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Legislation

- Child Care Act 1991 Section 45
Sub (a)“ **Where a child leaves the care of the healthy board, the board *may.. Assist him (her) for so long as the board is satisfied as to his need for assistance and ... he has attained the age of 21 years***
- **Sub 2 (b) ..until completion of the course in education”**

CCA 1991 Section 45; Subsection 2

- (a) by causing him to be visited or assisted;
- (b) by arranging for the completion of his education and by contributing towards his maintenance while he is completing his education;
- (c) by placing him in a suitable trade, calling or business and paying such fee or sum as may be requisite for that purpose;
- (d) by arranging hostel or other forms of accommodation for him;
- (e) by co-operating with housing authorities in planning accommodation for children leaving care on reaching the age of 18 years.

Ryan Report Recommendation 2009

- 'the provision of aftercare by the HSE should form an integral part of care delivery for children who have been in the care of the state. It should not be seen as a discretionary service or as a once-off event that occurs on a young person's 18th birthday.'

Ministerial Directive 2010

- “.....to provide services in accordance with the section and subject to resources.
- ..to direct the HSE to formulate and implement appropriate administrative policies, procedures and guidance for implementing the aforesaid duty”.

Statistics

- As of March 2012 there are 6236 children in care . This figure has risen almost 20% in the last 4 years in line with population growth.
- 90% are in foster care with less than 10% in residential .

Statistics

- 1123, 18 to 21 year olds were in receipt of an aftercare service.
- 1341 young people in total were receiving a service.
- Approximately 60% were in education or training.

Service provision

- An aftercare service can range from support over the phone to a full care package which includes remaining with Foster carers, a living allowance, practical support and home visits.

Issues for the Service

- Number of children received into care rising.
- Increased number of Children with challenging behaviours.
- Budget reductions and moratorium on recruitment expected for a number of years to come.
- Do Children with mild to moderate learning difficulties fall through the gap on leaving care?
- Some young adults in high risk category refuse services.

Aftercare Policy

- Policy was approved in April 2012.
- Inter agency group established by the HSE to develop an implementation plan.

Some of the principles underpinning the policy

- The welfare of the young person is paramount.
- All young people have the right to be supported in their transition to adulthood.
- Preparation for leaving care will begin on entry into care.
- Young people are full participants in the process.

Eligibility

- All young people who have had a significant care history are entitled to an aftercare service based on assessment of need.

Implementation Recommendations

- Aftercare Steering Committees area based-multidisciplinary teams possibly linked to Children Services Committees.
- Joint protocol with Housing Authorities: Ryan Recommendation 66- well advanced.
- Standardised financial packages with separate cost codes.

continued

- Children in Care in Detention Schools are eligible.
- Communication of services.
- Develop a set of National Standards for Aftercare.
- Developed a set of metrics in 2012

Aftercare Area Steering Committees

- Interagency response to young people leaving care at area level,
- Forum for re-referrals in the event of a placement breakdown,
- Ability to track young people from 16 to 23,
- Develop services and networks community response.

Currently

- After care needs of young people being addressed within resources.
- In areas where there are no dedicated aftercare workers, social workers provide support

or

- there are Service level agreements with NGO such as Focus and Clare Care.

Other developments

- Development of a Section 5 policy.
- Developing linkages with adult homeless prevention services.
- Supported lodgings Policy.

Further work required

- Need to further developing linkages with primary care.
- Improve the support for those leaving residential care.
- Improving educational and training supports.
- Robust and quality care planning.
- Develop young people's Charter.

The services should be

- Accessible,
- Holistic,
- Needs based,
- Multi-agency,
- On request.

Finally quality care & aftercare planning

- Transition to independent living.
- Support and guidance.
- Provide young person with the capacity to make well informed decisions.