For immediate release

New Report: Care Leavers support system in England should redirect resources to the front-line

- Leaving care is often a traumatic time for care leavers. On leaving care, there is 23% increase in mental health conditions; 19% have no one they can turn to for help. Nearly 40% of 19-21 year olds care leavers are not in employment, education or training.
- Personal advisers from local authorities express frustration that they cannot give more support to care leavers. Today's report suggests that around 30% of personal advisers' time is spent on crisis cases. Nearly a quarter of their time is taken up by administration.
- Current system is creaking under the weight of statutory responsibilities. Resources need to be redirected to free up personal advisers' time to collaborate more closely with care leavers. This could transform outcomes for young people leaving care.

(*25 June 2018, London*) Today, Social Finance releases its second insights report looking at the effectiveness of support for young people leaving care. The report is based on findings from a period of analysis into frontline practice in three partner local authorities: Leeds City Council, the London Borough of Havering and Southampton City Council. The report found that the current system does not adequately support leaving care teams to help young people in their transition to adulthood despite the best efforts of committed participants.

Each year 11,000 young people leave care in England, including foster and residential placements. The stability and length of their care experiences, and success in school all contribute to the likelihood of a successful transition to adulthood. But alongside these factors is the support being offered by local authorities to care leavers.

The report highlighted that young people do not always receive the support that they need, and many face significant challenges as young adults. At the same time, the personal advisers supporting these young people often have high caseloads, leaving them with a frustrating tension between the amount of support that they want to give young people, and the time that they have available to do this.

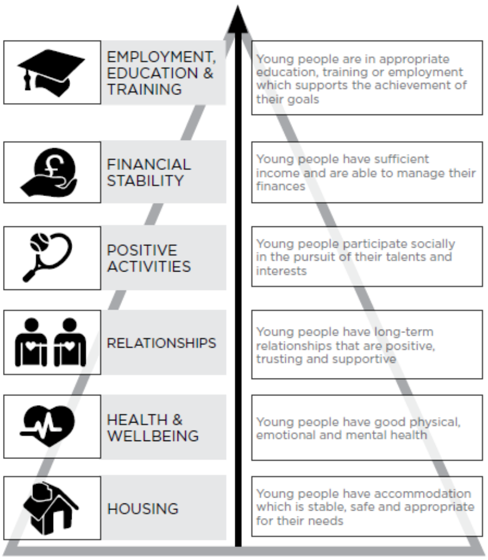
Personal advisers feel that the pathway planning process is not as useful as it could be, and lacks engagement with the young people it is designed for. The management information in the three local authorities does not provide managers with useful oversight over their services and successful service provision. Administration for personal advisers is burdensome and data collection is limited. The report also makes clear that the voices of young people are not always heard.

The Leaving Well initiative, launched by Social Finance in 2014, is working with partner local authorities to develop a digital tool for young people leaving care. It will give young people ownership over their plan to independence and enable local authorities to support young people to achieve positive outcomes.

> ***Professor Mike Stein, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy, University of York said:*** "This research-informed report highlights the need to re-think how we support care leavers - by entering the digital age, by ensuring personal advisers spend more face-to-face time with young people and by making pathway planning more relevant and dynamic."

The initiative has also published the Leaving Well Outcomes Framework. Created in partnership with Dr Mark Kerr from the University of Kent, the evidence-based framework sets out a hierarchy of needs required for healthy, happy lives. It is available for use in local authority practices across the country and is a tool to measure the successful transition to adulthood for young people leaving care.

FIGURE 1: HIERARCHY OF OUTCOMES



> ***Robin Cartwright, Director, Social Finance said:*** "We want this report to help motivate change in the system. We think a different approach can help engage young people more effectively whilst freeing up professionals' valuable time – for the same overall cost."
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> ***Caroline Mason, Chief Executive, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation said*** "With growing numbers of young people entering the care system it is more important than ever that, when they leave, they are prepared and confident. We are proud to support the Leaving Well initiative in taking an approach that puts young people at its heart: working with local authorities and their staff to manage and understand the data they have and enable better relationships with and for young people."

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For more information, please contact Alisa Helbitz, Director of Communications, ++ 44 (0) 7500 433044 or alisa.helbitz@socialfinance.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1) The Leaving Well initiative, launched by Social Finance in 2014, aims to improve the life outcomes for young people leaving care. It is funded by Big Lottery Fund, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation. Leaving Well is supported by an advisory group which comprises Brett Service, Carrie Wilson, Dr Claire Baker, Danielle Morris, Gurdawar Jassi, Jo Dixon, Dr Mark Kerr, Professor Mike Stein, Peter Makeham and Robert MacPherson.

2) Big Lottery Fund uses money raised by National Lottery players to help communities achieve their ambitions. From small, local projects to UK-wide initiatives, its funding brings people together to make a difference to their health, wellbeing and environment. Since June 2004 it has awarded £8.5 billion to projects that improve the lives of millions of people.

3) Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. It does this by funding the charitable work of organisations that are building an inclusive, creative and sustainable society. The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK.

4) The Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded, charitable grant-making foundation, which supports a wide range of causes across the UK, donating over £62 million annually. It was established in 1958 by the Weston family and in 2018 will donate its £1billionth, becoming one of the largest and most respected charitable institutions in the UK. The Trustees are descendants of the founder and the Weston family continues to take a highly active and hands-on approach.

5) Social Finance is a not for profit organisation working with government, the social sector and the financial community to find new ways of tackling entrenched social problems in the UK. Founded in 2007, Social Finance has mobilised over £100 million in investment for a range of social issues including homelessness, vulnerable children and youth, offenders and adults with social care needs. Social Finance is the originator of the Social Impact Bond model.

6) The full report is available for download at: https://www.socialfinance.org.uk/resources/publications