**Briefing 7: Support Through Care Team**

The Support Through Care Team provides a dedicated support service to children in care aged 0-21 or 25 if a young person is in full time education. It also provides assessments and support for unaccompanied and trafficked children, homeless 16 & 17 year olds and children/ young people remanded to local authority care.

Cases transfer to this team from the Children In Need Team once a permanence plan has been agreed for the child/young person - the team will then continue to support the children and their families until that permanence plan has been achieved. In terms of functionality the team is broadly divided into social workers who work predominantly with children aged 0-13, young people aged 14-18 and care leavers 18+ who in the main will have an allocated Personal Advisor. The aim is to provide continuity and manage the transitions for young people in their journey through their care pathway.

Together with partners / other professionals, parents and carers the team aim to help children and young people to achieve better outcomes and equip them to develop into responsible and participating citizens in their communities. The Team works closely with a specialist Children in Care Education Team - the Virtual School, a specialist nurse service for Looked After Children and the local Child Adolescent Mental Health Team as well as other professional staff in order to provide a joined-up service for Children in Care.

The team is responsible for ensuring that all children in care are visited, consulted and have robust plans in place to meet their needs to ensure good outcomes. This includes in particular their education, health (including emotional health) and plans about their permanent placement. As appropriate, children are moved onto adoption or become subject of Special Guardianship or Residence Orders. Many remain in foster care, although for some residential placement is most appropriate. In other circumstances children may return to live with their families. For young people aged 16 and above, work begins to plan for their move into adulthood through their Pathway Plan.

*Support provided by the team*

Children who are in care or provided with accommodation are subject to several legal requirements and responsibilities, which the local authority has to ensure are carried through.

* Support includes regular meetings (called reviews) to set up clear plans for each child. Specific attention will be paid to children's developmental, emotional and behavioural needs. They will have regular medicals and each child of school age will have a Personal Educational Plan (PEP) , and after the age of 16 a Personal Opportunity Plan (POP)
* It is important for the local authority to support the child at home or within the child's extended family wherever possible, if it is in the child's best interests. This may involve for example, assessing extended family members or friends as carers for a child, and seeking to rehabilitate children home to their family networks if safe and appropriate.
* The services for children in care will reflect an assessment of the individual child's needs (“Me and My World”) and feeds into the agreed care plan. This will reflect the child's age, development, and cultural and religious needs, as well as behavioural and emotional issues. The child's and the parents' views are important in defining the service provided.
* The Team aims to provide stability, permanence, consistency and a secure base for all children in our care.
* Where possible the local authority will try and place the child with foster carers as near as possible to the child's home environment so that their network of school, friends and family contacts remains as consistent as possible.
* For some children a family environment may not be appropriate. In these circumstances the local authority will consider residential care with or without education on-site.

Services include ensuring each child/ young person has an allocated social worker or Personal Adviser, with whom the child/ young person builds a caring, consistent relationship. Social workers undertake direct work with children in care including life story work, addressing child/ young persons Identity needs and protective behaviours work as well as ensuring children have assessed and safe (in some cases supervised contact) with important family members to ensure this vital link is preserved and promoted.

The support we provide reflects the promises detailed in the Brighton & Hove Pledge.  This is to ensure that children in care get the best experiences in life from excellent parenting and education to a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills. The promises assist our desired outcome for children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, whose lives mirror those of their peers.

Our Social Workers, Personal Advisors and Managers aspire to integrating the values and qualities below into their work with children and young people:

These aspirations are based on the [Brighton & Hove City Council Values](http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/ourcouncil/Pages/OurPurpose,Ambition,PrioritiesandValues.aspx)