carers.						

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683698/Applying_corporate_parenting_principles_to_looked-after_children_and_care_leavers.pdf

i. Care leavers are involved in developing our local offer for care leavers annually.						
j. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check how satisfied they are with the degree to which how they are involved in service improvement						

2. Gold Standard Area: Relationships – having people to count on for emotional support

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support at present, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p>Agree at present 4</p>	<p>Mostly agree 3</p>	<p>Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p>Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
<p>a. Care leavers are supported to maintain relationships that are important to them (e.g. with parents, siblings, friends, former carers).</p>						
<p>b. All care leavers have a named allocated worker</p>						
<p>c. We have good support in place for care leavers who return home.</p>						
<p>d. We make sure all care leavers, staff and carers know that young people can keep PA support up to age 25 (if they wish) or return for support after age 21</p>						
<p>e. We visit care leavers regularly and when they ask us to.</p>						
<p>f. We value the expertise of older care leavers who can act as 'peer supporters'/role models.</p>						
<p>g. Care leavers report that they find it easy to get in touch with their worker or others who know them.</p>						
<p>h. Our local authority does all it can to keep in touch with all care leavers & keeps reaching out to those we are not in touch with</p>						
<p>i. Our leaving care service(s) is in a space that encourages care leavers to drop in and attend activities.</p>						

j. We monitor work load for our staff to ensure they have capacity to develop meaningful relationships.						
k. Young people have someone to call 'out of hours'.						
l. Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) support available to care leavers to develop and maintain positive social networks						
m. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check how satisfied they are with the support they receive in relation to emotional support						

3. Gold Standard Area: Care leavers' entitlements – being informed and supported						
Thinking about leaving care support <u>at present</u>, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X	Agree at present 4	Mostly agree 3	Mostly disagree 2	Disagree at present 1	How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)	Ideas for improvement / future actions
a. Our local care leavers' offer has been given to all care leavers.						
b. All adults supporting care leavers have a copy of the local offer and make sure young people access their entitlements						
c. Care leavers are aware of the Care Leavers Charter (and/or local pledge) and involved in the design, updating and scrutiny of it.						
d. Care leavers have opportunities to get support from, and give support to, other care leavers.						
e. Care leavers are encouraged and well supported to access their files						
f. Care leavers have clear information on how to make a complaint.						
g. We use a range of social media platforms to engage and inform care leavers.						
h. We actively support care leavers to build networks to reduce feelings of loneliness						
i. Care leavers are given and take up opportunities for volunteering in the local authority and community.						
j. We have a high-quality advocacy service accessible to all care leavers.						

k. All care leavers get the key documents they need to begin their lives as young adults, e.g. national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports.						
l. We help care leavers understand the reasons why they were in care.						
m. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check how satisfied they are with the support they receive in relation to their entitlements.						

4. Gold Standard Area: Educated (to their potential)

<p>Thinking about leaving care support at <u>present</u>, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements:</p> <p>please tick ✓ or X</p>	<p>Agree at present</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Mostly agree</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Mostly disagree</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Disagree at present</p> <p>1</p>	<p>How do we know this?</p> <p>Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
a. We have clear financial policies outlining the support we offer care leavers attending further education (FE) and higher education (HE).						
b. Our local authority education performance data shows care leavers starting points and individual progress made.						
c. Our virtual school head takes responsibility for maximising the learning opportunities for all care leavers up to 25.						
d. We have effective partnership arrangements with local FE Colleges and Universities and have named lead contacts.						
e. Young people are helped with moving and supported to settle into University						
f. Education professionals contribute to the Pathway Planning process (assessment, review and actions).						
g. Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) funding and support available to care leavers to achieve their potential in education						
h. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check that they are satisfied with the support they receive with their education.						

5. Gold Standard Area: Employment – care leavers helped into work

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support at present, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p align="center">Agree at present 4</p>	<p align="center">Mostly agree 3</p>	<p align="center">Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p align="center">Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
<p>a. We have a range of in-house 'ring fenced' opportunities for work experience, training, apprenticeships and employment for care leavers in the local authority.</p>						
<p>b. We help care leavers find suitable apprenticeships and make sure young people access the £1000 apprenticeship bursary</p>						
<p>c. We find employability opportunities with partner agencies and local employers and have engaged with the national Care Leaver Covenant</p>						
<p>d. All care leavers receive career planning support.</p>						
<p>e. Employability professionals contribute to the Pathway Planning process (assessment, review and actions).</p>						
<p>f. We track and monitor the employment needs of our care leavers and actively seek out opportunities to match the needs and aspirations of the group.</p>						
<p>g. We have approaches and services to support young people who are less academically able or not yet 'work-ready'.</p>						
<p>h. We have effective local partnership arrangements with Job Centre Plus colleagues.</p>						

i. Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) funding and support available to care leavers to achieve their potential in employment						
j. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check that they are satisfied with the support they receive in relation to their employment and work skills						

6. Gold Standard Area: Having good health and wellbeing

<i>Thinking about leaving care support at present, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i>	Agree at present 4	Mostly agree 3	Mostly disagree 2	Disagree at present 1	How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)	Ideas for improvement / future actions
a. Care leavers transferring to adult services report a smooth transition in support						
b. Effective partnership agreements and joint working is established between health services and social services.						
c. Care leavers have access to services to help with substance misuse, sexual health and pregnancy.						
d. Links are established with CAMHS and community mental health services to ensure care leavers are given priority access to targeted services.						
e. Health professionals contribute to the Pathway Planning process (assessment, review and actions).						
f. Care leavers have access to, and are supported to understand, their full health history						
g. We actively help care leavers to recover and heal from past harm and to promote resilience and emotional wellbeing.						
h. Care leavers have access to a designated nurse (or equivalent).						
i. Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) support available to care leavers to promote healthy lifestyles						
j. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check that they are satisfied with the support they receive in relation to their health						

7. Gold Standard Area: Being in safe and settled accommodation

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support at present, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p>Agree at present 4</p>	<p>Mostly agree 3</p>	<p>Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p>Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
<p>a. We have developed a positive accommodation pathway (e.g. based on the Barnardos/St Basils' care leaver accommodation pathway) which means we have a range of accommodation matched to the needs of our care leaver population.</p>						
<p>b. We ensure that all accommodation offered to care leavers is safe and suitable including risk assessments conducted on unregulated accommodation (including for 16 and 17 year olds in 'other arrangements').</p>						
<p>c. Services work together to avoid care leavers becoming 'intentionally' homeless.</p>						
<p>d. All relevant services and stakeholders (including young people) have contributed to a detailed accommodation needs analysis.</p>						
<p>e. Our housing allocation policy prioritises care leavers.</p>						
<p>f. We provide practical support with moving into and furnishing care leavers' homes.</p>						
<p>g. Joint working protocols and agreements are in place between children's services and housing partners.</p>						
<p>h. We never use B&B accommodation.</p>						
<p>i. We identify and intervene early if care leavers are at risk of tenancy breakdown</p>						

j.	The accommodation offered to care leavers is affordable, now and in the future.					
k.	Housing professionals contribute to the Pathway Planning process (assessment, review and actions).					
l.	All care leavers are given the opportunity and encouraged to stay put with foster carers should they wish to.					
m.	Staying close in residential care is available in our authority.					
n.	Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) support related to accommodation available to care leavers.					
o.	We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check that they are satisfied with the support they receive in relation to their housing					

8. Gold Standard Area: Having an adequate level of income

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support at present, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p align="center">Agree at present 4</p>	<p align="center">Mostly agree 3</p>	<p align="center">Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p align="center">Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
<p>a. Our local authority has in place clear written policies and procedures on the financial assistance available to care leavers.</p>						
<p>b. Care leavers pathway assessments and plans include a comprehensive assessment of financial needs and how these needs will be met.</p>						
<p>c. Financial assistance is provided to young people when they are in a crisis.</p>						
<p>d. Care leavers receive a 'setting up home' allowance (at least £2000) that is sufficient to ensure they have all the essentials they need.</p>						
<p>e. Care leavers have choice and flexibility in how and when they receive and spend their setting up home allowance.</p>						
<p>f. Care leavers are exempt from council tax (these provisions extend to young people out of authority and apply to young people up to age 25)</p>						
<p>g. We open savings accounts for children in care and encourage use of these as the child grows.</p>						
<p>h. Young people and staff have access to expert advice to help maximise income and financial support.</p>						

i. Young people leaving care receive support to manage their money (e.g. to develop their budgeting and financial management skills).						
j. Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) financial support available to care leavers						
k. We regularly get feedback from care leavers to check that they are satisfied with the support they receive in relation to their income						

9. Gold Standard Area: Managing day to day living

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support at present, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p align="center">Agree at present 4</p>	<p align="center">Mostly agree 3</p>	<p align="center">Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p align="center">Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
<p>a. Young people are supported to develop the skills and confidence they need to maximise their chances of successful maturity to adulthood whilst in foster care, children's homes' or supported accommodation.'</p>						
<p>b. Young people can return to a more supported environment if they wish.</p>						
<p>c. Training flats (or equivalent) are available to provide a supportive environment to 'test out' independence and skills.'</p>						
<p>d. Our preparation support is designed and run either by, or with, young people who have experience of leaving care. It focuses on both practical and emotional skills.</p>						
<p>e. Young people have a Pathway Plan that complies with regulations and guidance and that is reviewed in line with statutory requirements and quality assured.</p>						
<p>f. Young people generally report that they find pathway planning helpful in supporting them day to day.</p>						
<p>g. Our local offer details the <i>additional</i> (above statutory requirements) support available to care leavers to help them 'participate in society'</p>						
<p>h. We regularly get feedback from care leavers that they are satisfied with the support they receive in relation to managing day to day living.</p>						

10. Making sure support works for all care leavers (for example: disabled care leavers; young people who are homeless; in the youth justice system; living out of area; UASC; parents; LGBTQ)

<p><i>Thinking about leaving care support <u>at present</u>, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements: please tick ✓ or X</i></p>	<p align="center">Agree at present 4</p>	<p align="center">Mostly agree 3</p>	<p align="center">Mostly disagree 2</p>	<p align="center">Disagree at present 1</p>	<p>How do we know this? Add evidence, examples and comments (e.g. policies, projects; any disagreements in rating; obstacles face)</p>	<p>Ideas for improvement / future actions</p>
a. Our service ethos values diversity, promotes fairness and challenges discrimination.						
b. We work with young people to actively mitigate discrimination and dispel myths about being in care.						
c. We ensure that we offer the same level of support to care leavers living out of authority.						
d. We have policies and procedures which specifically address the needs of different 'groups' of care leavers						
e. Our staff are trained and supported to recognise and engage with care leavers with 'complex needs'						
f. We know the number and experiences of care leavers who run away, go missing or are at risk of exploitation.						
g. Care leavers in custody receive regular visits from their PA & support plans for release						
h. We undertake multi-agency risk assessment on all care leavers, involving all agencies where necessary and have arrangements to escalate concerns to senior managers and DCS.						

Final ‘global’ rating in each Gold standard area

Having reviewed the different statements in each ‘Gold standard’ area please give a ‘global score’ for each area (out of 10)

NB: young people taking part in New Belongings visit 2 are doing this work too (the way the ‘gold standard’ areas are described replicates the wording in the exercise with young people) – part of the feedback to your local authority will compare the score areas

We would rate our current performance in... Listening to care leavers’ views and doing something about it	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Entitlements: knowing your rights as a care leaver	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Supporting care leavers with their education	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Employment: helping care leavers into work	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Having good health and well-being	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Being in safe and settled accommodation	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Supporting care leavers to manage money	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Relationships: having people for emotional support	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Managing day to day life	/ 10 [score out of 10]
We would rate our current performance in... Making sure support works for all care leavers (different groups)	/ 10 [score out of 10]