



Staying Close: Policy Brief

Please note that this brief aims to outline the policy objectives the Department for Education is looking for projects to respond to in their applications. Whilst it is specific in terms of what the Department for Education is looking for, we are open to different, innovative approaches to how you achieve this.

What do we mean by the term 'Staying Close' pilots in the context of this Targeted Funding Opportunity?

In his [report](#), Sir Martin Narey recommended that the government introduce Staying Close, subject to verifying the cost of doing so, through running pilots via the Innovation Programme. The report outlines some cost estimates and suggests piloting the operation of Staying Close in three or four areas to test some key assumptions.

At its core, Staying Close provides for continuity of the trusted relationship between the young person and the members of staff who were involved in their care before they left the children's home.

We envisage a pro-active offer of support, with a clear set of requirements about what level and frequency of contact and support the residential home would provide, and for how long. There will need to be a clear understanding between the local authority, residential home and the young person setting out the type, quantity and quality of support that would be provided to ensure that the offer of support is not tokenistic. This continuity of support will be combined with an offer of accommodation.

The pilots will support us to develop the national Staying Close policy. We want to learn what works to deliver a successful Staying Close arrangement and we will use the pilots to understand what must be included in any Staying Close arrangement and what can be designed locally. In parallel to, and informed by the pilots, we will continue to develop the Staying Close policy including (but not limited to) defining the role of the team around child and designing the inspection and monitoring of Staying Close arrangements in terms of the planning, accommodation and support available.

Key principles

While Staying Close is a broad term and we are keen to hear ideas on what it covers and how it will work, there are some key principles that any Staying Close proposal should cover. In particular, there are three key elements to Staying Close:

1. The continuity that it provides for the young person, particularly continuity of existing relationships between the young person and those who care for them in the home;
2. Provision of suitable and sustainable accommodation; and



3. In each individual case both the young person and the home want to pursue a Staying Close arrangement where this is in the best interests of the young person and it is supported by the 'team around the child'.

In addition, Staying Close should:

- Be more than a loose offer of support and sporadic contact, such as the opportunity to return to the home for a meal or to do laundry, although that should be part of the offer. It should mirror, as far as possible, the way that parents support their own children to move into independence and adulthood. This should be led by the particular needs and preferences of each young person;
- Have a clear offer of support to the young person supported by a contract between the home and local authority. Each organisation and person involved in Staying Close should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect of others;
- Be available to all young people leaving care whose final placement is in residential care aged 16, 17 or 18 where both the young person and the home want a Staying Close arrangement. The length of time that the young person has been living in the home should not be a barrier to accessing Staying Close, although those who have been there for a shorter period may not wish to continue those relationships;
- Involve planning early with the young person to make sure that any future Staying Close arrangement provides the right support. In proposals we want to see evidence of young people's experience and voice contributing to the design of services. Leaving care is a process, not an event, and the planning and transition period should reflect the individual needs, views and wishes of the young person as far as reasonably possible; and
- Be the responsibility of the originating local authority to fund and to plan for any Staying Close arrangement.

What are the challenges we would like to see addressed?

Young people leaving care often tell us that they face a 'cliff-edge' where support decreases after they turn 18 when they leave care. For young people leaving foster care, the Children and Families Act 2014 placed a duty on local authorities to provide support to enable young people in foster care to remain with their former foster carer(s), 'Staying Put', up to age 21, if that is what they both want.

Currently young people leaving residential care do not have the option to 'Stay Put' and it is this difference in choice and provision that we want to address. Sir Martin's report into residential care recommended introducing 'Staying Close', as an alternative to 'Staying Put', for those leaving residential care. We are committed to introducing Staying Close beginning first, as recommended by Sir Martin, by testing out variations of it through this Targeted Funding Opportunity.

We want Staying Close to provide parity in the support available to young people leaving residential care. However, we acknowledge that there are particular challenges for young people leaving residential care. We want to run pilots that will address these challenges and support the development of Staying Close to engage with as many young people leaving residential care as possible. We want to provide a meaningful Staying Close offer to all young people leaving residential care that meets and supports their varied needs.

Like all care leavers, young people leaving residential care have certain challenges, including difficult pre-care experiences that have an impact into adolescence and adulthood:



- A high proportion (53%) of children in children's homes at 31 March 2015 had a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP);
- In 2013, about 62% had clinically significant mental health difficulties and 74% were reported to have been violent or aggressive in the previous six months; and
- Most of the children in children's homes at 31 March 2015 were between the ages of 10 to 15 (56%) or 16 or over (41%).

In addition, young people in residential care are more likely to have had negative experiences while they are in care that can make it harder to make a smooth transition to adulthood:

- Young people in children's homes are more likely to be living away from their local communities and outside of their placing local authority: 37% of children in children's homes were placed over 20 miles from home and outside their local authority at 31 March 2015, compared to 14% of all looked after children; and
- Young people in residential care are more likely to have experienced multiple placements and more instability in the care system.

We want Staying Close to be accessible to as many young people leaving residential care as possible and respond to all the experiences described above.

What is in scope for the Staying Close pilots?

The purpose of piloting Staying Close is to build an evidence base of what works to provide the support young people want and need, understand how much it will cost and work out the specific details of how it can be delivered. There are some broad parameters as to what constitutes Staying Close (outlined above) and the outcomes that we want to achieve (see below for more on outcomes) but we are interested in your ideas on the detail of how it will work and to test that out through the pilots.

Across the portfolio of pilots we want to test key aspects of Staying Close, including how existing statutory roles and duties are best delivered alongside any arrangement and the implications for children's homes inspection. Staying Close should provide additional support to these young people and not simply repackage existing services. Within this we are particularly interested in testing:

- Who in the home, local authority and the young person's life is best placed to take on different roles within Staying Close including providing the continuing relationship, representing the young person's voice, and leading on the planning process? As an example, this could involve the children's home staff, the Independent Reviewing Officer or the Personal Adviser.
- How local authorities can work together to provide the support the young person wants and needs. This will be particularly important where a young person has been placed out of authority as a looked after child and they wish to remain there as part of a Staying Close arrangement.
- Different approaches to providing the accommodation element of Staying Close. We think there are two potential options for securing Staying Close:
 - The local authority secures the accommodation
 - The children's home secures the accommodation

We would like to test both of these models and are interested in hearing about alternative models to deliver Staying Close. We expect that in all models the home will be responsible for providing the support package as they continue the relationship with the young person.



- A range of different support packages available for the young person based on their needs. This is likely to include preparing for full independence after the Staying Close arrangement ends and support to access appropriate education, employment and training, and to enable the young person to access any mental health support they might need.
- How Staying Close works in different contexts and locations. We want to support pilots across the country in cities, towns, seaside and rural areas to understand the different experiences, and potentially different challenges, in each. We are also interested in receiving bids from the 'Opportunity Areas' of Blackpool, Derby, Norwich, Oldham, Scarborough and West Somerset. We are also interested in receiving bids from areas that are planning to run a care leaver Social Impact Bond through the Targeted Funding Opportunity.

What areas are out of scope for Staying Close pilots?

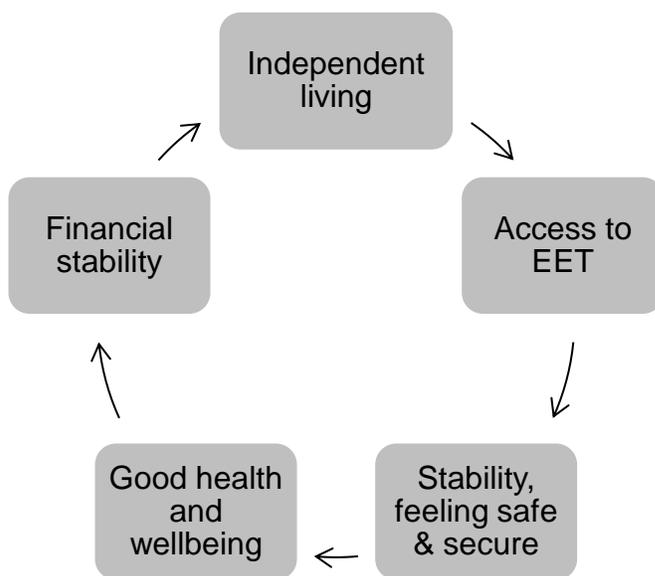
The Staying Close pilots are not:

- An offer for young people whose last placement in care is not a residential placement;
- A vehicle for LAs to handover their corporate parent responsibility to the children's home;
- An exact copy or extension of Staying Put in a children's home; or
- Building or funding the provision of the physical Staying Close accommodation. The cost of the accommodation or 'rent' should be covered by Housing Benefit or income received by the young person

What outcomes do we expect the Staying Close pilots to deliver?

In the refreshed cross-government care leaver strategy '**Keep on Caring**' published July 2016, the Department set out five key outcomes that we want for all care leavers.

As the diagram below sets out these outcomes are inter-related and an improvement in one is likely to lead to improved experiences and outcomes in others:





A successful Staying Close arrangement will support all five of these outcomes. It will mostly focus on supporting independent living: providing stability both in terms of the placement and relationships with carers and enabling the young person to feel safe and secure.

There is a range of different outcomes for young people that we expect the Staying Close pilots to deliver. These outcomes will be monitored in all the pilots to ensure quality accommodation and support is provided (please see the section below for further information on evaluation and monitoring). While different pilots will deliver different outcomes there are some core outcomes that we expect to see:

- The young person is able to maintain key relationships and is regularly and frequently invited to join in with activities happening at the home: and
- Provides suitable and sustainable accommodation for the young people, and the young person agrees the Staying Close accommodation is suitable and provides for their needs.

We also want Staying Close arrangements to support some or all of the following:

- The location of the accommodation enables the young person to access the education, employment or training they want and is a suitable distance from the children’s home. This needs to be defined and led by the young person’s wishes, feelings and needs.
- A gradual step-down transition that continues the support that young people receive while in care so that by the end of the Staying Close placement the young person is ready to live independently. The young person should feel ready and be equipped to manage:
 - Finances, including savings, rent, benefits, bills and taxes;
 - cooking and food shopping;
 - basic DIY and repairs; and
 - their health and wellbeing.
- The young person to work towards their individual aspirations and ambitions, particularly in education and employment.
- The young person to maintain existing social networks and friendship groups (outside of the children’s home) that will support and sustain them into adult life.

These outcomes reflect our ambitions for care leavers, as set out in *Keep on Caring*, and mirror what good parents want for their own children. We recognise that for some young people it will take significant time and input to reach these ambitions. With this in mind, we also want proposals to consider how they can use goal-based outcomes to assess the progress that an individual has made.

The table below sets out the specific kinds of outcomes that we expect pilots to aim for and measure. The table is divided into four columns that reflect the essential elements of Staying Close, as well as the additional areas that the arrangement could cover:

Essential Staying Close	Preparing for full independence	Education, employment and training support	Resilience
Care leaver is in suitable and sustainable accommodation	A step-down process is in place to enable the care leaver to be fully independent at the end of Staying Close	The Staying Close placement does not disrupt existing EET	Care leaver feels happy and safe in their Staying Close placement



<p>Staying Close accommodation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within walking distance of the home OR - Is within easy reach of the home (defined depending on the needs of the young person) OR - Provided while at university and/or during university holidays 	<p>Continue existing support so the care leaver is ready and equipped to manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finances, including benefits, bills and paying taxes - Cooking - Basic DIY and repairs - Their own health, including GP and dental visits 	<p>Staying Close supports educational aspiration and ambition, including where a young person chooses to go to university</p>	<p>The Staying Close placement is in the right place to enable the care leaver to access any mental health services they need</p>
<p>Care leaver is in touch with someone from their children's home <i>at least</i> once a week</p>	<p>Care leavers say they feel ready and equipped to live fully independently</p>		
<p>Care leaver is regularly and frequently (at least twice a month) invited to join in with activities happening in and outside the home</p>	<p>Builds on the preparation for independence training and support already included in the Pathway Plan</p>		
<p>Care leaver agrees that the Staying Close placement is right for them</p>			

In addition to the specific outcomes we want to achieve for young people leaving residential care, a successful Staying Close project will support a significant proportion of young people leaving residential care. We are interested in providing quality support and achieving positive outcomes for as many young people leaving residential care as possible.

Evaluation and monitoring of pilots

There will be an evaluation of each theme in the Targeted Funding Opportunity and we will work with successful bidders to develop this. We want to use the evaluation to test what works across the range of projects in each area and in particular evaluate the outcomes achieved for young people through the projects.

We also want to ensure that the Staying Close pilots provide the quality of accommodation and support that we expect for young people leaving residential care. We are working with Ofsted to identify the best way to monitor the pilots. We will also look at how Staying Close arrangements will be monitored when it is rolled out nationally. We will share further information about evaluation and monitoring at the next stage of the process.



Submission requirements

Applicants should use the detail provided in this brief when completing their EOI to ensure they are addressing the problems and challenges outlined and that their EOI meets the policy objectives for this targeted funding opportunity. In addition, applicants should refer to the Innovation Programme's assessment criteria when completing their EOI which can be found in the '[How to get involved](#)' document.

All applications must be submitted by 3pm, 31st January 2017 to CS.INNOVATIONPROGRAMME@education.gsi.gov.uk using the **EOI form** provided alongside this brief.

Please hold in your diary the 22nd February 2017 in Manchester for a workshop to develop your solution should your EOI be successful.