



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

When I am Ready

Good Practice Guide

March 2016

‘When I am Ready’ Good Practice Guide

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1. Purpose of this guidance

This guide has been written primarily for practitioners involved in making and supporting 'When I am Ready' arrangements for young people leaving care. It sets out good practice and suggested approaches to setting up 'When I am Ready' arrangements, and to supporting young people and their carers who enter into such arrangements.

We hope the guide will also provide a good general introduction to the 'When I am Ready' scheme for those who want to find out more.

The guide supplements the statutory Code of Practice relating to Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014¹. The code sets out a local authority's legal responsibilities in respect of post-18 living arrangements for young people in foster care. Local authorities are required to set up local 'When I am Ready' schemes in line with the requirements in the code. Local authority staff who are setting up or revising local 'When I am Ready' policies and procedures should refer to the code, which sets out what a local authority must and should do to deliver the scheme.

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/health/socialcare/act/code-of-practice/?lang=en>
Part 6 deals with the 'When I am Ready' scheme (pages 129 - 141).

2. Glossary of terms

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

An Act of the National Assembly for Wales, setting out a new legal framework for social services in Wales. Part 6 of the Act covers looked after and accommodated children, replacing Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 in Wales and came into force in April 2016.

Part 6

Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The new legal framework for looked after and accommodated children in Wales, replacing Part 3 of the Children Act 1989. Part 6 covers care planning, placement and review, and arrangements for leaving care. Supported by regulations (secondary legislation), and a statutory Code of Practice. Includes the new duties on local authorities in respect of post-18 living arrangements for young people leaving foster care. Came into force in April 2016.

Part 6 Care and Support Plan

The overarching plan for a looked after child. It brings together all key information, including the child's health, placement and the personal education plans. At age 16, the Part 6 care and support plan will be subsumed with the Pathway Plan, which sets out arrangements for transition from care.

Referred to as a 'Part 6 care and support plan' to distinguish it from general care and support plans prepared under Part 4 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Where a disabled or other child with a care and support plan becomes looked after, that plan will be incorporated into the Part 6 care and support plan.

Post-18 Living Arrangement

The legal term for a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. Found in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

'When I am Ready'

A scheme set up by the Welsh Government in 2015 to prepare local authorities for their new duties in respect of post-18 living arrangements under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Local authorities are required to operate their own local 'When I am Ready' schemes in line with national guidelines. Similar to, but distinct from, 'Staying Put' in England.

'When I am Ready' arrangement

The term used in Wales for an arrangement whereby a young person in foster care remains with their former foster carer beyond the age of 18.

Pathway Assessment

Shortly before the young person's 16th birthday, the local authority must carry out an assessment of the young person's needs. This is to help shape and record what advice, assistance and support would be appropriate for them to provide the young person, as they prepare for, and once they have left, care. This information will be used to help create the Pathway Plan.

Pathway Plan

When a looked after child is about to turn 16, the local authority must prepare a pathway plan. This plan will capture the actions required from the local authority, the young person's carer, the young person, birth family and other identified parties to assist the young person to make a successful transition from care into adulthood. The pathway plan will build upon the child's existing Part 6 Care and Support Plan, which will be subsumed within the pathway plan. It will also contain the results of the Pathway Assessment. In a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, the Pathway Plan will mainly be subsumed into the Living Together Agreement when the young person turns 18. However, the pathway plan contains information additional to what is contained in the Living Together Agreement. The pathway plan will be reviewed and updated every 6 months until the young person is 21. This could extend until 25 if in an agreed programme of education or training.

Living Together Agreement

An agreement between the young person and a carer in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. It will generally build on the young person's Pathway Plan when the young person turns 18.

The Living Together Agreement sets out the outcomes the young person wishes to achieve and the support available from the carer and others, as well as the practical details of the arrangement. It is monitored, evaluated and revised as necessary during the six monthly pathway planning reviews, and may also be used as a supervision tool by the supervising social worker when supporting the carer.

Excluded licensee

This is the legal basis on which the young person lives in the property. In a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, the carer technically becomes the young person's landlord. As an excluded licensee, the young person can be asked to leave the property by the 'When I am Ready' carer following reasonable notice.

'When I am Ready' carer

A former foster carer for a young person who continues to have the young person live with them in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement when the young person turns 18, and who receives an allowance for doing so. May or may not continue to be a foster carer for other children.

3. What is ‘When I am Ready’?

‘When I am Ready’ enables young people in foster care to continue living with their foster carers once they turn 18. It allows them to remain in a stable and nurturing family environment up to the age of 21, or up to age 25 if they are completing an agreed programme of education or training. It also provides them with the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence so they can make a successful transition to more independent living.

‘When I am Ready’ was set up by the Welsh Government in 2015 to prepare local authorities for their new legal duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. These new duties came into force in April 2016. Local authorities are required to set up local ‘When I am Ready’ schemes in line with the national guidelines set out in the Code of Practice relating to Part 6 of the Act.

The ‘When I am Ready’ scheme in Wales is similar in many respects to the ‘Staying Put’ scheme in England.

Why is ‘When I am Ready’ important?

Evidence shows that the transition into adulthood can be more difficult for care leavers than many of their peers of a similar age. This could be a consequence of their past experiences, such as possible breaks in their education and the absence of a supportive family base. These circumstances may result in this milestone often being an abrupt event rather than a supported process. ‘When I am Ready’ seeks to help mitigate these factors, so care leavers are better equipped to achieve independence and to maximise their life chances.

‘When I am Ready’ arrangements should as far as possible replicate stable family life. A foster carer is required to care for any child placed with them as if they were a member of their own family. This expectation should also carry through into the ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement with the young person. Therefore, the role of the ‘When I am Ready’ Carer (former foster carer) should be similar to that of any other supporting parent, assisting the young person to be self-reliant by helping them to develop their independent living skills in a stable and safe environment.

This continuity will help ensure that these young people do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements which could have a negative impact upon their emotional stability, education, training or employment, or upon them developing independent living skills.

How does ‘When I am Ready’ differ from foster care?

Young people who are over the age of 18 are no longer legally ‘in care’ or ‘looked after’ by the local authority. Therefore, fostering arrangements and legislation relating to children placed with foster carers no longer applies. Local authorities assisting these young adults are no longer making a foster ‘placement’, but are instead facilitating a ‘post-18 living arrangement’ for the young person. This means that the young person is effectively lodging in the home under an ‘excluded licensee’ agreement with their ‘When I am Ready’ carer, who technically becomes their landlord. However, the over-riding principle is that it continues to be the young person’s home and that he or she remains a member of the family. The relationship between the ‘When I am Ready’ carers and the young adult will be set out in a Living Together Agreement.

Summary of local authority’s legal duties

Post-18 Living Arrangements

Under section 108 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, local authorities must:

- find out, when a ‘looked after’ young person is about to turn 16, whether the young person and their foster carer wish to enter into a post-18 living arrangement when the young person turns 18
 - provide information to the young person, the foster carer and other interested parties, so that they can make an informed decision about entering into a post-18 living arrangement
 - where the young person and his or her foster carer want to enter into a post-18 living arrangement, provide advice and other support to facilitate that arrangement.
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4. What is the ‘When I am Ready’ scheme trying to achieve?

The overall outcome of the ‘When I am Ready’ is that a young person leaving foster care will have the time and support to develop the necessary skills and resilience to make a successful transition to independent living.

It means that:

- the young person can continue to live in a supportive family and household environment after they turn 18
- the young person will continue to have security and protection, and practical and emotional support they had when they were fostered
- the chances of the young person experiencing homelessness or housing instability are reduced
- the opportunities for the young person to access post-18 education, training and employment opportunities are maximised
- the young person can receive on-going support and can develop the necessary emotional and practical skills before they are required to live independently
- the young person develops the confidence to move into independent living
- the young person can exercise their voice and have control over the timing of their transition from care, and is not obliged to leave their former foster family before they feel ready to do so.

These aims complement the Welsh Government’s ‘National Outcomes Framework’ developed to support the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014². What this means for each young person will depend on their particular needs and circumstances. This will need to be explored with the young person and their carer during discussions about setting up the ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement. These individual aims and outcomes should be made clear in the young person’s pathway plan, and will help shape the Living Together Agreement between the young person and their carer. They will also form the basis for monitoring the progress of the arrangement, and evaluating its success.

It is vitally important that these individual aims and outcomes are aspirational for the young person, and enable them to move on successfully once the ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement comes to an end, at whatever age. It is not just about allowing a young person to stay put, but enabling them to make a successful transition to more independent adult living in a way that is right for them and with the support they need.

Annex 2 contains a helpful summary of what success should look like, based on work that was done with young people and foster carers across Wales.

² <http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160106pt6en.pdf> (Part 6, pages 8 – 9 and page 130)

5. Who is eligible for the 'When I am Ready' scheme?

All looked after children who have been placed in foster care by their local authority, and who are approaching the age of 18, are eligible to be considered for the 'When I am Ready' scheme.

'When I am Ready' arrangements may be made where:

- the young person was looked after immediately prior to their 18th birthday and was living with foster carers in a placement arranged by the local authority.
- the carers were acting as approved foster carers for the young person immediately prior to their 18th birthday
- the young person and the foster carers both wish to enter into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, and the arrangement has been set out in the young person's pathway plan
- the local authority is satisfied that such an arrangement is not inconsistent with the young person's well-being
- a proportion of the allowance paid to the 'When I am Ready' carer will be paid for by the local authority.

'When I am Ready' arrangements can therefore cover all young people who were previously in foster care, and who were looked after immediately prior to their 18th birthday, as long as the above criteria are met.

A young person does not have to be undertaking full- or part-time education, training or employment in order to access 'When I am Ready'. However, there is a clear expectation that the young person will commit to developing their range of skills to prepare them for future independent living. There is also a clear expectation on the carer to support the young person to achieve this.

The focus of 'When I am Ready' must be upon helping the individual young person leaving foster care to make a successful transition into adult living in a way that is right for them.

Are disabled young people eligible for 'When I am Ready'?

Yes, they are. Young disabled people can move into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement with their foster carer when they turn 18 if this is in their best interests and can continue to meet their assessed needs as identified in their care and support plan.

The decision about 'When I am Ready' will depend upon individual circumstances. Where it is clear, from the pathway assessment and planning process, that a young disabled person in foster care will never be able to live independently as an adult, it may be more appropriate to make alternative arrangements for when the young person turns 18. However, the same

considerations apply as for any other young person with capacity to make decisions about their own lives. For example, the long term plan may be to move the young person into an adult placement ('Shared Lives') scheme, but the young person does not feel ready to move into this at 18 and wishes to stay with their former foster carer in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement until they have developed further skills and confidence.

Children and adult social services must work together as part of the pathway assessment and planning process, to find the most appropriate longer-term arrangement a young disabled person. 'When I am Ready' should never be used as a temporary solution to cover delays in assessment or care and support planning. It must always be a positive choice on behalf of the young person and their carer, and seek to achieve the outcomes set out in section 4 above.

6. Duration of a 'When I am Ready' arrangement

A 'When I am Ready' arrangement can continue until the young person reaches 21 (provided they have been continuously living in the arrangement since their 18th birthday). It can also be extended until their 25th birthday if they are in an agreed programme of education or training. However, the exact timing of when an individual arrangement ends will depend on the individual circumstances of the arrangement. The circumstances in which an arrangement may end, and the implications for both parties, should be explored during the Living Together Agreement meetings. The list below highlights how an individual arrangement can be terminated.

1. Planned early exits

Planned early exits by any party should include a reasonable notice period of 28 days (four working weeks), in which time the carer continues to receive their 'When I am Ready' allowance. The exit may be triggered by:

- the young person wishing to leave the 'When I am Ready' arrangement
- the 'When I'm Ready' carer no longer wishing to continue the arrangement
- the local authority deciding that the arrangement is no longer in the best interest of the young person and withdrawing support.

2. Exits triggered by 'When I am Ready' criteria

In any event, the 'When I am Ready' arrangement must end when:

- the young person reaches their 21st birthday and they are not in an agreed programme of education or training, or
- the young person (aged 21 – 25) completes their agreed programme of education or training, or
- the young person who is still taking part in an agreed programme of education or training reaches the age of 25.

3. Unplanned exits and evictions

There may be many reasons for unplanned exits, such as a sudden and irreparable breakdown of the arrangement. Some arrangements may also end with immediately effect. In cases where the young person leaves with immediate effect the local authority may wish to provide a 'cooling off' period of 28 days to allow for a reconciliation between the parties. In cases where the carer is forced to evict the young person, and living through a notice period could put people in danger, the local authority may consider paying the carer for the 28 days' following the eviction.

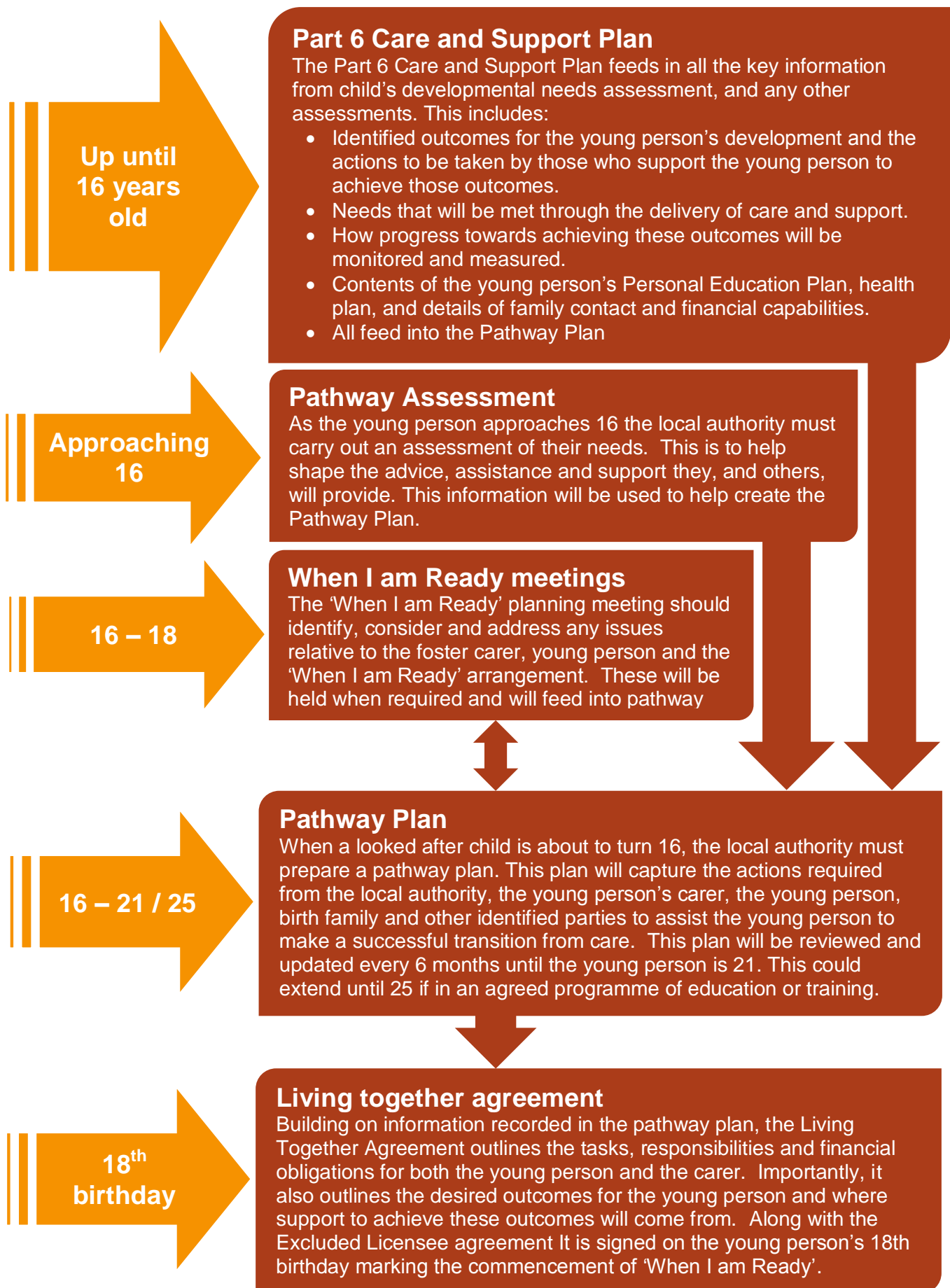
7. Making a 'When I am Ready' arrangement

The diagram below maps the transition from foster care to 'When I am Ready'. This is an ideal model representing best practice through structured early planning. While different local authorities may have slightly different transition processes, they may wish to consider the outline process below. On the following page there is information flow diagram.

Transition from foster care to 'When I am Ready'



Information flow



a. Age 15.9 – Pathway Assessment to Pathway Plan

When the young person is approaching their 16th birthday, a Pathway Assessment must be carried out by the local authority. This assessment will focus on what advice, assistance and support is required for that young person to progress successfully from being in care to being a thriving independent adult. The results of this assessment will help shape the contents of the Pathway Plan.

Focus on independent living

While local authorities are always expected to support a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria, they also have to take into account the wellbeing of the young person involved. For example, if the young person has very severe learning difficulties which prevent them from living independently as an adult, placing them on a scheme where independence is the desired outcome may not be in their best interests. In these circumstances children and adult social care services may need to work together to make alternative post 18 arrangements.

Discussions held separately

From the earliest opportunity, both the young person and their foster carer need to fully understand the nature of the 'When I am Ready' arrangement. Information must be made available in appropriate and accessible formats to both parties and the scheme should be adequately explained to them in separate meetings. The purpose of this is to fully ascertain that both parties understand what a 'When I am Ready' arrangement is, what is expected of them, the financial implications and whether they feel it is right for them. Care should be taken that the positive aspects of being in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement are not diminished by the new legal and financial terminology.

A young person should not be expected to decide whether they will want this arrangement until they are ready to do so. Neither is it always possible for foster carers to make firm commitments regarding the future, especially if circumstances are likely to change. Therefore, all decisions made at this point are decisions in principle and should be written into the young person's pathway plan. Empowered decisions are key to success. Every looked after young person has a right to a Personal Adviser, and if required, the young person should be offered the service of an independent advocate to support the young person throughout this process.

It may be of value to hold discussions with the foster carer first, to avoid the young person having any false expectations of staying post 18 if their foster carer is not willing or able to enter such an arrangement.

Frequently asked questions

The tables on the following page reflect the most commonly asked questions by foster carers and young people. Many of the answers to these questions can be found in this document and the local authorities 'When I am Ready'

policies and procedures. People providing support to carers and young people should equip themselves with answers that reflect the way the local authority is administering the 'When I am Ready' scheme. This list can be developed as the local authority creates more arrangements.

Frequently asked questions...

Young Person
'When I am Ready'
What is 'When I am Ready'?
Why can't I still be fostered?
What are my other options?
Living arrangements
What is a living together agreement? Who writes it?
What is independent living?
Can I have my own key?
Can you come home drunk?
Who cooks my food?
What if I get pregnant?
Can you have friends to stay?
Finance
Will I have my own bank account that no one can take money from?
Where do I get the money from?
Why do we have to pay them money?
What do I have to pay for?
Who decides what to pay?
Is there a list or something that I can look at to know what I have to pay for?
What if I can't / won't pay my bills?
Do they still buy your clothes?
Will my carers still pay for my holidays and presents?
Do they still buy me Christmas and birthday presents?
Support
Will I still get any support?
Who will help me if things go wrong?
Will I still have to have LAC meetings?
How do I get to appointments?
How will my family get to visit me?

Foster Carers
'When I am Ready'
When does the process start?
What is the difference between a 'When I am Ready' carer and a foster carer?
Who is responsible for talking about 'When I am Ready' with the young person?
What if the placement breaks down?
Can I still foster when I have a 'When I am Ready' placement?
Finance
How much money will I receive?
Am I still responsible for paying for their clothes and holidays?
Can I still claim housing benefit?
Support
How much support will I receive?
How much support will the young person receive?
What sort of support will be get if things go wrong?
What training will I receive?
Living arrangements
What is a living together agreement and who writes it?
Do I have to give them a key to my home?
What happens if I go on holiday do I have to leave them stay in my home?
What happens if they don't come home?
Will I need to take them to appointments with the doctor?
What happens if they young person goes to university but wants to come home to us for holidays and breaks?

Section 13 outlines what success looks like to young people and foster carers. This information, together with the answers to the frequently asked questions, can be very useful in shaping conversations with the young person and their foster carer.

What happen when there is no commitment from the foster carer?

Following these early discussions, it may be clear that while the young person is keen to enter a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, it may not be possible for this to happen with their existing foster carer for the following reasons:

- the foster placement is in danger of breaking down before the young person's 18th birthday
- the young person is keen to enter a 'When I am Ready' arrangement but not with their current foster carer
- the young person's current foster carer does not wish to commit to a 'When I am Ready' arrangement.

In such circumstances, the local authority should explore moving the young person to a new foster placement where a 'When I am Ready' arrangement is possible, if this is what the young person wants.

However, there may be circumstances where it becomes apparent that a foster carer is open to the possibility of 'When I am Ready' arrangement, but does not feel able to commit for financial or other reasons. If the young person is keen to continue the relationship, and the local authority considers this to be in the young person's best interests, further discussions will be necessary to see if the foster carer's concerns can be overcome so the arrangement can go ahead.

Discussions with young people in residential accommodation

There is currently no provision for young people in residential accommodation (children's homes) to stay within that setting beyond their 18th birthday.

Young people in residential accommodation **must also be informed** about the 'When I am Ready' scheme as part of the pathway assessment and planning process. If the young person wishes to move into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, and the local authority considers this to be in their best interests, then the local authority should consider moving the young person into a foster placement which could become sufficiently stable before their 18th birthday, in anticipation of this becoming a 'When I am Ready' arrangement.

What happens when there is no commitment from either party?

Entering into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement is a big decision, and there may be some occasions when a young person and their foster carers do not feel able to commit to this straightaway. They may also change their minds between the ages of 16 and 18. It is therefore important to maintain the

dialogue with the young person and foster carers, and to consider at each review whether anything has changed to make a 'When I am Ready' arrangement possible. This will include exploring with the young person and their carers any concerns or barriers to entering into an arrangement. However, both parties will need to be fully committed before a 'When I am Ready' arrangement can be put in place.

Whenever a 'When I am Ready' arrangement does not go ahead, the reasons for this should be made clear and recorded so that both the young person and the foster carer have a clear record as to why decisions were made.

Pathway Plan

The 'Pathway Plan' will contain the information developed through this pathway needs assessment, building on, and subsuming their Part 6 Care and Support Plan once the young person reaches 16. This plan must then be explained and provided to the young person and reviewed every 6 months.

b. Age 16 – 'When I am Ready' Planning Meeting

Once it is clear the young person and their foster carer wish to enter into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, you will need to set up meetings to plan the details of the arrangement. It is good practice to keep these separate from LAC review meetings, as LAC reviews have a wider function. The meetings should, however, be mutually supportive, and you may wish to consider holding the LAC review and the 'When I am Ready' planning meeting consecutively on the same day. This will help maximise attendance, and should facilitate a rapid response from the LAC team to any issues identified in the planning meeting.

'When I am Ready' Planning Meeting

The purpose of the 'When I am Ready' planning meeting is to identify, consider and address any issues relative to the foster carer, young person and the 'When I am Ready' arrangement. The meeting should include the young person, foster carer, young person's social worker, supervising social worker, independent reviewing officer, personal advisor and any others who may be involved in creating the 'When I am Ready' arrangement. Different tasks will be identified and assigned to the appropriate local authority staff member.

If there is any possibility that the young person could go on to higher education, this should be discussed immediately, as there are financial implications which may seriously affect the foster carers willingness or ability to enter a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. See section 10.

Further meetings may be needed to discuss understanding and commitment to living within a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. At this point, the financial implications of the 'When I am Ready' arrangement must be fully laid out and explained to both the young person and the carer. Full knowledge of the financial implications may result in the carer deciding not to go ahead with the scheme, triggering the search for a new placement.

Recognising that events and relationships change, it is important that alternative leaving care plans are considered and also shared at the LAC review.

LAC reviews

Young people who have been looked after for more than 13 weeks are entitled to support until at least the age of 21 or 25 when they remain engaged in education or training, and this continues until the end of the agreed programme as set out in their pathway plan. Where 'When I am Ready' is the preferred post 18 living arrangement, the LAC reviews should be supportive of that process and identify tasks and responsibilities for achieving a successful transition. Contingency plans should also be considered.

c. Age 17 – Putting things in place.

The supervisory social worker should carry out a **Foster Carer Review** identifying the household situation and changes, including safeguarding issues, that will occur if the 'When I am Ready' arrangement goes ahead.

Where there are likely to be other children in foster placements in the household, you will need to arrange a DBS check on the young person entering into the 'When I am Ready' arrangement. This reflects their status as an adult in the household. Where the DBS check highlights a potential risk, you will also need to undertake a risk assessment. There must also be a return to the fostering panel due to the change of circumstances. These processes can take time, so it is important that they are enacted quickly, so as not to put the 'When I am Ready' arrangement at risk. See section 12 of this document.

Living Together Agreement

The Living Together Agreement outlines the tasks, responsibilities and financial obligations for both the young person and the carer. It should also include the names of all those who will support the young person, the carer, and the nature and scope of that support. Importantly, it also outlines the desired outcomes for the young person. Care should be taken to ensure that the plan is written in a way that is clear and accessible to everyone.

To give ample time to develop this agreement, the local authority should arrange a Living Together Agreement meeting at least six months before the

young person is 18. The young person, foster carers, personal advisers, the young person's social worker and the fostering supervising social worker should all attend the meeting.

Young people in care will have a 'Placement Plan'. This forms part of the Part 6 Care and Support Plan and when the young person reaches 16, the contents of the placement plan will be subsumed into the Pathway Plan. It outlines the day-to-day living arrangement that pertains to that placement, and while this plan can be developed into the 'Living Together Agreement', its ethos will change fundamentally as the new agreement will be between two adults. It will have clear desired outcomes of assisting the young person to have the practical, emotional and behavioural skills to thrive as an independent adult.

The approach to drawing up a Living Together Agreement should be sensitive to the feelings of those involved and proportionate to their particular circumstances. The degree of detail is required in each case will depend upon the nature of the existing relationship between the young person and their carer, and how much this might change.

The Living Together Agreement may include:

- the outcomes the young person wishes to achieve
- identification of the skills / tasks required for independent living, and how these tasks will be monitored and their successful completion evidenced (an Independent Living Skills portfolio is an ideal way to structure and monitor these achievements)
- details of the support which will be provided by the 'When I am Ready' carer to help the young person achieve the defined tasks and outcomes
- details of the support which will be provided by others in helping the young person achieve the defined tasks and outcomes
- the young person's expected contribution to achieving the defined tasks and outcomes
- the agreed education, training, employment, volunteering and/or work preparation activities required to achieve independent living
- the financial contribution the young person will be expected to make to the household
- general financial issues such as young people having credit cards, loan agreements and mobile phone contracts registered at the address
- arrangements to promote the young person's health and well-being, including the contribution of the 'When I am Ready' carer to meeting any mental and emotional health needs

- household routines and expectations of the young person in respect of chores, tasks and routines
- arrangements for when friends and partners stay over, or times when the young person stays away
- the management of any risk taking behaviour
- issues relating to foster or other children living in the household, including safeguarding arrangements, role modelling and time keeping
- moving on plans.

On the following page is an example of a 'Living Together Agreement', setting out the type of information it may contain. Note that there are clear obligations for both the young person and the carer.

Living Together Agreement between: (Young adult)

..... (WIR Carer)

This agreement will start on

This agreement allows to continue to live at:

.....
.....

This agreement states what is expected of the young person and the 'When I am Ready' carer

1. Below are the things that the young person must do:

a. House Rules. I will:

- Clean the kitchen after I have used it
- Change my bedding every week
- Not smoke in the house
- Let you know if I break anything
- Let you know if anything needs replacing or repairing
- Not keep illegal substances in the property
- Keep to the alcohol rules
- Seek permission for overnight visitors; will inform when staying out;
- Carry out my household chores i.e. clean up after self; use of landline telephone; laundry
- Etc

b. Budgeting

- Will contribute £..... each week toward the home expenses
- Will contribute £..... each week toward the rent in addition to what is paid by housing benefit
- Prioritise paying bills
- Etc

c. Communication

- Exchange of contact details
- Take part in weekly communication/progress meeting (if necessary)
- Will take part in Pathway Plan meetings
- Etc

d. Preparing to be ready for independence

- Complete the skill building activities identified in the Independent Living Skills portfolio and listed in the Living Together Agreement.
- Keep evidence that I am working toward independence.
- Etc

2. Things the 'When I am Ready' Carer must do

a. House Rules

- repair items as quickly as possible
- etc

b. Budgeting

- will support YP each payment day to plan spending
- etc

c. Communication

- Exchange of contact details ; state what action to be taken by carer if concerned; state what action to be taken by young adult
- Provide weekly communication meeting
- etc

d. Preparing to be Ready for independence

- Assist the young person to develop their independent living skills as outlined in the Living Together Agreement

3. List of skills activities and who will provide the support

- Etc, etc, etc

By sticking to this agreement and by working with, the 'When I am Ready' Carer, is aiming to develop skills that will lead to full independent living.

Young adult: Signature

WIR carer: Signature

Personal Advisor

Name: Signature

Date:

Supervising social worker

Name: Signature

Date:

Independent Living Skills Portfolio.

Building on the contents of the pathway plan, the young person, their carer and social worker, may develop a portfolio of activities to demonstrate how they are preparing for, and moving towards having the skills and the physical and emotional wellbeing, to live independently. Development of this portfolio may be referenced in the living together agreement.

These activities should be within a structure that will enable them to evidence their achievements and also highlight where further developments are required. Tasks should be engaging, worthwhile and designed to develop skills that will enable young people to:

- develop basic living skills, such as, household tasks, cooking and personal hygiene
- negotiate effectively in relationships with others
- know how to be assertive and resist unwanted peer and other influences
- develop skills to adapt readily to changing situations
- develop the confidence to set personal goals and put their ideas into action
- learn strategies to ensure they remain both safe and legal at all times
- understand the concept of responsibility
- engage in the relevant opportunities available to them in education, training and the world of work
- increase independence through managing personal finances
- listen, reflect on and critically evaluate another person's point of view and respond appropriately.

Every activity undertaken should be clearly evidenced so that the young person has a record of achievement. The portfolio can also be used to evidence the young person's readiness to move on and live more independently. Please see section 9 for examples.

Understand their new obligations

The local authority should ensure that both the foster carer and the young person fully understand the difference between foster care and the new obligations set out in the 'Living Together Agreement'. Both have obligations, with the carer being tasked to help equip the young person with independent living skills.

Making expectations clear to young people

The young person should fully understand that when entering into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, they are committing to undertake skills development to prepare for their independent future. If not engaged in education, training or employment, the young person should be actively seeking to take part in activities, such as, voluntary work or employment preparation programmes. This should form part of the discussions with a young person during the pathway planning process and reflected in the Living Together Arrangement.

Making expectations clear to the ‘When I am Ready’ carer

The role of the ‘When I am Ready’ carer is to help the young adult to develop independent living skills. They will do this by:

- providing a home for the young person
- providing day-to-day support and guidance to the young person
- ensuring that the young person continues to build on the skills necessary for independent living, and knows where to go for help
- assisting the young person to develop their emotional capacity, develop appropriate behaviours and increase self-confidence to manage the transition into adulthood
- participating in all reviews of the pathway plan.

It should also be stated to both parties that if it becomes clear that the young person or the carer is not fulfilling their agreed roles, then the local authority will consider supporting the young person to move on from the ‘When I am Ready’ to a different living arrangement.

Pre 18 ‘When I am Ready’ meeting

It is important at this stage to remind all those involved of the expectations and requirements of the ‘When I am Ready’ arrangements. Below are four checklists to help those supporting the young person and the carer to ensure that all things are in place. These can be developed in the light of experience.

Young Person	Actions Required
‘When I am Ready’ knowledge	‘When I am Ready’ knowledge
Does the young person understand their new status and responsibilities and how it differs from being a fostered?	
Finance	Finance
Does the young person understand their financial responsibilities associated with remaining in a ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement?	
Does the young person have a NI number?	
Support	Support
Is somebody assisting the young person to claim benefit?	
Does the young person understand where future support will come from and the scope of that support?	
Education	Education
Are the education wishes of the young person known to all and does it include higher education?	

Foster Carers / family	Actions Required
'When I am Ready' knowledge	'When I am Ready' knowledge
Does the carer understand their new role as a 'When I am Ready' carer and how it differs to being a foster carer?	
Finance	Finance
Does the carer fully understand the financial implications of entering a 'When I am Ready' arrangement?	
Does the carer understand the impact of a 'When I am Ready' arrangement on their welfare benefit income and on their Income Tax And National Insurance responsibilities and liabilities?	
Has the carer informed their mortgage lender and/or changed their insurance appropriately?	
Support	Support
Has the carer received the required training for their new role?	
Household information	Household information
Have other young people in the household been informed of, and been given information about, the new arrangements? Have they had an opportunity to share their views, thoughts and feelings about the proposed arrangement?	

Local Authority	Actions Required
Providing information	Providing information
Has consideration been given as to whether to provide the biological family 'When I am Ready' information?	
Contingency plan	Contingency plan
Is there a contingency plan in place should the 'When I am Ready' arrangement breakdown?	
Safeguarding	Safeguarding
Is the local authority satisfied that a 'When I am Ready' arrangement is consistent with the young person's well-being?	
Have safeguarding procedures been updated to cover these arrangements.	
If required, has a DBS check been carried out on the young person? See section 12	

Foster Carer & Young person	Actions Required
Living Together Agreement	
Do all parties understand and are satisfied with the tasks outlined in the Living Together Agreement?	
Finance	
Do all parties know what an Excluded Licensee Agreement is?	
Support	
Are all parties clear where local authority support will come from when the young person reaches 18, and who will provide it?	

Making a late ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement

Due to individual circumstances, ‘When I am Ready’ arrangements may not always arise as the result of structured early planning within a long term foster placement. Even when the young person is 16 or even 17, it is still important to consider if the interests of the young person in a foster placement will be best served through transitioning onto adulthood within a ‘When I am Ready’ arrangements. When organising a late ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement, the processes generally required to create the arrangements should still take place, although the timetable well may be truncated.

d. Age 18 – Starting a ‘When I am Ready’ living arrangement.

Signing agreements

When the young person reaches their 18th birthday, they are no longer in care. At this point, the young person, the carer and the appropriate local authority support staff members sign the ‘When I am Ready’ Living Together Agreement. The young person and the carer also sign a excluded licensee agreement. This signifies the start of the ‘When I am Ready’ arrangement.

What is an excluded licensee agreement?

Once a young person in a foster placement turns 18, the legal basis on which they continue to live in their former foster care home changes, as they become an ‘excluded licensee’. This means, in effect, that they are lodging in the home and the ‘When I am Ready’ carer technically becomes their landlord. As an excluded licensee, the young person can be asked to leave the property by the ‘When I am Ready’ carer, who must give ‘reasonable notice’. Getting the young person and ‘When I am Ready’ carer to sign a licensee agreement makes it easier for the young person to claim housing benefit. For housing benefit purposes, a ‘When I am Ready’ agreement is regarded as a commercial arrangement.

e. Age 18 – 21. Monitoring and reviewing the living arrangement.

The commencement of the 'When I am Ready' arrangement does not suggest an end to the support given to the young person and the carer. The young person's progress towards achieving the outcomes set out in the Living Together Agreement, should be monitored, evaluated, and revised as necessary, during the six monthly pathway planning reviews. This allows the agreement to be used as a supervision tool by the supervising social worker and personal advisors. This should continue until the young person reaches 21 years old.

What does success look like?

When monitoring an arrangement, it is important to understand what success looks like. Please see Annex 2 which was produced by focus groups of young people and foster carers in Wales.

Planning for post 'When I am Ready' living

A plan for post 'When I am Ready' living arrangements should also be developed and revised with the young person at the six monthly pathway planning review meetings.

'When I am Ready' whole scheme monitoring

Each local authority has a duty to monitor its 'When I am Ready' scheme. To achieve this whole scheme monitoring, appropriate information from each individual pathway planning review should be recorded, and provided to the local authority staff member who is responsible for monitoring the scheme. What constitutes appropriate information should be set out in the local authority's 'When I am Ready' policies and procedures.

f. Age 21 – 25. Monitoring and reviewing the living and education arrangements.

The arrangement can only continue past 21 if the young person is participating in an agreed programme of education or training that is set out in the young person's pathway plan. The pathway plan may be updated by:

- monitoring the progress of the transition to independent living
- monitoring the progress of the educational arrangements
- ensuring that the post 'When I am Ready' living arrangements are still viable and kept up to date.

The 'When I am Ready' arrangements ends when:

- the young person completes their agreed programme of education or training
- the young person who is still taking part in an agreed programme of education or training reaches the age of 25.

8. Supporting people using 'When I am Ready'

A key factor influencing both the foster carer's decision to become a 'When I am Ready' carer, and the young person's willingness to enter into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, will be the quality of their relationships and the extent to which secure attachments have been established. As well as effective planning, the quality of support to the carer and young person will play a major part in achieving a successful outcome.

In a practical everyday sense, a young person and carer who enter into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement may view this as a continuation of their previous foster placement. While in many ways this is true, support should ensure that the young person and carer create an adult to adult relationship with each person recognising their obligations and are moving towards the clear goal of the young person becoming a thriving independent adult.

a. Supporting young people

All young people living in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement will have some level of support needs. These should be outlined in the pathway plan and fully reflected in their living together agreement. In addition to the daily support offered by the carer, there may be a need for support from a wider group of people such as their personal adviser.

Below are some of the factors young people say are important. These can be useful when considering what support may be required.

- being listened to regarding their thoughts and wishes
- keeping lines of communication open, and letting your thoughts and feelings be known
- being able to ask for help when needed
- receiving emotional support from the carers, with the carers in turn being properly supported
- keeping mutual respect for each other including each other's belongings, space and privacy
- being given increased responsibility
- carers receiving training to teach young people independent living skills like budgeting, cooking and managing bills
- regular meetings between the young person, their personal adviser and 'When I am Ready' carer to talk about what is going well or not so well, and any extra support needs
- training for everyone involved in the process, including young people
- a support worker who knows all about 'When I am Ready'
- a named person who understands the benefits system
- access to an advocacy service.

Support should be planned in a way which helps the young person to become gradually more independent, practically, behaviourally and emotionally. This may include assistance in the provision of seeking work, wellbeing, education and training.

Welfare Benefits for young people

Depending on their circumstances, from the age of 18 the young person may be eligible for certain means-tested benefits (such as housing benefit), be in receipt of an education bursary, or have an income from full or part-time employment. If the young person is disabled, they may be able to claim benefits at the age of 16 including Personal Independence Payments.

It is important that the young person obtains their National Insurance as this is essential to take up employment and or claim benefits³. The young person may need assistance to do this.

Having a source of income means that the young person will be able to contribute to their board and lodging, as well as meeting their own personal expenses such as clothing, travel or holiday money. This encourages the young person to develop their budgeting skills, and assists with the preparation for independent living.

The young person's contribution will need to be calculated on a case-by-case basis, especially for young people in employment with fluctuating or 'zero' hours contracts.

b. Supporting 'When I am Ready' carers

General advice and guidance from the local authority

Supervising social workers should ensure that foster carers becoming a 'When I am Ready' carer receive the appropriate information, training and support to carry out their new role as a 'When I am Ready' carer. This training and support should focus on developing the carer's skills and capacity that will be required to assist the young person achieve the specific outcomes detailed in the living together agreement.

If the 'When I am Ready' carer is also a foster carer, the supervision and support structure for that carer will include the 'When I am Ready' arrangement with the carer still being subject to an annual review.

If the 'When I am Ready' arrangement is in a household where there are no looked after children, the local authority will agree with the carer the appropriate structure for support. In this situation, fostering regulations no

³ www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number

longer apply. However, when supporting a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, the local authority may still wish to offer the following support.

- a return to fostering panel when there is change of circumstances
- DBS check every three years on all adult members of the household, regular visitors, and children of the carer aged 16 and older
- health and safety checks
- attending required training and optional support groups
- regular oversight and support from the supervising social worker.

In some circumstances 'When I am Ready' carers may continue to have one or more foster placements living in the household. In these circumstances fostering regulations will apply, with the 18+ year old being monitored as part of those processes and procedures.

Young people post 18 will require a DBS check in households where foster children are living and will be the responsibility of the supervising social worker to ensure completion of the task.

A 'When I am Ready' carer may also continue to be a foster carer, and in this situation they will continue to receive supervision and support in that role from their supervising social worker, who will need to consider the fact that the household includes a young person for whom they are also a 'When I am Ready' carer.

When foster carers cease to foster in order to become a 'When I am Ready' carer, consideration should also be given as to whether the supervising social worker can continue to provide them with support / level of support as this will provide continuity.

Learning and development

Whilst foster carers may have the core skills for supporting a young person towards independence at 18, it may be that as 'When I am Ready' carers they find that the practical, legal and ethical dimensions of caring for a child are very different from those of supporting an adult. Consequently, they may not always feel adequately prepared for the task.

Therefore, training and/or support specifically structured to meet their individual needs and requirements to successfully carry out their 'When I am Ready' carer responsibilities should be provided.

Financial support

Supporting the carer to fully understand the financial impact of the 'When I am Ready' arrangement on their family's financial position is crucial. These financial calculations can be quite complex, so it is important the person supporting the carer should enter these discussions fully aware of the local authority's 'When I am Ready' financial policy and processes, and how to interpret them for that particular carer's situation.

Payments made by local authorities to 'When I am Ready' carers will be made in accordance with provision made under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children).⁴

The rate of the 'When I am Ready' allowance is set by the local authority and should cover all reasonable costs of supporting the young person to remain living with their carer. The Welsh Government recommends that the financial support given to 'When I am Ready' carers should amount to the same as the National Minimum Allowances paid to foster carers.

The provisions in the Act allow for a degree of flexibility, permitting the local authority to respond to the particular needs and circumstances of the carer, young person and family household. For some foster carers, the loss of income from fostering fees may be the major obstacle to setting up a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, especially if fostering is their main source of income. In these circumstances, local authorities may wish to consider paying an additional amount to ensure that the 'When I am Ready' arrangement can go ahead.

Unlike the fostering allowance previously paid to the carer, it will not include any element to be given to, or spent on, the young person such as personal items, clothing, travel or holiday allowances, as these will be replaced by the young person's earnings or benefit entitlement when they reach 18.

The basic allowance paid to the 'When I am Ready' carer should reflect any contribution made by the young person. The young person's contribution may include their housing benefit and/or their contribution towards board and lodgings. Therefore, the allowance is a combination of:

1. the young person's housing benefit
2. any additional contribution made by the young person towards their board and lodgings
3. the local authority 'topping up' the shortfall after the two above contributions have been made towards the full rate of the 'When I am Ready' allowance.

The value of the allowance will generally apply to all 'When I am Ready' arrangements. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be good practice to consider paying a higher rate allowance where the young person's support needs are significantly increased due to factors such as:

- a mild to moderate learning difficulty
- enduring mental health needs
- severe behavioural problems.

⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160106pt6en.pdf>, see Part 6, Post-18 Financial Arrangements (pages 139 - 141)

An additional compensatory payment may also be made if the 'When I am Ready' carer is left disadvantaged due to changes in their tax or benefits status as a result of the scheme.

In summary, the Code of Practice states 'When I am Ready' carers will need to know:

- the amount to be paid
- when payments will cease
- any arrangements for review of the level of payment
- what the payment is intended to cover, and whether it includes a fee element as well as an allowance
- whether additional discretionary payments can be made
- if the young person is expected to make any contributions and whether this will affect the level of payment
- whether the carer's allowance includes any payments which they are expected to make to the young person
- what happens if the young person is temporarily away – for example, at university or on holiday
- what happens if the young person temporarily loses their entitlement to benefits through the imposition of a sanction
- how payments will affect benefit entitlement and tax liabilities, and where to get advice.

Insurance

Local authorities will also need to ensure that 'When I am Ready' carers are aware of the following practical considerations regarding insurance cover:


- 'When I am Ready' carers should ensure that they inform their mortgage provider or landlord, and their building and contents insurance provider, that they will continue to be supporting a former foster child as a young adult under a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. Failure to do so may cause a breach of mortgage/tenancy requirements and may result in insurance cover being void due to a 'failure to disclose material facts'.
- 'When I am Ready' carers who transport young people are required to apply the same level of standards and care as they did when they were transporting a foster child – i.e. comprehensive business insurance, a valid MOT, a valid Road Vehicle Licence and a roadworthy vehicle.
- 'When I am Ready' carers should be provided with information about liability insurance cover in situations where young people may make an allegation against a foster child in placement, or against their 'When I am Ready' carer/s, or an allegation is made against the young person. Foster carers / 'When I am Ready' carers should clarify the arrangements for extending cover after a young person's 18th birthday.

9. Independent Living Skills Portfolio examples.

Example 1

Activity - Cooking skills					
Food	Toast	Beans on Toast	Meal with 4 main ingredients	Two course meal for 1 person	Two course meal for 2 persons
Fully Achieved	22/8/14	4/9/14	12/10/14	2/1/15	

Example 2

Activity – Going to the doctor	
What is the purpose of my activity?	I have to get a doctor
Who will help me?	Janet, my YP Adviser Sue, my 'When I am Ready' carer
What do I need to help me achieve this?	I need to know where the doctor surgeries are. I need to get a form from the surgery and fill it in. I want to get a surgery close enough to walk to.
Evidence of achievement	
<p>I registered with the GP on 16th March 2014. The name of my GP is Dr Morgan, but there are other doctors at the surgery who I might see.</p> <p>The address and contact details are: The Priory Surgery New Street 01665 752009</p> 	
Signed	Date

10. Spending time at university or college

When a young person in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement goes away to university or college, they should be able to return to the carer's home during the holiday breaks.

If the intention is that the young person returns home during the holidays, consideration should be given to keeping the 'When I am Ready' arrangement open – i.e. going away to university or college during term time will not terminate the arrangement.

The local authority may look to reduce payments to the 'When I am Ready' carer while the young person is away. Similar considerations will apply where a young person joins the Armed Forces or takes up any other training or employment programmes that require a young person to move away from home for a period.

It should be remembered that where the 'When I am Ready' arrangement covers holiday stays only, and there are foster children living in the household, the young person in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement is an adult member of the household and the appropriate safeguarding procedures need to be put in place.

11. 'When I am Ready' compared with other arrangements

Although 'When I am Ready' arrangements must always be considered the preferred option for the majority of care leavers who have been in foster care, this will not always be the most appropriate option. For some, independent living, supported lodgings, a return to living with family members, or other alternatives, will be preferred.

Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings is primarily a housing scheme for vulnerable young people, and does not operate on the familial model promoted by 'When I am Ready'. The tax and benefit rules for Supported Lodgings are also different to those for 'When I am Ready', especially in relation to qualifying care relief for the carer / Supported Lodgings provider.

Supported Lodgings tend to provide a lower level of support when compared to 'When I am Ready', but may be a suitable option for some care leavers, instead of, or following on from, a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. The relative merits of different arrangements should be discussed with the young person and their foster carers as part of the pathway assessment and planning process. If the young person wishes to remain with their foster carer beyond the age of 18, this will almost always be under a 'When I am Ready' arrangement.

Private rented accommodation

For young people who wish for independence, they can privately rent accommodation from a landlord. This is usually only available to those over 18 years old as you need to be an adult to legally sign a tenancy agreement.

Adult Placements

'When I am Ready' is also different to Adult Placements (usually known as Shared Lives schemes), which may be the most suitable long term option for people with ongoing care and support needs who are unlikely ever to be able to live independently.

12. Regulatory framework and safeguarding

When setting up 'When I am Ready' arrangements, local authorities will need to ensure that their safeguarding procedures are updated to cover these arrangements, so that all children and young people living in the household are safeguarded from harm and abuse.

Where foster children are living in the 'When I am Ready' household.

Where a young person reaches the age of 18 and there are other fostered children living in the household, the 'When I am Ready' carer will continue to be an approved foster carer and all aspects of the legislation relating to fostering will continue to apply and govern the regulation of the whole household. Whilst the fostering legislation will primarily apply to the placements of the fostered/looked after children, it does ensure a system of approval, checking and supervision is applied to the whole household.

DBS Check

The major change will be that the former foster child becomes an adult member of the household, and as such will require:

- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously called a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check)
- a risk assessment if the DBS check highlights a 'trace' (potential risk).

The process will need to have commenced in sufficient time to ensure that the check and any risk assessment are completed by the young person's 18th birthday.

The foster carer will also need to be returned to the fostering panel due to a change of circumstances – i.e. that one of the fostered children has turned 18 and is now living as an adult member of the household in a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. The fostering panel will need to consider the impact of the 'When I am Ready' arrangement on the foster carer's terms of approval, including the numbers approved for and whether this includes the 'When I am Ready' young person.

Where no foster children are living in the 'When I am Ready' household.

When a young person turns 18, and there are no other foster children in the household, the legislation relating to fostering will no longer apply. Where it is clear that the 'When I am Ready' carer will not be fostering any further children, it may be appropriate to terminate their approval as a foster carer. Where it is possible that they may foster again in the future, it may be inappropriate to terminate their approval, given the length of time that re-approval would take, and the local authority will need to ensure that they do what is necessary under the fostering regulations to keep the approval open.

Annex 1 Roles and Responsibilities for delivering 'When I am Ready'

'When I am Ready' Carer

- Provide a home for the young person.
- Provide day-to-day support and guidance to the young person.
- Ensure that the young person continues to build on the skills necessary for independent living, and knows where to go for help when necessary.
- Assist the young person to develop the emotional capacity and self-confidence to manage through adulthood.
- Participate in reviews of the pathway plan.

Personal adviser

- Advise, assist and befriend the young person.
- Keep in touch with the 'When I am Ready' carer.
- Discuss options with the young person as part of the pathway planning and assessment process.
- Help the young person to apply for their DBS check as well as benefits where applicable so that payments start on the young person's 18th birthday.
- Liaise with the local authority in implementation of the pathway plan.
- Co-ordinate provision of services to support the young person and promote their well-being.
- Keep informed about the young person's progress and well-being.
- Feed into the monitoring process.

Young person's social worker

- Work alongside the personal adviser and young person to develop the pathway plan.
- Prepare any reports/updates required for Independent Reviewing Officer and the pathway plan reviews.
- Liaise with the Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure that the pathway plan is reviewed regularly.
- Follow through any actions that come out of the review and ensure/oversee that any actions required of the personal adviser from the reviews are followed through.
- Co-ordinate services to ensure that the pathway plan can be implemented (including health, education etc.).

- Maintain contact with the young person and 'When I am Ready' carer (and when necessary the carer's link worker/fostering service social worker) to look at progress, future planning and address issues as they arise
- Ascertain and take into account the wishes and feelings of the young person.

Supervising social worker from the fostering service

- Assist the foster carer to make an informed choice about whether to become a 'When I am Ready' carer.
- Explaining the 'When I am Ready' scheme to the foster carer, and discussing the financial and other implications of becoming a 'When I am Ready' carer.
- If the carer is also a foster carer, consider the implications of this on fostering, address this through supervision and contribute to the review of their approval as foster carers.
- Continue to provide advice and support to the carer when the foster placement is converted to a 'When I am Ready' arrangement.
- Co-ordinate provision of services to support the 'When I am Ready' carer.
- Ensure that the carer is receiving the right payments.
- Participate in reviews of the pathway plan.
- Respond to the learning and development needs of the carer.
- Supervise the 'When I am Ready' arrangement.

Role of the Independent Reviewing Officer

- Ascertain the wishes and feelings of the young person and ensure that these are recorded and made known to the professionals involved with the young person.
- Review the pathway plan and ensure that actions taken by the supervising social worker, personal advisor and social worker are in the young person's best interests and that the 'When I am Ready' guidance has been adhered to.

Annex 2 What success looks like

Focus groups with young people and foster carers in Wales identified the following indicators of success for 'When I am Ready' schemes.

Success was described by young people as:

A chance to explore and try things out

- feeling safe enough to explore and try things out
- being able to change your mind and not lose all support
- having the right balance of independence and support
- having the opportunity to do the same things as other young people do
- taking gradual steps towards independence over time

Knowing what to expect and what support is available

- understanding what you can expect and are entitled to
- planned well in advance of a young person turning 18
- clear who everyone is and what their role is
- clarity about the house rules and finances
- giving us information about the money we're entitled to, and helping us to claim it

A positive experience in the home

- knowing that it's your home and that it's stable
- having your own front door key
- knowing that you are more important than the money and finances
- no broken promises

Comfort and reassurance

- feeling part of the family and not treated as a lodger
- having someone to fall back on, who is there for you and cares about you
- having carers who can help you make important decisions about your future

Independence

- being confident to live alone when the time comes
- having the skills for independent living
- being able to access education and training
- being able to stay in touch with our carers after we move out
- having our own home and money to support ourselves when we move out

Success was described by foster / 'When I am Ready' carers as:

Feeling part of a family

- the young person continues to feel part of the family
- everyone affected is involved in the preparation and planning
- every young person who really needs it gets the chance to stay
- young people know the benefits of staying on, and have the right support to make an informed choice
- young people and carers trust each other and promises are kept
- young people can try things out, make mistakes and not be penalised

Aspirations

- young people have aspirations and support in achieving them
- clear plans are in place that everyone can work towards
- young people are enabled to manage their finances, in a phased way over time
- young people learn independent living skills such as managing bills and cooking
- young people are ready to move on when the time comes

Status of 'When I am Ready' carers

- 'When I am Ready' carers have a clearly defined role, with no ambiguity
- the carers understand their change in status from foster carer to 'When I am Ready' carer and the implications of this
- carers are listened to by professionals and fully involved in decision making

Clarity and continuity

- everybody understands what is expected of them and what the ground rules are
- pathway planning begins at the right time so that young people and carers can make a successful transition to 'When I am Ready'

Finance

- carers know what they are getting into, and how their tax and benefits might be affected
- carers do not feel worried about the financial aspects of being a 'When I am Ready' carer, and can afford to undertake this role