

Walsall  
children's  
services  
*are*  
**OUTSTANDING**

What Ofsted had to  
say about Children in  
Care and Care  
Leavers in Walsall



Walsall Council



# Overall Judgements



Walsall Council



The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good

The criteria to be judged as “Good” for care leavers is extensive – more than 1500 words!



# Children in Care Report Highlights

- Timely and appropriate decision making
- Children are placed in stable homes that meet their needs.
- Children live close to Walsall and maintain relationships in their community.
- Appropriate permanency arrangements.
- Social Workers and IROs know children very well.
- Wide range of health and therapeutic services.
- Education stability is understood and is a priority.
- Good involvement in leisure activities.
- Robust scrutiny of those in unregistered children's homes.
- Disabled children "flourish"
- Separated migrant children receive effective and sensitive support.
- Children return to parents safely
- Effective missing/exploitation services.
- Strong partnership with Adoption@heart.

Ofsted  
Outstanding  
Quality Standard



# Children in Care

## The best quotes

“Children in care benefit from living in stable and long-lasting homes. They experience positive nurturing relationships with their carers, and children spoken to by inspectors talked of feeling loved by their carers. Children are supported to maintain contact with important family members, including living with their brothers and sisters and seeing people who are important to them in line with their needs, wishes and feelings. This helps children to have a sense of belonging.”

“[Social Workers] and the child’s independent reviewing officer (IRO) are tenacious advocates for children and ensure that children are involved and understand their plans”



# Care Leavers Opening Quote

“Care leavers in Walsall benefit from an effective and responsive service delivered by dedicated, caring and persistent personal advisers (PAs), with whom they develop longstanding and trusting relationships. PAs provide responsive practical help, advice and support to care leavers when they need it, which helps them through the ups and downs of life. PAs have honest and, at times, tricky discussions with care leavers about potential risks, which helps them to better understand and reflect on their vulnerabilities and the challenges they face.”



# Care Leavers

## Report Highlights

- Effective and responsive service
- Dedicated, caring and persistent PAs
- Longlasting and trusting relationships
- Responsive
- Supported to maintain relationships with family and community.
- Wide ranging care leaver offer.
- Good healthcare encouraged
- Benefits from TLC hub
- YP actively encouraged to share views. PAs are strong advocates.
- Separated Migrants well supported.
- Young people in custody are seen regularly.
- Wide variety of services for YP who are parents or pregnant.
- Good quality pathway plans.
- Persistent encouragement and support to be in education, training or employment.
- YP “Very well supported into a home of their choice”
- Easy access to the service

# Care Leavers

## What stopped us getting “Outstanding”

- The effectiveness of emotional, health and well being support needs to improve.
- “Some children are not introduced to their PA early enough for them to have time to build a relationship with them before they leave care.”
- Some young people are uninformed on the offer.
- “Some care leavers’ plans do not detail the full extent of the care leaver offer or the complete healthcare services available. This is mitigated by the level and quality of support given by PAs to young people.”



# Care Leavers – What is the offer?

“Some care leavers’ plans do not detail the full extent of the care leaver offer or the complete healthcare services available. This is mitigated by the level and quality of support given by PAs to young people. “

- PAs trained in low lever CBT to give them strategies to support young people while awaiting specialist services.
- Monthly “Mental Health Support” drop Ins and Weekly Health drop ins and open door approach
- Expedited referral process to “Mustard Seed CIC”
- Utilising the universal offer from the NHS including Kooth
- “Mind Kind” – Men’s Mental Health support service
- 50 Ask Jan licences – phone App supported by partners in public health
- Transition planning panel with adult social care



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Provider



# Care Leavers – Key Planned Improvements

“Some care leavers’ plans do not detail the full extent of the care leaver offer or the complete healthcare services available. This is mitigated by the level and quality of support given by PAs to young people. “

- Corporate Parenting Board annually considers the CAMHS support for children in care.
- Therapeutic Life Story Training to social care teams and two PAs.
- Care Leavers strategy action plan 2025 – 2026 to review progress of offer and dates for audit completion.
- Strengthen the transitional arrangements when children with complex mental health needs transition into adult social care.
- Life long links programme to be developed
- Ensure the emotional well-being and mental health needs of care leavers are clearly recorded in Pathway plans with corresponding actions.



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# Care Leavers

## The best quotes

“PAs are tenacious in supporting young people’s relationships with family members and other significant people in their lives. This means that young people are supported in maintaining lifelong links with people who can help them understand their identity and life history”

“Care leavers of all ages benefit from support provided at the transition and leaving care hub. The hub provides a safe space where young people can go and gain practical help, advice and support. They can access co-located specialists, such as a nurse, Department of Work and Pensions staff and the virtual school. The hub is also a place where care leavers can get food and use aundry facilities, receive essentials in an emergency and take part in leisure activities and regular social events. Those who are parents and separated migrant young people have access to a variety of activities, services and opportunities which help them develop new skills and meet their needs.”

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# Care Leavers

## The best quotes

“Care leavers’ PAs are appropriately focused on equipping and preparing them with the essential life skills they need to enable them to flourish and achieve at each step of their journey to adulthood. PAs provide person-centred support to individuals through their contact and direct work, which helps young people develop essential life skills to manage their relationships and finances, do their own laundry and cooking and be more resilient to cope with the ups and downs of life.”

