

The Staying Close Aspiration project is designed to provide young people leaving residential settings with the additional support and nurture they need to help them develop the skills they need to live independently. Research has shown that young people who have been Looked After need extra time to grow and develop the skills necessary to live successfully on their own. The Staying Close project provides young people with accommodation and an intensive support package tailored to their needs, including therapeutic support, to enable them to develop these skills through experiential learning and self-advocacy. It is currently funded through the Department for Education (DfE).

Why is it important?

Each young person who is referred to the project will meet with their designated Personal Advisor and the CAMHS practitioner to have an individual assessment of their needs. They will also work with the Personal Advisor to develop their own PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) This is an interactive assessment model which encourages young people to focus on their dreams and ambitions and from there break these down into achievable goals. The PATH then forms the basis for their support plan when they move to Staying Close. The project has different types of a properties and young people will be offered either a bedsit with own cooking facilities and shared bathrooms with onsite staff support, or their own bedroom in house with shared bathrooms and cooking facilities and outreach support. Young people will have weekly key work sessions to support them with their life skills development and achievement of the aims of their PATH. They will have a quarterly skills assessment and when they and their Personal Advisor feel they are ready to move on they will have a formal assessment to identify their next placement. This can include both private rented flats and Portsmouth City Council tenancies.

The Staying Close Model has been so successful that the model has now been adapted to provide accommodation with support for other Care Experienced young people and Care Experienced Children Seeking Safety, who have not been in a residential setting. This is known as the Aspiration Supported Accommodation Project.

Currently there are 4 houses with shared facilities and 1 with self contained units, using the same model as Staying Close. The other buildings are supported through an outreach model with support tailored to individual needs.

How do we do it?

We provide:

- A person centred assessment (a PATH) that informs an individualised support plan for every young person referred.
- A skilled and knowledgeable Personal Advisor to provide intensive 1:1 support.
- A dedicated CAMHS practitioner to provide more in depth emotional support if required
- A comprehensive life skills training package
- Peer support and learning through group activities
- Opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them
- Move on to more independent living and eventually their own tenancy.

Referral Criteria

For All Staying Close/Aspiration Properties:-

- Must be aged over 18 and be a Looked After Child of Portsmouth City Council
- Be willing to engage with support
- To be able to share facilities with others safely and respectfully

For Staying Close Properties



One Minute Guide Staying Close Aspiration Project



- The young person must also have been in a residential unit or 24 hours supported provision within the last six months

For more information:

Contact Shakira Gearty , Staying Close Manager for a discussion and referral form

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