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A young woman with problematic substance use was resident in a unit where she made new friends. On leaving, the units provided young people with the skills training group where young people built with practitioners while in the unit. This was especially the case for those young people who discovered their strengths and potential while in the unit. The evaluation recognised the value of relationships that young people could develop with practitioners while in the unit. These relationships could be a difficult task (Boendermaker, 1998; Buchanan, 1999). Such relationships, however, are extremely important. Different pathways of care leavers (moving-on, staff turnover and visits) are associated not only with the quality of care experience, but also their transition from care and the support they receive after care (Stein, 2006). This evaluation recognised the value of relationships that young people could develop with practitioners while in the unit. This was especially the case for those young people who had poor family engagement. Good practice in transitions is crucial to positive outcomes for young people. A real commitment to corporate parenting as laid down in the document These are our Bairns (Scottish Government, 2004) should be followed up by ensuring that services have the resources to make good transitions a reality, and that staff are trained to learn as much as they can about the legal rights of those who are leaving care.

References
Scottish Executive (2004), Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland Regulations and Guidance on Services for Young People Coating to the Looked After by Local Authorities, Edinburgh: The Stationary Office.

Supporting transitions: Some care: Throughcare and aftercare to secure care:

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Introduction
Research in the area of throughcare and transitions has highlighted major problems (Dixon and Stein, 2002 and 2005; Stein, 2006). In response to such findings, regulations and guidance were published. The Scottish Government has taken the lead in recognising the responsibilities for supporting young people leaving care (Scottish Executive, 2004). In spite of this, the development of good practice in transitions has been slow. The SIRCC stakeholder review of 2007 identified throughcare and aftercare services as key areas for development and in 2009, during consultations held in relation to the National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI), this was emphasised again. This paper outlines the findings of a recent evaluation of practice in the secure sector and explores some general principles which can be applied across the residential child care sector.
Proactive practice from staff improved, as they moved from asking ‘Why are you here?’ to ‘Where are you going?’
Inadequate range of supported living units;
Provision for the Learning Disability and the Social Care (SCCYP) sector;
A lack of family work;

These findings echoed the study on the innovative practice and demonstrated that practice with young people would be well suited and applicable to the residential care of those young people in care:

Practitioners felt that continuity of care was demonstrated by corporate parents where young people were placed at the heart of their provision:

Focusing on the young person’s own needs and goals, you will be led on a journey where you will be guided towards the future. Why else should they be on the road with you if they are not each other’s lodger, the ‘carer’ who follows them? Why else should they be for the drive? We need more opportunity for young people to explore their talents, and not simply to define themselves as a young person. This approach means getting to know the young person through the development and establishment of strong relationships in the early stages and encourages wider practice.

Proactive practice

Most practitioners in the evaluation indicated that, by focusing on continuity of care, they changed the way they worked. For example, ‘Where did you go? God bless you and thank you’ (the youth had been released from care), ‘You have changed your life’ (the young person had taken up an education course) or ‘God bless you’ (the young person had taken up an education course). The majority of practitioners and managers believed that this approach had a positive impact on the young person. Young people were more likely to sustain their transition (including employment, further education, training or the arts) and there was a reduction in the number of young people who were discharged from care.

The evaluation showed that practitioners had to remind young people to advocate actively on behalf of young people if they are at risk of being discharged into inappropriate settings. It also demonstrates a need for practitioners and services to advocate actively on behalf of young people if they are in danger of being discharged into inappropriate settings. These are young people who are at risk of being discharged from care without a pathway plan in place. Sadly, this reflects the reality of many young people’s experience in care. Many practitioners felt that young people leaving care were seen as a problem by social workers and care providers, rather than a family. Social workers did not expect young people to succeed. Some practitioners felt that when they left care, they felt they were wasting their time, according to staff.

Individual social workers cannot be blamed for the size of their caseloads, as managers and other social workers are placed outwith their own authority, so there can be competing priorities in addition to their own workload. Some transfers from practitioners at the early stages of new education or training may be difficult. This evaluation found that family relationships were often stressed and that practitioners had to remind the young person to advocate actively on behalf of young people if they are at risk of being discharged into inappropriate settings. It also demonstrates a need for practitioners and services to advocate actively on behalf of young people if they are in danger of being discharged into inappropriate settings. These are young people who are at risk of being discharged from care without a pathway plan in place. Sadly, this reflects the reality of many young people’s experience in care. Many practitioners felt that young people leaving care were seen as a problem by social workers and care providers, rather than a family. Social workers did not expect young people to succeed. Some practitioners felt that when they left care, they felt they were wasting their time, according to staff.

There is also a need for practitioners and services to advocate actively on behalf of young people if they are at risk of being discharged into inappropriate settings. This is particularly the case for special needs housing associations as well as organisations offering supported accommodation. It also demonstrates a need for practitioners and services to advocate actively on behalf of young people if they are in danger of being discharged into inappropriate settings. These are young people who are at risk of being discharged from care without a pathway plan in place. Sadly, this reflects the reality of many young people’s experience in care. Many practitioners felt that young people leaving care were seen as a problem by social workers and care providers, rather than a family. Social workers did not expect young people to succeed. Some practitioners felt that when they left care, they felt they were wasting their time, according to staff.

The need for family work

Home placements after a period of care seemed to fail frequently. This emphasises the importance of family work, with a focus on the social, educational and aftercare. Services should address this, and provide training in collaboration with families and other agencies. The importance of well-developed advocacy skills is particularly relevant for young people leaving care. The evaluation also showed that stressing should be avoided in advertising to young people who have been dispossessed in treatment, such as mental and physical health problems were often out of context when young people were discharged from care.

Practice considerations

Practitioners must advocate strongly for pathway planning to take place. Some practitioners are unclear about the regulations associated with young people leaving care. They may not be clear about their role in this area.

Inadequate range of supported living units; inadequate range of supported living units for care leavers. This undermines the importance of well-developed advocacy skills in the context of meeting the needs of care leavers. The evaluation showed that stressing should be avoided in advertising to young people who have been dispossessed in treatment, such as mental and physical health problems were often out of context when young people were discharged from care.