

FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT
EDUCATION, CARE & HEALTH DEPARTMENT

REVIEW OF LEAVING CARE AUDIT FOR 2017-18

Issued to: Aneesa Kaprie, Interim Head of Service, CLA & Care Leavers,
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(Final Report Only).

Prepared by: Principal Auditor

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Report No: ECHS/01/2017/AU

REVIEW OF LEAVING CARE AUDIT 2017-18

INTRODUCTION

1. This report sets out the results of our systems based audit of Leaving Care for 2017-18. The audit was carried out in quarter 4 as part of the programmed work specified in the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan agreed by the Section 151 Officer and Audit Sub-Committee.
2. The controls we expect to see in place are designed to minimise the department's exposure to a range of risks. Weaknesses in controls that have been highlighted will increase the associated risks and should therefore be corrected to assist overall effective operations. Any Priority 1 recommendations or Nil/Limited Assurance opinions must be considered for inclusion in the Department's Risk Register.
3. The 16+ Leaving care team provides help and support to children and young people who have been looked after by our social services and are leaving care.
4. The revised net budget for CLA and Care Leavers for 2017-18 was £3,329,220 and the year to date actuals was £3,722,832 a variance of £393,612. For 2018-19 the revised net budget for CLA and Care Leavers was £4,084,580 and the year to date actuals was £864,647.

AUDIT SCOPE

5. The scope of the audit was outlined in the Terms of Reference issued on 27/3/18. The review did not cover any petty cash testing.

AUDIT OPINION

6. Overall, the conclusion of this audit was that limited assurance can be placed on the effectiveness of the overall controls. Definitions of the audit opinions can be found in Appendix C.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

7. Our testing identified the following issues which we would like to draw to management's attention:-
- Leaving Care Procedures were found to be out of date and in need of review.
 - Documentation was found not to always be in place to support payments to service users.
 - Payment request forms could not be located in some cases.
 - Pathway Plans had not been reviewed within 6 months as expected.
 - Individual finance records were found to be incomplete.
 - Grant sheets (central log) did not reconcile to the finance records held.
 - T accounts were found not to have been reconciled. The process of making payments to care leavers needs to be fully reviewed.
 - Service agreements had not been completed or authorised in a timely manner.
 - Staying Put Allowances were not in line with the DFE rates and had not been uplifted for 2017/18 and 2018/19.
 - It was confirmed that none of the staff within the Leaving Care Team with finance responsibilities had completed the mandatory financial regulations training.
 - The Asset Register was found to be incomplete, undated and had no review date.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS (PRIORITY 1)

8. There are six priority one findings made within this report.

Documentation to support payments to Service Users

9. Issues arose in six cases concerning the supporting documentation and substantiating the payments currently being paid:-
- For Sample 1 no documentation could be located to verify the amount of £1,337 per week.

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- For Sample 2 – A Living Together agreement was located for this service user at the weekly rate of £155.75. The current service agreement is £255.75 from 24/8/16. The Group Manager advised that the rate that should actually be paid is the staying put rate of £376.45 per week.
- For Sample 6 – A service agreement from 5/3/18 to 25/11/18. This service user turned 18 on 23/11/18 but it is unclear why the payment was not ended on 23/11/18. An overpayment of £16.54 has arisen.
- For Sample 13 a service agreement commenced on 21/12/17 to 19/5/18 for £100 per week. This was a staying put retainer payment for term time only while the service user attended education. It was found that the period related to term time and non term time, so the incorrect rates had been paid.
- For Sample 16 a service agreement commenced on 8/7/16 for £1,800 per week and remains current. No agreement has been located to support this placement. The Finance & Monitoring Officer confirmed that the service agreement should have been closed as the service user is no longer there and the service agreement ended on 15/12/16 retrospectively.
- For Sample 19 a service agreement commenced on 4/4/18 and ended on 4/4/18 for £699.01 for the carer whilst the service user returned home for 13 days. This was a one of payment. The rate is not correct.

Pathway Plans

10. Issues arose with Pathway Plans for 12 cases in relation the pathway plans not being reviewed every 6 months as expected. The Group Manager explained that the pathway plans due to be reviewed are detailed within a BOXI report on Carefirst.

Individual Service User Finance Record

11. Payment records were reviewed and were found not to be up to date and complete. These related to the Setting up Home Allowance (SUHA), travel reimbursement, clothing allowances food vouchers and sundry items.

Grant Sheet (Central Log)

12. It was found that when reconciling the grant sheet to the finance records, issues arose in seventeen of the cases sampled for testing.

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Reconciliation to Oracle – T accounts

13. A FBM report was run of all transactions under accounting code 807***4076 for 2017-18. It was found that for 3 samples Setting Up Home Allowances (SUHA) transactions appeared on the finance records but not on the grant record and were unallocated to the individual T account. Other transactions on the FBM report remained unallocated that went back to 31/7/17.

Staying Put Allowances

14. Staying Put allowances are included within the agreed Fostering Allowances. In May 2016, a report went to the Executive Committee to approve a change whereby rates were to be brought in line with the DFE rates. It was confirmed by officers that this was to be from December 2017. The Auditor was informed that the Staying Put Rates were linked to the Fostering rates.
15. It was found that the Staying Put rates had not been subject to any uplift for 2017/18 and 2018/19. This should be read in conjunction with the Family Placements Audit for 2017-18.

DETAILED FINDINGS / MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

16. The findings of this report, together with an assessment of the risk associated with any control weaknesses identified, are detailed in Appendix A. Any recommendations to management are raised and prioritised at Appendix B.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

17. Internal Audit would like to thank all staff contacted during this review for their help and co-operation.

DETAILED FINDINGS

No.	Findings	Risk	Recommendation
1	<p><u>16+ Leaving Care Procedures</u> The 16+ Leaving Care Procedures were provided to the Auditor. It was found that the 16+ Leaving care procedures were out of date and the rates have since changed.</p> <p>There is no version control, date of review and the document is undated.</p> <p>It was confirmed by the Group Manager that the procedures are likely to be out of date.</p> <p>Procedures need to detail a process to prevent the Setting Up Home Allowance being exceeded.</p>	<p>Staff may not be aware of Policies and Procedures resulting in inconsistent practices being undertaken and payments being exceeded.</p>	<p>Leaving Care procedures should be fully reviewed and updated, stating the responsible officer and be version controlled and dated. A review date should also be added. On completion, procedures should be made available to all staff.</p> <p>[Priority 2]</p>
2	<p><u>Documentation to Support Payments to service users</u></p> <p><u>This is linked to recommendation 8</u></p> <p><u>Issues arose in 6 samples :-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample 1 – No documentation has been seen to verify this service agreement of £1,337 per week. 		

Priority 1
 Required to address major weaknesses and should be implemented as soon as possible

Priority 2
 Required to address issues which do not represent good practice

Priority 3
 Identification of suggested areas for improvement

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample 2 – A Living Together agreement was located for this service user at the weekly rate of £155.75. The current service agreement is £255.75 from 24/8/16. The Group Manager advised that the rate that should actually be paid is the staying put rate of £376.45 per week. • Sample 6 – A service agreement from 5/3/18 to 25/11/18. This service user turned 18 on 23/11/18 but it is unclear why the payment was not ended on 23/11/18. An overpayment of £16.54 has arisen. • For Sample 13 a service agreement commenced on 21/12/17 to 19/5/18 for £100 per week. This was a staying put retainer payment for term time while the service user attended education. It was found that the period related to term time and non term time, so the incorrect rates had been paid. • For Sample 16 a service agreement commenced on 8/7/16 for £1,800 per week and remains current. No agreement has been located to support this placement. The Finance & Monitoring Officer confirmed that the service agreement should have been closed as the service user is no longer there and the service agreement ended on 15/12/16 retrospectively. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Sample 19 a service agreement commenced on 4/4/18 and ended on 4/4/18 for £699.01 for the carer whilst the service user returned home for 13 days. This was a one off payment and the rate is not correct. 	Lack of robust monitoring could lead to incorrect payments being made.	<p>Documentation should be readily available to support payments continuing to be made in respect of service users. All agreements should be current and complete.</p> <p>[Priority 1]</p>
3	<p><u>Payment Request Forms</u> It was found that Payment requests forms could not be located for Samples 4, 12 and 19.</p>	Payments are not authorised or appropriate.	<p>Payment request forms should be completed as required.</p> <p>[Priority 2]</p>
4	<p><u>Pathway Plans</u> Issues arose with Pathway Plans for 12 cases in relation to the pathway plans not being reviewed every 6 months. Sample 1 – 7 month gap Sample 3 – Last one dated 29/6/11-5/7/11. A closure record started 5/8/13 but remains incomplete. Sample 4 – 7 month gap</p>		

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	<p>Sample 5 – 8 month gap Sample 7 – 8 month gap Sample 9 – Last one 14/2/11-29/6/11. A closure record started on 28/9/12 but remains incomplete. Sample 10 – 9 month gap. Sample 11 – 7 month gap. Sample 12 – 7 month gap Sample 14 – 1 year gap (should have been closed). Sample 15 – 8 month gap Sample 16 – 7 month gap The Group Manager explained that the pathway plans due to be reviewed are detailed within a BOXI report on Carefirst.</p>	<p>Pathway Plans are not reviewed within expected timescales. (Children & Social Work Act 2017 & Children’s Act 1989).</p> <p>Non-compliance with Children & Young People Service Safeguarding and Social Care Division Procedures Manual.</p>	<p>Ensure that completed Pathway Plans are in place and reviewed as appropriate and compliant with legislation.</p> <p>[Priority 1]</p>
5	<p><u>Individual Service User Finance Records</u></p> <p>Payment records were reviewed and were found not to be up to date and complete. The following issues arose:-</p> <p><u>Clothing allowances</u> Sample 6 totalling £300 not detailed.</p> <p><u>Birthday Allowances not always listed.</u> Incorrect payment made Sample 6. Not detailed for Sample 15,</p>		

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	<p>and Sample 20. For Sample 17 service user is aged 26 and was paid £30 birthday money 8/2/17.</p> <p><u>Travel Allowances</u> Not listed for the following:- Sample 4 (21/5/18 £15, 26/3/18 £15), Sample 5 21/11/17 £90, Sample 11 (17/4/17 £21.20 5/6/17 £21.20), Sample 14 (30/5/17 £22.00), Sample 15 18/4/17 £21.20 5/6/17 £21.20), Sample 18 23/10/17 £10. The Auditor requested evidence in relation to these travel reimbursements and it was confirmed that there are no receipts available.</p> <p><u>Food Vouchers</u> For Sample 12 £20 8/9/17 and 15/11/17 and Sample 16 £20 25/7/17. Sample 18 on 25/1/18 £40 and 8/3/18 £20.00.</p> <p><u>Setting Up Home Allowance</u> Not listed for Sample 14 £300 8/9/17, Sample 18 £145.06.</p> <p><u>Sundry items</u> Sample 4 laptop, Gym membership Sample 5 £76 total, Sample 10 (glasses and stationery), Sample 15 laptop £400 12/12/17, Sample 17 rent £250, Sample 18 rent arrears £966.73, Sample 19 Passport reimbursement £75.50 15/3/18, Sample 20 driving test theory £23.</p>		

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	<p>Service agreements for items may appear on Carefirst but are not updated onto the individual finance record.</p> <p>For Sample 7 the date of birth differs from the details recorded on Carefirst and seems to be the wrong finance record belonging to another service user</p> <p>For Sample 10 there are recent transactions for October and November 2017 and the Setting Up Home allowance is overspent by £88.69.</p> <p>For Sample 17 the last transaction was in June 2017 relating to rent arrears. The SUHA was overspent by £737.36.</p>	<p>There is a risk that payments made to a young person exceed their entitlement.</p>	<p>A comprehensive record should be readily available to detail all payments made to support each individual leaving care service user.</p> <p>[Priority 1]</p>
6	<p><u>Grant Sheet (Central Log)</u></p> <p>It was found that when reconciling the grant sheet to the finance records issues arose in the following cases –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample 1 Clothing total shows as £335 but payment record shows £395. • Sample 2 not listed on grant sheet. • Sample 3 not listed on grant sheet • Sample 4 queries with SUHA balance and clothing. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample 6 Clothing total shows £350 but the payment record shows £100. • Sample 7 cannot be tested as payment record refers to another service user. • Sample 10 SUHA total shows as £2,463.10 but finance records shows as £88.69 over. Clothing shows as £70 but nothing detailed on finance record. • Sample 11 clothing total shows as £295 but finance record says £180. • Sample 12 SUHA total shows as £741 balance remaining but finance record shows £774.17. Clothing shows as £480.03 but finance record shows £145 • Sample 14 SUHA balance £1827.24 but finance records shows £827.24 • Sample 15 SUHA shows £2,030.52 but the finance record shows £58.59 balance, • Sample 18 SUHA shows as £503.56 but finance record shows £145.06. Clothing shows as £50 but finance record shows £250. • Sample 19 SUHA no transactions but the finance record shows a balance of £2,150 balance, after a transaction of £350. 	<p>There is a risk that payments made to a young person exceed their entitlement.</p>	<p>All service user finance records should be fully reviewed to ensure that all payments and allowances are up to date accurate and complete. Payments should not be made unless there are sufficient funds.</p> <p>[Priority 1]</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample 20 SUHA shows as £ 1,501.01 but shows full grant of £2,800 spent. Samples 3, 8, 9, grant records were not listed on the grant sheet. Sample 17 was also not listed and showed that the SUHA balance was over by £737.36. 		
7	<p><u>Reconciliation to Oracle – T account</u></p> <p>In order to assist monitoring, under the leaving care account code 807***4076 all transactions in respect of the Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA) should be recorded in each individual T account which is a sub code. Reconciliations are undertaken monthly.</p> <p>A FBM report was run of all transactions under accounting code 807***4076 for 2017-18. It was found that for :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample 1 £150 SUHA 27/7/17 appears on finance record but does not appear on the Grant Record and could not be matched to a T8673. The Finance Monitoring officer confirmed that the this transaction went to T7220 account. Sample 8 £50 SUHA on 12/3/18 does not appear on the Grant Record and could not be matched to T8626. 	<p>There is a risk that payments made to a young person exceed their entitlement.</p> <p>The stand alone monitoring system maintained by the service does not reconcile to the Authority's accounts.</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample 11 £2,500 (5 individual transactions) appears on finance record but only 3 could be found on the FBM report and remain unallocated.T8494 Sample 12 the SUHA balance on the finance sheet is £774.17 but the grant sheet states £741. The Finance Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was an error on the spreadsheet formula. Sample 14 the SUHA balance on the finance sheet is £827.24 but the grant sheet states £1,827.24. This was an error on the spreadsheet. Sample 18 the SUHA balance on the finance sheet is £145.06 but the grant sheet states £503.56. The Finance Monitoring Officer identified it was likely to be the purchasing card transactions and team members complete entries which may or may not include VAT. Sample 19 Transactions on Carefirst do not link to individual T codes and therefore these are picked up on reconciliation. Transactions are processed and authorised without having prior knowledge of the actual funds available. 	<p>The Authority’s accounts are not a true and fair reflection of the service delivery for the team.</p> <p>Allowances are likely to be exceeded as there is no comprehensive record available at a given time.</p>	<p>All transactions specific to the leaving care team should be allocated to the individual T accounts. Accounts should be reconciled on a regular basis.</p> <p>The whole process for making payments to care leavers needs to be fully reviewed as the current system is not fit for purpose.</p> <p>[Priority 1]</p>

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8	<p><u>Service Agreements on Carefirst</u> <u>(See Recommendation2)</u></p> <p>It was found that there were issues with five service agreements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample 3 – A service agreement commenced on 20/01/2004 and remained current at the time of testing. The Finance & Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Carefirst team had been contacted for cancellation of this agreement • For Sample 8 the service commenced on 14/6/10 for £79.66 per week. It was queried with officers whether this service agreement should still be open. A service agreement commenced on 14/6/10 and the Finance & Monitoring Officer emailed the case worker to confirm closure. • For Sample 9 the service commenced on 30/4/09 for £210 per week. It was queried with officers whether this service agreement should still be open. It was confirmed that this had been passed back to Placements & Brokerage to confirm whether the service agreement should be closed. 	<p>Delayed payments to service users and providers budget implications and inaccurate commitment shown within the budget. Lack of accurate management information.</p>	<p>Service agreements should be authorised in a timely manner to ensure that payments are made on time and commitments are accurately reflected in the budget. Service agreements should be closed in a timely manner and authorised for closure to prevent any potential overpayments arising. Service agreements for the Leaving Care team need to be reviewed to confirm that they are all current and that the correct rates are currently being paid.</p> <p>[Priority 2]</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Sample 13 a service agreement commenced on 21/12/17 to 19/5/18 for £100 per week. This was a staying put retainer payment for term time while the service user attended education. It was found that the period related to term time and non term time, so the incorrect rates had been paid. For Sample 14 the service commenced on 30/9/16 for £562.50. When reviewing this service agreement, it was noted that the service user moved out of the property on 20/8/17. The Finance Monitoring officer confirmed that the service agreement was closed on 14/9/17. 		

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9	<p><u>Staying Put Allowances</u></p> <p>Staying Put allowances are included within the agreed Fostering Allowances. In May 2016, a report went to the Executive Committee to approve a change to the rates which were to be brought in line with the DFE rates. It was confirmed by officers that this was to be from December 2017. The Auditor was informed that the Staying Put Rates were linked to the Fostering rates. It was found that the Staying Put rates had not been subject to any uplift for 2017/18 and 2018/19.</p> <p>This should be read in conjunction with the Family Placements Audit for 2017-18.</p>	<p>Where payments are not made in line with the Department for Education guidelines in accordance with the child’s age, there is a risk that incorrect payments are being made. This could lead to financial loss for the Council if overpayments are being made, or dissatisfied residents where underpayments are being made.</p> <p>The Authority may be in breach of their agreement with carers if the allowances have not been uplifted.</p> <p>Reputational risk to the Authority from underpayment of allowances.</p>	<p>The Department must review the application of DFE allowances for staying put and the need to action both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 uplifts. Annual uplifts must be communicated to the CareFirst Team in a timely manner once the appropriate authorisation has been evidenced.</p> <p>[Priority 1]</p>

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10	<p><u>Mandatory Financial Regulations Training</u></p> <p>It was confirmed by the Group Manager that none of the Leaving Care team had completed the mandatory Financial Regulations training.</p>	<p>Where financial regulations training are not completed, there is a risk that staff do not act in line with current financial regulations. This could result in financial loss.</p>	<p>All staff within the Leaving Care Team who have financial responsibilities, should complete financial regulations training.</p> <p>[Priority 2]</p>
11	<p><u>Asset Register</u></p> <p>The asset register was supplied on 2/7/18 by the Group Manager. This detailed Blackberry's and Laptop's allocated to the Leaving Care Team. The document was undated and had no review date. The register had not been signed off as correct.</p> <p>It was found that no equipment is detailed for the previous Head of Service of the current post holder.</p>	<p>Ineffective control over assets.</p>	<p>The Leaving Care service should ensure that they are maintaining an up to date record of assets and that movements of these assets are recorded and reviewed.</p> <p>[Priority 2]</p>

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MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Finding No.	Recommendation	Priority *Raised in Previous Audit	Management Comment	Responsibility	Agreed Timescale
1	<p><u>16+ Leaving Care Procedures</u></p> <p>Leaving Care procedures should be fully reviewed and updated, stating the responsible officer and be version controlled and dated. A review date should also be added. On completion, procedures should be made available to all staff.</p>	2	<p>The review of leaving care financial policy should be undertaken but there are significant interdependencies with other sources of income, and review dates should be driven by these changes. (eg benefit rates, apprenticeship bursaries etc)</p> <p>A discussion will need to take place with the finance team to agree who is best placed to re-write this policy. The current capacity within the service does not allow for this to take place within the service. A meeting will be set up with the finance team to agree a way forward.</p>	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT, Group Manager, Leaving Care.	Meeting to take place in October 2018. Finance procedure to be reviewed by end of December

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2	<p><u>Documentation to Support Payments to service users</u></p> <p>Documentation should be readily available to support payments being made to service users. All agreements should be current and complete.</p>	1	<p>All service users have a clear eligibility criteria and allowance rates are set. Discretionary payments are signed off by the Group Manager or HOS.</p> <p>This action will be considered as part of the review of the financial policy as noted above.</p> <p>All Leaving Care Cases are currently being reviewed and financial agreements will be checked for accuracy.</p>	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT, Group Manager, Leaving Care.	December 2018
3	<p><u>Payment Request Forms</u></p> <p>Payment request forms should be completed as required.</p>	2	Agreed. This is already in place.	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT, Group Manager, Leaving Care.	Completed

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4	<p><u>Pathway Plans</u></p> <p>Ensure that completed Pathway Plans are in place and reviewed as appropriate and compliant with legislation.</p>	1	<p>This is undertaken already and there is regular monitoring of performance in this area. Weekly monitoring of compliance and quality is currently in place.</p> <p>There is an overall improvement in the timeliness of completion and where plans are out of timescales, management reviews are undertaken and exception reporting with reasons are provided to the Director of CSC.</p>	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT, Group Manager, Leaving Care.	<p>Completed (all outstanding PP have been reviewed and updated)</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of timeliness.</p>
5	<p><u>Individual Service User Finance Records</u></p> <p>A comprehensive record should be readily available to detail all payments made to support each individual leaving care service user.</p>	1	As part of the review process the development and investment in suitable record management tools should be considered. A single workflow is desirable, linking across systems to minimise the administrative overhead and foster increased accuracy.		

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			<p>The capacity to manage these records in the light of a projected 40% growth in the cohort should be assessed.</p> <p>All current finance records per young person will be updated to accurately reflect current payments. Each case to be reviewed by the responsible team manager.</p> <p>Procurement of new case recording system to include tracking of finance for Care.</p>	<p>Group Manager/Care Leaver Team Managers.</p> <p>Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT/ Director, Children’s Social Care.</p>	<p>December 2018</p> <p>Date to be confirmed for procurement of the new system.</p>

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6	<p><u>Grant Sheet (Central Log)</u> All service user finance records should be fully reviewed to ensure that all payments and allowances are up to date accurate and complete. Payments should not be made unless there are sufficient funds.</p>	1	<p>Agreed. As above. Team Managers will undertake this review over the next 3 months. Given the nature of the service user group, at times young people may require additional payments. This will be agreed by the head of service.</p>	<p>Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT / Group Manager /Care Leaver Team Managers</p>	<p>December 2018</p>

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7	<p><u>Reconciliation to Oracle – T accounts</u></p> <p>All transactions specific to the leaving care team should be allocated to the individual T accounts. Accounts should be reconciled on a regular basis.</p> <p>The whole process for making payments to care leavers needs to be fully reviewed as the current system is not fit for purpose.</p>	1	Finance processes to be reviewed including reconciliations. This will be part of the review of the full process.	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT/ Head of Finance.	December 2018

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MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Finding No.	Recommendation	Priority *Raised in Previous Audit	Management Comment	Responsibility	Agreed Timescale
8	<p>Service Agreements on Carefirst Service agreements should be authorised in a timely manner to ensure that payments are made on time and commitments are accurately reflected in the budget. Service agreements should be closed in a timely manner and authorised for closure to prevent any potential overpayments arising.</p> <p>Service agreements for the Leaving Care team need to be reviewed to confirm that they are all current and that the correct rates are currently being paid.</p>	2	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>All current service agreements to be reviewed by the end of January 2019.</p>	Group Manager.	Ongoing. This is part of the core business of the team.

Priority 1
 Required to address major weaknesses and should be implemented as soon as possible

Priority 2
 Required to address issues which do not represent good practice

Priority 3
 Identification of suggested areas for improvement

MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Finding No.	Recommendation	Priority *Raised in Previous Audit	Management Comment	Responsibility	Agreed Timescale
9	<p><u>Staying Put Allowances</u> The Department must review the application of DFE allowances for staying put and the need to action both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 uplifts. Annual uplifts must be communicated to the CareFirst Team in a timely manner once the appropriate authorisation has been evidenced.</p>	1	<p>Agreed. Annual uplifts are communicated to CareFirst team. Current Staying Put payments to be reviewed for accuracy.</p>	Group Manager/Project Manager	<p>Ongoing January 2019</p>

Priority 1
 Required to address major weaknesses and should be implemented as soon as possible

Priority 2
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Priority 3
 Identification of suggested areas for improvement

MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Finding No.	Recommendation	Priority *Raised in Previous Audit	Management Comment	Responsibility	Agreed Timescale
10	<p><u>Mandatory Financial Regulations Training</u></p> <p>All staff within the Leaving Care Team who have financial responsibilities, should complete financial regulations training.</p>	2	Agreed. All staff will be encouraged to attend the relevant training when this becomes available.	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT/ Group Manager.	Timescale to be confirmed (dependant on availability of training)
11	<p><u>Asset Register</u></p> <p>The Leaving Care service should ensure that they are maintaining an up to date record of assets and that movements of these assets are recorded and reviewed.</p>	2	As part of a full service review due to undertaken between November 2018 –January 2019 – all posts numbers and assets linked to the post will be recorded.	Interim Head of Service, CLA & CT.	January 2019

Priority 1
 Required to address major weaknesses and should be implemented as soon as possible

Priority 2
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Priority 3
 Identification of suggested areas for improvement

OPINION DEFINITIONS

APPENDIX C

As a result of their audit work auditors should form an overall opinion on the extent that actual controls in existence provide assurance that significant risks are being managed. They grade the control system accordingly. Absolute assurance cannot be given as internal control systems, no matter how sophisticated, cannot prevent or detect all errors or irregularities.

Assurance Level	Definition
Full Assurance	There is a sound system of control designed to achieve all the objectives tested.
Substantial Assurance	While there is a basically sound systems and procedures in place, there are weaknesses, which put some of these objectives at risk. It is possible to give substantial assurance even in circumstances where there may be a priority one recommendation that is not considered to be a fundamental control system weakness. Fundamental control systems are considered to be crucial to the overall integrity of the system under review. Examples would include no regular bank reconciliation, non-compliance with legislation, substantial lack of documentation to support expenditure, inaccurate and untimely reporting to management, material income losses and material inaccurate data collection or recording.
Limited Assurance	Weaknesses in the system of controls and procedures are such as to put the objectives at risk. This opinion is given in circumstances where there are priority one recommendations considered to be fundamental control system weaknesses and/or several priority two recommendations relating to control and procedural weaknesses.
No Assurance	Control is generally weak leaving the systems and procedures open to significant error or abuse. There will be a number of fundamental control weaknesses highlighted.