



**Putting co-production into practice with young people:
pathway planning**

Including the young person's self-assessment traffic light tool for pathway planning

The Fostering Communities programme

Maria Boffey, Natalie Silcox and Alain Thomas

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'A pathway plan is a plan about your future from leaving care. It's all about you and what you want to do and how your team can support you in making it happen'.

1. Introduction

1.1 About The Fostering Network

[The Fostering Network](#) is the UK's leading fostering charity. We are the essential network for fostering, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered young people. We support foster carers to transform young people's lives and we work with fostering services and the wider sector to develop and share best practice. We work to ensure all fostered young people experience stable family life and we are passionate about the difference foster care makes. We champion fostering and seek to create vital change, so that foster care is the very best it can be.

We have been leading the fostering agenda for more than 40 years, influencing and shaping policy and practice at every level. As a membership organisation we bring together individuals and services involved in providing foster care across the UK. We have approximately 60,000 individual members and nearly 400 organisational members, both local authorities and independent fostering providers, which cover 75 per cent of foster carers in the UK. Our views are informed by our members, as well as through research; in this way we aim to be the voice of foster care.

1.2 The Fostering Communities programme

[Fostering Communities](#) is a national programme led by The Fostering Network in Wales and funded by the Welsh Government from 2020 – 2023. The programme supports looked after children and their foster families throughout Wales, by improving wellbeing outcomes for children and increasing the competence, confidence and motivation of the fostering workforce.

The programme is underpinned by a fostering community shared power model, built around workstreams and interventions, which will aim to improve wellbeing in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Also embedded within Fostering Communities is a [co-production approach](#), which means working equal partnership with foster carers and fostering services to plan and deliver the programme. (Further details of The Fostering Communities programme are available upon request.)

This guide forms part of this co-production approach.

1.3 About the authors

Maria Boffey is the head of operations for The Fostering Network in Wales. She has a wealth of experience across fostering, including in the engagement of both young people and foster carers.

Since joining The Fostering Network, Maria has developed, managed, and delivered many programmes, training courses, workshops, consultations, academic research and events for practitioners, children, young people, and foster carers.

She is the editor of The Fostering Network in Wales highly acclaimed young people's magazine *Thrive*, as well as author and co-author of several fostering publications, including *Men Who Care: Experiences and reflections of male foster carers* and *Don't You Forget About Me: A guide to developing a peer support group for the sons and daughters of foster carers*.

Maria is a key contributor to the development of *The Skills to Foster*[™]. She has played a role in the development of the When I am Ready scheme, and the National Fostering Framework, as well as being a member of a number of Welsh Government working groups. She has also worked on a large number of research studies with Cardiff University and CASCADE.

Natalie Silcox is the Director of Social Synergy Limited, a consultancy which offers a range of service and ideas to complete or contribute towards larger projects from a management or social work perspective. Natalie is also the Assistant Head of Business in Barnardo's Adoption and Fostering Services in Wales.

Natalie was a local authority foster carer for six years, before qualifying and working as a social worker. She has worked in a number of teams, including adoption and fostering, before leaving local authority employment in 2018.

Natalie is an associate trainer for The Fostering Network, developing and delivering a comprehensive range of training for social and residential workers and foster carers.

She is also member of an adoption panel and vice chair of a fostering panel and has set up children's residential homes, a supported living service, written service specifications and writes and review policies for organisations.

Alain Thomas is the principal consultant at the Alain Thomas Consultancy, which provides support to organisations involved in community development and social welfare. Alain has extensive experience of delivering research, evaluation, organisational development, and training services to public and third sector organisations across different contexts and cultures in Wales, other parts of Europe and the developing world.

Participatory approaches underpin all of Alain's work and he has a particular interest in how they can be applied to a wide range of processes including research, evaluation, public engagement, organisational development, and facilitation. He is on a personal mission to increase awareness and usage in Wales of these intuitive and effective methods which originated in the developing world.

As an associate of The Fostering Network, Alain has facilitated numerous consultations to review strategic planning and evaluate fostering initiatives and, as an author, he has contributed to a huge number of fostering reports, guides and resources.

2. The purpose of this guide

Co-production is gaining attention, partly in response to the current challenges in the delivery of public services. In 2013, the Welsh Government confirmed that co-production would be a necessary part of both the design and delivery of all public services.

Co-production supports the delivery of person-centred care, putting people at the heart of all decisions, as equal partners in planning, developing and assessing care, and in meeting their needs.

Co-production is one of the main principles of the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). It means working with, and involving, individuals, their family, friends and carers to make sure their care and support is the best it can be. There is an 'easy to read' guide about the Act [here](#), and information about the main principles underpinning the act can be found [here](#).

This guide aims to support managers and social care practitioners in the further implementation of the 2014 Act, in putting co-production at the heart of practice, alongside the young people who are looked after.

The guide focuses on:

- Pathway plans. It is hoped that this might encourage independent reviewing officers (IROs), managers, social workers, personal advisors and foster carers to pilot co-production as part of the pathway planning process, before rolling it out across other areas of their work and practice.
- A simple traffic light assessment tool to enable practitioners and young people to assess how well they are co-producing together.

The guide will be relevant to all foster carers, independent reviewing officers (IROs), managers and practitioners who support young people who are looked after, and those involved in promoting young people's participation in all services which have an impact on their lives and their families.

It will also be of particular interest to social workers and personal advisors by posing key practice questions:

- Am I/Are we co-producing with young people?
- Are young people sufficiently involved in taking decisions about the services that affect them?
- Am I/Are we constantly learning how to improve our co-production practice?
- Are my/our practice and organisational arrangements modifying significantly to support the principles of co-production and embed them throughout all the services?

2.1 Pathway plans – the challenges

It can be challenging to fully appreciate the intricacies in the legislation and guidance related to care leavers– and, as a result, care leavers may not receive the full support that they are entitled to.

Thanks to the work of advocates, policy experts, third sector organisations and others across the children's social care sector, as well as landmark decisions by the courts, there have been some positive developments to support care leavers. An example of this is the [When I am Ready](#) scheme which allows young people in Wales to stay living with their foster families beyond the age of 18.

Despite these positive developments, a key issue is that young people are often not sufficiently involved in the planning of their own care, which may result in a lack of understanding of the need for detailed pathway plans that clearly set out all the support care leavers want and should be receiving. If the young person's voice is not

heard, the choice and possibilities are not always fully explored, and the personal and social impact of decisions is overlooked. Many decisions are made still with an institutional mindset, rather than with an individual approach to the needs of each young person, as set out in the Children (Leaving Care) Act and the Children Act guidance and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015.

"My pathway plan was already written before I requested it. After I spoke to my social worker about it, my new plan was completely different. I knew everything in it. I had chance to say what I wanted it."

"I don't have a pathway plan; I just had a late conversation about accommodation. Because my social worker and PA kept changing no-one saw it through. I didn't really know what was going on."

"Recently I was meant to have funding for extra driving lessons and my social worker disagreed with my PA about it. I showed them my pathway plan which says that I was going to be funded for 20 hours of extra lessons and that has happened now because they legally have to do it because it's in the plan."

"I would say to another young person about to go through the pathway planning process, get your foster carers involved, ask questions, ask how it's been done, ask how you can improve your plan, ask how they feel about your plan, get them to ask you about how you feel about your plan. Make sure you are involved."

"My social worker only gave me the option of When I am Ready, I didn't know there might have been other options. I think they assumed I'd stay living with my foster carers, but it was never actually agreed what would happen."

A special edition of [Thrive](#), a magazine aimed at young people in care, has been produced on the subject of pathway planning.

3. What is co-production?

The Co-production Network for Wales defines co-production in the context of public services in this way:

'An asset-based approach that enables people providing and people receiving services to share power and responsibility and work together in equal, reciprocal and caring

relationships.’¹

The New Economics Foundation, which has been developing co-production-based approaches with the public sector for over a decade, defines co-production with young people as:

‘Delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change’²

Co-production is a step forward from current practice. It focuses on the needs of the young person and recognises their voice, their strengths, resources and personal qualities. Co-production is focused on delivery of person-centred care, which prioritises putting people at the heart of all decisions as equal partners.

‘Co-production takes a slightly different tack to normal engagement practices. It focuses less on identifying and responding to a child’s “need” or “problem” in favour of a reciprocal approach, which builds on a child’s interests, knowledge, experience, skills and support network.’

‘A co-production approach sees young people as having their own valuable perspectives, knowledge and skills. It is fundamentally different from the traditional position of seeing young people as (some might say) passive recipients of services.’³

4. What might co-production look like in practice in children’s services?

Co-production in children’s services has been described as:

‘Doing things “with children” as opposed to doing things “to children” or “for children”. It is a strengths-based approach, which recognises that all children, young people and their families have their own set of skills, knowledge and experiences which they bring to the table.’⁴

Children and young people then do not just ‘take part’ or ‘be present’, but they are in partnership, their ‘voice and control’ is central to decisions and actions. Co-production means that they will have a real say in decisions about their own lives, be involved in the process of designing the best services for all, and able to express their opinions on the quality of services provided.

¹ Co-production Network for Wales. *What is co-production?* <https://copronet.wales/> (Accessed 26 February 2021)

² New Economics Foundation. *Participation and co-production policy context, children and young people now*. Derren Hayes. Available from <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/Other/article/participation-and-co-production-policy-context> (Accessed 26 February 2021)

³ New Economics Foundation. *A guide to co-producing children’s services*. Jody Aked and Lucy Stephens. Available from https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation/d745aadaa37fde8bff_ypm6b5t1z.pdf (Accessed 26 February 2021)

⁴ Tony Bovard (2017) *Beyond engagement and participation: user and community co-production of public services*. Public Administration Review. September-October pp 846-860. In Anna Wright Co-production in Children’s Services A think piece. ADCS Virtual Staff College.

Managers, policy staff and commissioning staff within each of the children's services in Wales will have a policy with regard to young people's participation. The basis of this guide is for practitioners and foster carers to consider the involvement of the young people they look after in their care plan, reviews and services.

4.1 Co-production principles

A set of principles for co-producing with children and young people has been formulated by Boingboing Resilience CIC and the University of Brighton:

It is asset based (or strengths based)

A co-production approach sees young people as having their own valuable perspectives, knowledge and skills. It is fundamentally different from the traditional position of seeing young people as (some might say, passive) recipients of services. Instead, it values them as equal partners in the design, commissioning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of services.

It builds on people's existing capabilities

Co-production with young people also means building on the skills and strengths young people have, rather than imposing staff expectations of what is required. It means changing staff members' thinking about planning, commissioning, delivery and review of services, so that it provides opportunities for young people to grow their capabilities. It actively supports young people to put their skills and life experience to work, for their own benefit and the benefit of their peers in the community.

It is based on reciprocity and mutuality

This means offering a range of incentives for young people to work in reciprocal relationships with staff and with each other. It relies on clearly outlined mutual responsibilities and expectations, which are regularly revisited and reviewed. Essentially, it means that young people are valued and receive various benefits from being involved and that it is clear what these benefits should be.

It values and enables peer support networks

Engaging peer and personal networks alongside staff, as the best way of transferring knowledge. Young people who 'own' a service, because they are directly involved in its planning, commissioning, delivery or review can be the most effective promoters, recruiters and deliverers of the service.⁵

Co-production has similarities with 'engagement' and 'consultation', but there is also a fundamental difference. In a traditional consultation process or review, the final decision about what happens next lies within the fostering service. In co-production, young people are centrally involved, their views and experiences are equally valued

⁵ Anne Rathbone, Sunita Pallan-Jhalli, Hansa Clay, Raymond Codner, Tara Bourne, Samantha Gregory, Francesca Turner, Emerson Morris (2018). [*All together now: a toolkit for co-production with young people for use by Wolverhampton service providers, commissioners and schools*](#). HeadStart Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, UK: City of Wolverhampton Council. (Accessed 26 February 2021)

alongside those of social care practitioners, and the final decision about what happens is taken jointly, by practitioners and young people working in partnership in a relationship based on trust, respect and mutual understanding.

The results of this co-production process are:

- young people feel more empowered
- practitioners are motivated from the very start to enable young people to define the shape of services
- young people receive training and support in key skills such as communicating effectively in formal settings, negotiation and using social media safely
- practitioners and young people meet regularly, personal relationships develop and respect for each other grows
- practitioners and young people come to realise the unique perspectives contributing to produce the best services
- the values of co-production are aligned with social work and other professional caring practices.

5. What are the benefits of co-producing with young people?

Co-production involves the re-balancing of responsibilities and recognising the wishes and feelings of the young person as the driving force defining their care and support plan or pathway plan.

The development of co-producing services with young people will require an investment of time and patience, while everyone involved is learning new skills; however the benefits will more than repay this investment.

Co-production of care services with young people will help them to be more independent, confident and in control of the services they use. Their involvement will develop and deliver better care services.

Additional benefits of co-production are further highlighted by Boingboing Resilience CIC and the University of Brighton:

- *Whether you are a school, a service provider or a commissioner, involving young people in co-production leads to services and support that are more suited to their needs and, therefore, will have more impact and be better value for money.*
- *Co-production with young people gives staff a sounding board to challenge their assumptions and ideas and can help them see how little things can have big impact in real-life situations.*
- *It gives a more up-to-date picture of current needs and priorities which, amongst young people in particular, can change at a fast pace.*
- *Young people will have their voices and opinions heard and their skills are often strongest where adult skills are weakest. For example, young people may have expertise in digital media, social media, or performance, which are lacking in adults working alongside them.*

- *It can empower young people to take control in their own lives (which is shown to be significant in promoting good mental health) and to use other services and support systems more effectively to meet their needs.*⁶

6. When can co-production happen in children's services?

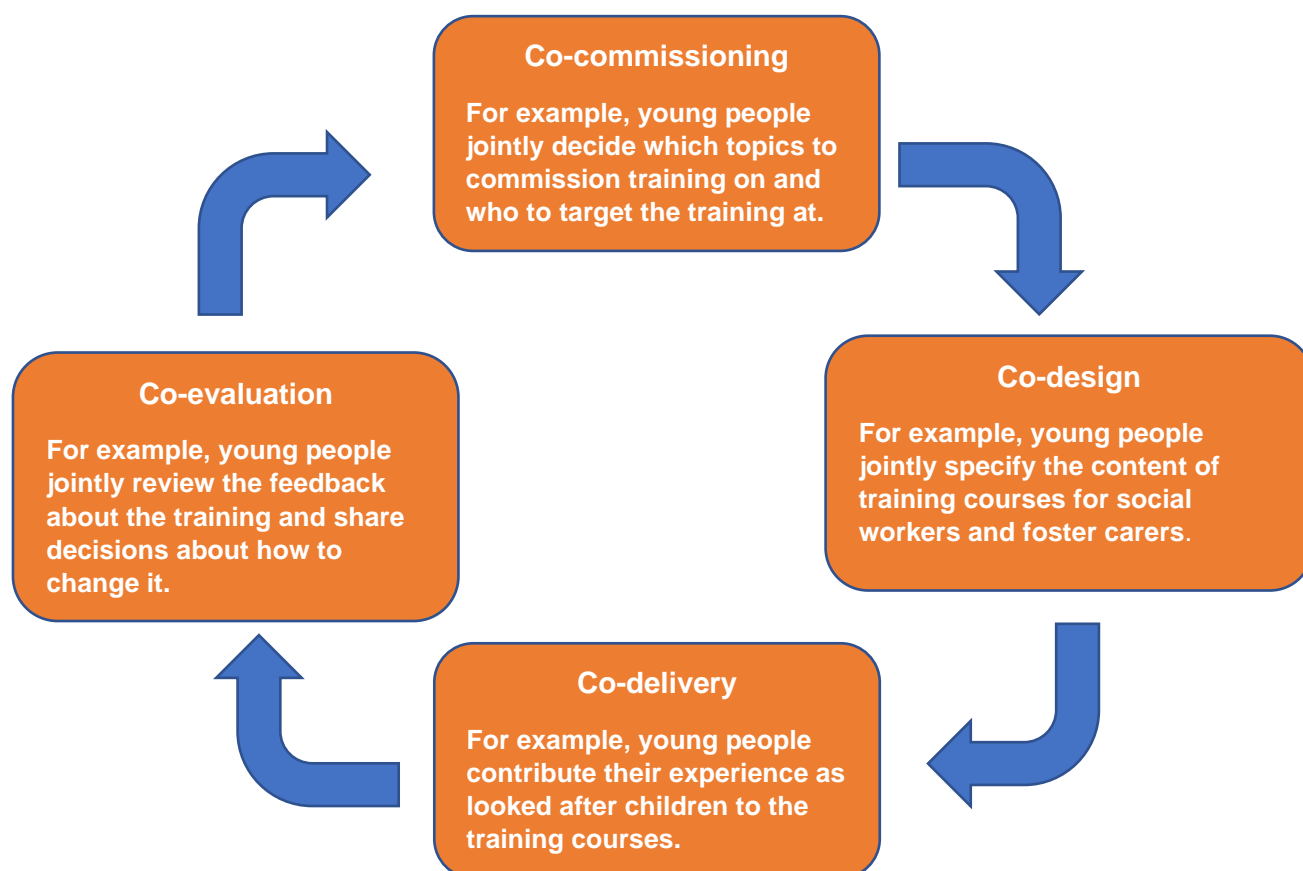
Co-production in children's services can happen at each stage of a project cycle. This includes commissioning, design, delivery and management, and evaluation.

6.1 Co-production across the project cycle

The roots of co-production start with its adoption in each of the Regional Partnership Boards and by the Corporate Parenting Panel of each local authority in Wales. All other agencies will also be expected to adopt co-production values and practices. With this stamp of authority and leadership in the multi-agency environment, co-production becomes embedded in all planning, design, implementation, and delivery, of services as illustrated below.

6.2 Example of co-production across a fostering service project cycle

The following diagram demonstrates how co-production with young people can influence training for foster carers and social workers.



⁶ Anne Rathbone, Sunita Pallan-Jhalli, Hansa Clay, Raymond Codner, Tara Bourne, Samantha Gregory, Francesca Turner, Emerson Morris (2018). [*All together now: a toolkit for co-production with young people for use by Wolverhampton service providers, commissioners and schools*](#). HeadStart Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, UK: City of Wolverhampton Council. (Accessed 26 February 2021)

Putting co-production into practice with young people

7. What kind of organisations or services are best suited to co-production?

Some organisations and services have found it relatively easy to implement and embed co-production, while for others it will involve cultural and organisational changes, including additional support, development, and training.

Clearly affirmed leadership commitment is a necessary starting point. Research has suggested that if the following characteristics are present in an organisation or service, they will be more likely to be successful in implementing co-production:⁷

- A positive culture in the organisation, for example, one that supports strength-based working.
- A positive attitude by staff towards the engagement and participation of children, young people and families.
- Clear incentives towards co-production.
- Policies that support co-production, for example, in performance management and staff competencies.
- Financial support.
- Good information-sharing.

8. How to make a start with co-production

Anna Wright, an associate of the Virtual Staff College, suggests three broad approaches to introducing co-production into an organisation:⁸

- To adopt co-production as an overall strategy with the intention that all services should be co-produced.
- To take an incremental approach, setting co-production as a direction to work towards but accepting different services will progress at different speeds through a ladder of involvement (for example, information, consultation then co-production).
- To pilot co-production in a specific service area and learn from it.

The remainder of this guide is shaped by the belief that it may be easier for such organisations and services to start with a small-scale pilot before embedding within the whole organisation and moving onto a broader roll-out of co-production practices throughout all the services.

This next section will describe the implementation of co-production with young people in the specific setting of a pathway plan. The final section of this guide sets out a self-assessment checklist for use in that setting.

⁷ Paper for the IRSPM Conference, Prague 2013. *Embarking on the social innovation journey: a systematic review regarding the potential of co-creation with citizens*. W. Voorberg, V Bekkers, L Tummers. Available here <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/> (Accessed 26 February 2021)

⁸ Virtual Staff College. Co-production in Children's Services: A think piece. Anna Wright. Available here https://thestaffcollege.uk/wp-content/uploads/co_production.pdf (Accessed 26 February 2021)

9. Introducing the role of a personal adviser and the independent living skills portfolio

Young people in care should be allocated a personal adviser (PA) as they turn 16. The PA could stay involved with the young person up to the age of 25 depending on whether that young person is engaged in education or training.

The personal adviser's functions are to:

- provide advice (including practical advice) and support
- participate in reviews of young person's case
- liaise with the responsible authority in the implementation of the pathway plan
- co-ordinate the provision of services and take reasonable steps to ensure the young person makes use of such services
- remain informed about the young person's progress and wellbeing
- maintain a written record of their contacts with the young person.

In more practical terms the personal adviser's role is to:

- advise, assist, provide emotional support and befriend the young person
- keep in touch with the young person's former foster carer providing When I am Ready (where appropriate)
- discuss options with the young person as part of the pathway planning and assessment process
- provide practical support through signposting or attending appointments (for example: education, employment or training opportunities; guidance around nutrition; maintaining links with housing)
- help the young person to apply for their DBS check, passport and driving licence applications, if needed, as well as benefits where applicable, so that payments start on the young person's 18th birthday
- liaise with the local authority in the planning, implementation and delivery of the pathway plan
- co-ordinate provision of services to support the young person and promote their wellbeing
- keep informed about the young person's progress and wellbeing
- feed into the monitoring process.

The young person's wishes as to who will be their personal adviser should be respected as far as possible and issues such as ethnic origin, gender and race should be considered.

9.1 The living skills portfolio

At some point the young person will move out into shared or their own accommodation, and there are a mountain of things that the young person needs to be aware of or to learn to make that a positive experience. As part of pathway planning, there needs to be support in place to enable the young person to achieve the skills and knowledge they required prior to them moving on to independent living. The introduction of the independent living skills portfolio is designed to enable young people to leave care with the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities to live independently.

A good independent living skills portfolio will:

- build on content of the pathway plan
- be developed jointly by the young person, foster carer, personal adviser and social worker
- include a plan of activities to show how they are planning to develop skills and wellbeing in a structured way
- provide a record of progress and the achievement of goals
- evidence a young person's readiness to move on and live independently.

The portfolio should include plans/evidence of:

- basic living skills – housekeeping, cooking, hygiene
- finances – budgeting, banking, benefits
- self-care – personal hygiene, personal boundaries, asking for help
- relationships – building, negotiating, assertiveness, sexuality
- skills to adapt and problem solve
- confidence for personal goal setting and achievement
- strategies to remain safe and within the law
- understanding and taking responsibility as an adult
- taking up opportunities in education, work and training
- digital safety and responsibility
- listening and reflecting on the views of others to agree, disagree or challenge.

10. Implementing co-production in pathway planning

Under S.49 of the [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#) (CPPCR), a local authority acting as a corporate parent, MUST complete an assessment of a child/young persons' needs in accordance with section 107(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) not more than three months after the date on which the child/young person reaches the age of 16 or becomes a category one young person after that age.

Under S.104 within the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) (SSWBA) a 'category one young person' is a young person who:

- (a) is aged 16 or 17,
- (b) is being looked after by a local authority, and
- (c) has been looked after by a local authority or a local authority in England for a specified period, or periods amounting in all to a specified period, which began after the child reached a specified age and ended after the child reached the age of 16;

The purpose of the assessment is to establish and define the likely needs of a young person when they cease to be looked after and must consider:

- all aspects of health
- education training or employment
- support available to the young person

- actual and anticipated financial resources and capacity to manage finances
- the extent to which the young person possesses the practical and other skills necessary for independent living
- the young person's need for continuing care, support and accommodation
- the overall views wishes and feelings of the young person.

The Care Leavers (Wales) Regulations 2015 say that the local authority MUST 'seek and have regard to a child/young person's views'.

It is imperative that a young person is supported to think about their future, enabled to voice their wishes and feelings, and to know who will be available to support them when they need it or who will be there to guide them and where they could access information.

The statutory contents of a pathway plan are outlined in section 12 of this document. As well as developing a pathway plan, Part 6 of the CPPCR [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#) sets out the duty of the local authority to conduct reviews of the plan at specific timescales.

Once an initial pathway plan has been developed, it is agreed and signed off and shared with the independent reviewing officer (IRO) who will engage with the young person in order to help them to prepare for their review.

The preparation for the review will include consideration of:

- who the young person wants at the meeting
- where the meeting is held
- who can hear the young person's personal information
- what role the young person's advocate will play at the review
- what order items will be discussed in
- how written pre-attendance feedback is shared.

Coming out of the review there should be a clear action plan outlining for each action, who is responsible, the timescale and who is going to check it is being done (if necessary). It is essential that at the time each person is aware of their responsibilities and timescales and the young person is clear on who they are.

The date of the next pathway review should be set before the meeting is ended. It is important to note that it should be made clear that if there is a significant change or further discussion is needed then a review can be brought forward.

Co-production can overcome many of the current challenges in the pathway planning process. These challenges include:

- professional views being presented in a clinical manner and being prescriptive in nature
- assumptions from professionals that 'we know what is best'
- only a pre-determined set of subjects being discussed
- electronically populated documents that pre-determine the review meeting agenda.

As a result of these and other obstacles, young people sometimes choose not to participate, or reluctantly engage in the pathway planning process. Without their

contributions, the planning process ultimately results in their wishes and feelings not being taken into account or being acted upon.

10.1 How pathway planning can be driven by co-production

For a pathway plan to be co-produced with a young person, these things would need to be in place:

- The young person confirms the location and venue where they feel they would be comfortable and safe. Where is the easiest and preferred venue? Home, college, work? It is important for the young person to be comfortable and in a supportive and neutral environment.
- The young person confirms who they would like to be at their pathway review and, conversely, if there is anyone they would not like to be present. If this person has to attend, it will be agreed with the young person for them to be present for a limited time within the review.
- The leaving care service devises young people-friendly methods of enabling them to lead how the pathway review takes place.
- The meeting content and agenda order are confirmed by the young person, with the guidance of their PA and the IRO.
- The IRO will discuss with the young person who will chair the meeting. The young person could consider acting as the chair themselves.
- The young person could use social media to help them to engage in the process and to conduct the review (as long as everything conforms with confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection requirements).
- 'Young people-friendly' versions of the main documents are produced.
- It will be agreed with the young person beforehand that any information such as reports and feedback from the review would be provided in the way that they request, such as email, text or in writing.

During the planning process, all of the areas outlined in section 12 of this document must be discussed and, where appropriate, the items below:

- Confirm that the current assessment of needs is accurate and remain appropriate for the young person.
- If it is not then proposed changes of the assessment and who is responsible for amending and updating, by when.
- Follow up on actions from the last review, including if not completed, why not and the new person responsible (if changed) and timescales.
- Significant events or changes since the last review, including whether they would have any effect on the stability of the young person's residence.

- Progression of independent living skills (where appropriate).

11. Co-producing a pathway plan

Stages in pathway planning	Practice which is not co-production compliant practice	What co-production will look like
<p>Assessment of needs to be completed.</p> <p><i>Not more than three months after the date a young person turns 16.</i></p>	<p>Assessment completed based on information already known and last child looked after review report and minutes alongside young person's care plan</p>	<p>The young person and all agreed important relevant people are consulted and input into the assessment.</p> <p>Young person is involved in the production and content of each of the areas of the report and agrees the content or registers any areas of disagreement.</p>
<p>Pathway plan needs to be completed.</p> <p>When a looked after child is about to turn 16, the local authority must prepare a pathway plan.</p> <p>Consideration should be given as to whether this should be a sit-down meeting involving the key people around the young person who will offer them support to carry out the plan.</p>	<p>Social worker and/or PA write the plan following the completion of the needs assessment</p>	<p>The young person and social worker and PA work together to produce the plan covering all essential areas.</p> <p>The young person is supported by whomever they feel is most appropriate to support them in fulfilling or working towards that plan</p>
<p>Pathway plan meeting needs to be held.</p> <p><i>(This is often held under the title "pathway plan review" but it is the initial meeting to agree the content, actions and person responsible for parts of the plan).</i></p>	<p>Pathway plan is shared that has been produced by the social worker or PA from the assessment of need and any case notes.</p> <p>It could also simply be a continuation of the last care plan and child looked after review actions which may no longer be relevant or considering the right agenda for the young person.</p>	<p>The pathway plan is shared that has been fully developed and agreed with the young person and their primary supporters.</p> <p>Each person confirms to the young person that they know, understand, can and will be responsible for their part with that plan.</p>

Pathway review meeting is arranged.	Standard invites are sent out to designated invitees on a pre-arranged date and available venue.	The young person advises when and where the most convenient time and location for the review is and asked who they would like to be in attendance at their review.
Feedback forms to be considered within the pathway plan review meeting are distributed to attendees.	The social worker or PA send out forms to anyone involved and asked for their feedback.	<p>The young person is consulted as to who will be sent forms. If there are mandated people to attend then that is explained clearly to them.</p> <p>How those individuals are involved in sharing views or feedback can then be discussed and agreed upon with the young person.</p>
Pathway review report produced.	Social worker or PA completes the standardised documentation, taking into account the pathway plan and also any feedback received	The young person is involved in the completion of the document in its entirety and the end result is a clear plan that is realistic and achievable
Independent reviewing officer (IRO) reads the report.	IRO reads the report but may not be able to speak to the young person properly and confirm their input and until just before the review.	<p>IRO would introduce themselves to the young person at an earlier stage.</p> <p>They would also confirm the actions the above report have been carried out and then have a discussion about the order of the items of the review meeting and any special requests.</p>
Pathway review is held, typically the meeting agenda follows a standard format.	The pathway review form comes from an internal service IT system, which suggests the predetermined order the review meeting will follow.	The young person is fully aware of the relevant sections of the review and plan. They are given the ability to choose the order in which they are discussed.

Minutes and the plan are agreed by the IRO and then distributed to the attendees of the pathway review meeting	<p>Minutes are often severely delayed.</p> <p>Written or e-mailed plans and minutes are not always available for the young person or others involved in carrying out the plan.</p> <p>The IRO signs them off.</p> <p>The young person is not asked if they believe them to be a true and accurate reflection before they are distributed.</p>	<p>The pathway plan should be signed off in the meeting and a copy (even if in draft) made available to the young person and key supporters.</p> <p>Before the minutes are distributed the young person should be asked if they believe them to be a true and accurate record of discussions so their views can also be seen by others involved.</p>
Next pathway review date is set.	<p>Date set in that review meeting when plans are not fully known for the young person.</p> <p>Date set by automated system or business support</p>	<p>Consideration is given to the date, time and location of the next pathway review meeting, for example, acknowledging college, work or university.</p> <p>Location needs to be appropriate, suitable and convenient for the young person.</p>

12. Matters to be dealt with in the pathway plan

12.1 Schedule 9 Regulations 51 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 (CPPCR)

1. Name of the young person's personal advisor.
2. The nature and level of contact and personal support to be provided to the young person, and by whom.
3. Details of the accommodation the young person is to occupy when they cease to be looked after.
4. Where the young person wishes to make a post-18 living arrangement, details of the advice and support the responsible authority will provide to facilitate and support the young person in the making of such an arrangement.
5. The plan for the young person's continuing education or training when they cease to be looked after.

6. How the responsible authority will assist the young person in obtaining employment or other purposeful activity or occupation.
7. The support to be provided to enable the young person to develop and sustain appropriate family and social relationships.
8. A programme to develop the practical and other skills the young person needs to live independently.
9. The financial support to be provided to enable the young person to meet accommodation and maintenance costs.
10. The young person's healthcare needs, including any physical, emotional or mental health needs and how they are to be met when the young person ceases to be looked after.
11. The responsible authorities' contingency plans for action to be taken, in the event that the pathway plan ceases to be effective for any reason.

13. Young person's pathway plan traffic light tool

Rate your review

This form is for you to fill in after your **review**.

It will tell us how much of a say you had in planning your review, how it was run, who attended and what was written about you.

REMEMBER ...

Your pathway plan is an important document. It replaces your care and support plan. It sets out how the local authority and children's services will help you consider the options of preparing for leaving care and provide the support you need, so that you can achieve your hopes and dreams as you become an adult. What could be more important than that?

Social workers and personal advisors have a responsibility for you to be part of the decisions that need to be made about your care and wellbeing. At times, you may disagree with them, but they **MUST** consider your wishes and feelings, and put your care and wellbeing before anything else.

If you are unhappy about something to do with your care plan, the placement arrangements or your review, you should talk to your personal adviser, social worker or your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). They are there to listen and should be able to give you information, advice and help.

You can fill in this form electronically or print it out. It can be found [here](#).

The traffic light colour coding in the answer boxes below are as follows:

✗ The Red box means that you feel you were not involved.

✗ The Amber box suggests that you feel you were not truly involved.

However, there might have been reasons why it was not possible to take your views into account. It will be important to explore these answers further with your social worker.

✓ The Green box means that you feel your voice was heard.

Put a tick against the box which best describes how you feel about your review and add a few lines to say why you feel like that.

1. Carrying out an assessment of my needs

The assessment of my needs was carried out by professionals who used information from existing documents (for example, the last review).	I had some input into the assessment of my needs and some other relevant people did too but I would have wanted more of a say.	I was fully involved in preparing the assessment of my needs, as were other relevant people. I was able to say if I disagreed with something.

2. Completing the pathway plan

The plan was written by a social worker and or personal advisor (PA).	I contributed to the plan slightly but either I would have wanted more input or I did not receive enough support to allow me to contribute as I would have liked.	I worked with the social worker and/or personal advisor to produce the plan. I received the support I needed to allow me to do this.

3. The pathway plan is shared with everyone who needs to see it

The plan was shared with everyone who needs to see it but I did not receive any feedback.	The plan was shared and I heard from some people who were named as having actions to carry out that they understood and agreed with what they had to do.	The plan was circulated and everyone who was named as having actions to carry out confirmed to me that they understood, and agreed with what they had to do.

4. A date is set for the pathway plan (review) meeting and the meeting is arranged

Standard invitations were sent out to those who were invited and I was told when and where the meeting would take place.	I was asked either about when and where the meeting should be held or who should attend but not both; Or, I was asked about both but I wasn't fully listened to.	I was asked when and where the meeting should be held and who should attend, and my views were acted on.

5. Feedback forms are sent to people attending pathway plan (review) meeting

Feedback forms were sent out to anyone involved in the meeting.	I was asked either about who should provide feedback or about the best way for me to hear the feedback but not both, and/or I did not feel my views were listened to.	I was asked about who should provide feedback and about the best way for me to hear the feedback and I felt my views were listened to.

6. The pathway plan review report to be presented to the meeting is produced

The social worker or PA wrote the report based on my old pathway plan and the feedback they received.	I was involved a little in deciding the content of the report but not enough; or, there are some parts of the report I am not sure are realistic or achievable.	I was fully involved in deciding the content of the report and I feel the new plan is realistic and achievable and represents my wishes.

7. The independent reviewing officer (IRO) reads the report

The IRO did not have any contact with me until just before the meeting.	The IRO contacted me in advance of the meeting but I didn't feel we were able to talk about everything I wanted to and I was left with some questions.	The IRO contacted me well in advance of the meeting, they told me what actions listed in the report had already been carried out and we talked about the order I wanted things discussed in at the meeting. They asked if I had any special requests. I felt they listened to me.

8. The pathway plan (review) meeting takes place

The order things were discussed in was decided in advance and followed a standard order. I did not have any input.	The order things were discussed in was decided in advance but I was able to make a few changes.	I was able to suggest which order I wanted things discussed in and I was listened to.

9. The new pathway plan and minutes of the pathway plan (review) meeting are sent to everyone who needs to see them

The plan and minutes were sent round late or not at all and I was not asked whether I thought they were accurate.	Either I was not asked whether I thought the plan and minutes were accurate before they were sent out, or they were sent round late.	I was asked whether I thought the plan and minutes were accurate before they were sent out and they were circulated on time. I was given a draft copy of the plan at the end of the meeting.

10. The next pathway review date is set

The date was set without any thought about how it might fit with my new pathway plan or my personal plans.	I was asked about what a suitable date might be bearing in mind my new pathway plan and my personal plans, but the meeting couldn't take place at a time that suited me.	I was asked about what a suitable date might be bearing in mind my new pathway plan and my personal plans and my views were acted on.

The Fostering Network in Wales
 33 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HB.
 Telephone: 029 2044 0940
 Email: wales@fostering.net
 Web: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk



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14. Additional supporting resources

Co-production Network for Wales

The Co-production Network for Wales has produced a number of resources on co-production. The information and downloads can be accessed [here](#).

Children and Young People Now

The foundations for children and young people's participation in decision making over key aspect of their lives are contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which the UK Government ratified into law in 1991.

More information on participation and co-production can be found [here](#).

New Economics Foundation

A guide for co-producing children's services by Jody Aked and Lucie Stephens can be found [here](#).

Public Administration Review

(September – October pp 846-860: Tony Bovard 2017).

Beyond engagement and participation: user and community co-production of public services. Access article [here](#).

ADCS Virtual Staff College

Co-production in Children's Services: a think piece by Anna Wright can be accessed [here](#).

Boingboing and University of Brighton

All together now: a toolkit for co-production with young people for use by Wolverhampton service providers, commissioners and schools (2018) by Anne Rathbone and others can be found [here](#)

Public Management Review

Embarking on the social innovation journey: a systematic review regarding the potential of co-creation with citizens. Paper for the IRSPM Conference, Prague, April 2013. William Voorberg, Viktor Bekkers and Lars Tummers, can be found [here](#).

Social Care Wales

Co-production is one of the main principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It means working with and involving individuals. Some helpful resources can be downloaded [here](#)

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

SCIE has developed a useful [online toolbox](#) focusing on co-production and involving young people in developing social care.

Fosterline Wales factsheets and briefing papers

There are a number of helpful co production factsheets and briefing papers available on The Fostering Network website.

The briefing papers can be accessed [here](#).

Fostering Communities: Co-production in annual reviews

As part of the Fostering Communities programme, we have developed a guide which supports managers and social care practitioners in the further implementation of the 2014 Act, in putting co-production at the heart of practice, alongside the young people who are looked after. It focuses on co-production within the looked after children's annual review and describes what co-production might look like in this context and provides a simple traffic light assessment tool to enable practitioners and young people to assess how well they are co-producing together. The guide can be accessed here - [Putting co-production into practice: A young person's self-assessment tool for annual reviews](#).

Fostering Communities: Co-production in learning and development

As part of the Fostering Communities programme, we have developed two briefing papers which focus on engaging co-production in the development of learning and development opportunities, for fostering services and foster carers. The briefing papers can be accessed here – [Introducing co-production at the evaluation stage of a project cycle](#) and [Co-production: Reflecting on professional learning and development for foster carers](#).

Leaving care resources from The Fostering Network

Factsheets

The Fostering Network has also produced a number of [factsheets](#) on a variety of topics:

- [Care leavers – accommodation and support](#)
- [Fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people](#)
- [Pathway Planning](#)
- [St David's Day Fund](#)
- [The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)
- [When I am ready](#)

[Thrive](#)

The Fostering Network in Wales publish *Thrive*, a young person's magazine for those aged 12-16 years. They have produced a special edition focussing on pathway plans and a full list of past Thrive editions can be found by clicking [here](#).

When I am Ready

[When I am Ready](#) gives all young people living with foster families in Wales, the right to stay with their foster carers once they reach 18 years of age. The change in law came about following a campaign by The Fostering Network in Wales.

The Fostering Network in Wales has also produced a When I am Ready [film](#), on behalf of the Welsh Government, which focuses on young people and looking at both carers' and young people's concerns.

There is also a FAQs guide to When I am Ready, which can be found [here](#).

15. How The Fostering Network can help

The Fostering Network offers advice, information and support. Our expertise and knowledge are always up-to-date and available through our vital member helplines, publications, training and consultancy.

Advice

[Fosterline Wales](#) is delivered by The Fostering Network and funded by the Welsh Government. It is an independent and confidential advice line for the public on all matters related to fostering.

Call us on 0800 316 7664 from 9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

If you call outside this time, please leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible.

You can email us at:

fosterlinewales@fostering.net

Support and resources

Our website is an essential source of information, while our online community brings together foster carers for peer support and advice. You can login to share your experience and get advice from other foster carers. Our online community is a safe and secure area to discuss foster care matters.

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

Training and consultancy

Wherever you are in your fostering career, as a foster carer, social worker or manager, The Fostering Network has a range of training designed to meet your development needs.

In particular, The Fostering Network can deliver specific in-service training and open courses on co-production:

Fostering Co-production: Working in partnership with looked after children and young people
Aim This two-day course will provide practitioners with knowledge and skills to work co-productively with children and young people and review their systems to embed co-production within their organisational practices.
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide an overview of the Welsh context for co-production.• Discuss key issues in relation to shared power with children and young people.• Identify and practise core skills for working with children and young people.• Share examples of what works from research and practice.• Conduct an audit of current skills and organisational practice.• Design a model of co-production for your organisation.• Develop a process to embed culture change in your organisation.

As the leading fostering charity, The Fostering Network can draw on expertise from a range of fostering and co-production topics. We will work with you to create a package of consultancy to help your service achieve its aims and objectives.

For more information, please email Maria Boffey, Head of Operations in Wales, maria.boffey@fostering.net

16. Your feedback

The Fostering Network welcomes comments on any aspect of this guide which will inform our future work and further development of the [Fostering Communities](#) programme. We are also very interested in collecting examples of good practice.

Please email:

Maria Boffey
Head of Operations
The Fostering Network in Wales
maria.boffey@fostering.net

About The Fostering Network

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children to make foster care the very best it can be.

Contact

To find out more about our work in Wales, please contact:
The Fostering Network in Wales
33 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9HB

Telephone: 029 2044 0940
Email: wales@fostering.net
Web: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk



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