

Innovation Zone: Opening Session - Care Leavers Support

Tuesday 22 October, 12:25 - 13:20

Michael Cullen

Chief Executive at Stockport Council and Chief Executive Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People at GMCA

The HUB

H&F Care Leavers Hub



Concept

The Care Leavers Hub formed part of the Administrations manifesto commitment to our cared for children.

Our vision for the hub is a **local, homely and informal space** where care experienced young people can seek advice, support & guidance, chose to spend time in and always return to.

The key Aims and Objectives of the hub are to:

- Create a **safe space** where young people can meet with practitioners and support professionals to receive support and guidance around a range of life skills and from where they can be sign posted to other specialist areas.
- Enable our Care Experienced young people to feel **valued** and **socially** included in a thriving community.
- **Reduce social isolation**, ensure Care Experienced young people are equipped with the skills to and resilience to **thrive in their adulthood**.
- Opportunity to **coordinate services in one place**.
- To ensure the hub's development aligns with our Corporate Parenting Priorities, which are:
 - ***To feel Settled and Belong***
 - ***To be Safe Happy and Healthy, &***
 - ***To Thrive as Adults.***

How we did it

Cross-council project led by Children's Services:

Sourcing and securing the building was led by colleagues in the **Economy**

Refurbishment of site was provided as part of contractor Kier's **Social value** commitment to the Council

Children's commissioning provided **project managing**

Capital Works provided the specific project management for the building works

Operational delivery was led by our Care Leaving Service, Virtual School and Participation officer alongside a team of enthusiastic CHS staff

Our **young people** developed the vision for the space and use of it and continue to be actively involved

Wider CHS colleagues came on board to support with the music offer at the Hub

Communications team supported with promotion of the HUB

Facilities Management supported with furniture and equipment (such as CCTV)

How it
started...





Work in progress

Final Product





Whole Council Commitment and Approach

Partners of The Hub

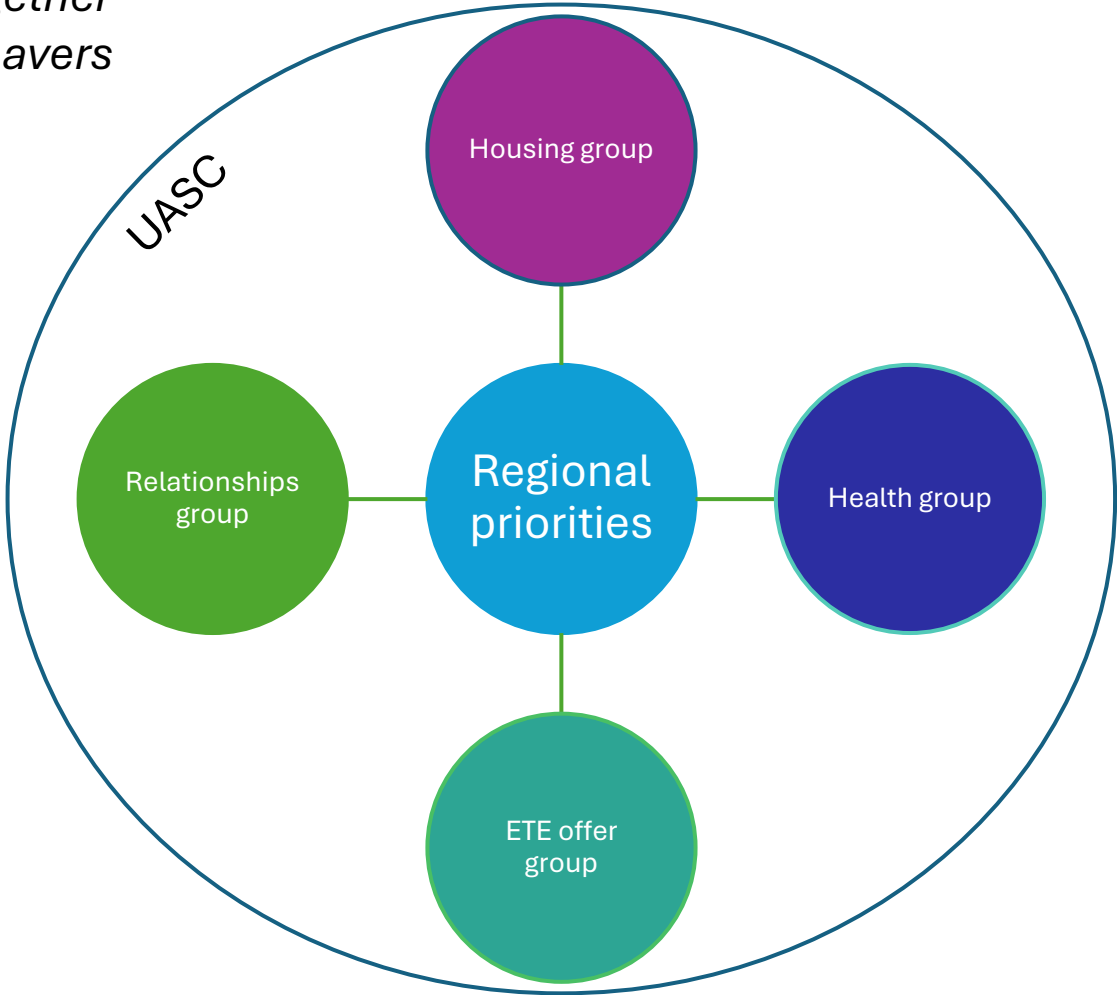


London Care Leavers Trust Board

Statutory and other organisations working together to improve the experience of London's care leavers

Pan-London Care Leavers Compact

A series of partner offers to build consistency and quality in supporting care leavers



A one council approach to our care experienced young people

Wiltshire Council



Overview

- Summary of work completed or underway which is in addition to the One Council approach to education, employment and training, health and well-being and Housing.
- **Care Leavers Covenant** - Wiltshire Council has signed up to the Care Leaver Covenant which provides a range of meaningful opportunities for care leavers in five key areas: Independent Living, Education, Employment & Training, Safety & Security, Mental & Physical Health, and Finance.
- **Graduating for Care South West** – Wiltshire is part of this project along with 8 other local authorities in the region, this aims to address the inequalities that exist within individual LAs by designing and publishing a core regional offer, to enable young people to access the same level of support regardless of where they may live across the region.
- **Regional Care Leavers App** – part of the above project. The GCSW app is interactive and engaging and young people can access on their phones to find out what support is available across the region.
- **Care leavers Hub** – launched in January, dedicated space for young people.
- **Care experience becoming a protected characteristic** – currently being considered.

Education

- Favourable access to Council apprenticeships.
- Commissioned provider offering employment support and signposting.
- Dedicated virtual schools' officer for post 18's.
- Financial support offered to young people in college and university.
- Internal communication channels for PA's to access information.
- Guaranteed work experience offer.
- Support from the post 16 skills and participation team including the offer of courses from the hub.
- Strong links for care leavers with the SEND team.



Employment & Training

- 6 weekly Care Leavers Education and Employment (CLEET) panel.
- Careers event held at the hub twice a year.
- Care experienced young people can apply for all posts within the council and will receive a guaranteed interview if they meet the job criteria.
- Mock interviews offered to support with job applications.
- Commissioned provider offers a monthly CV writing workshop and interview skills support.

Health & Wellbeing.

- Free access to all leisure centres.
- Contribution towards WiFi to stay in touch with important people.
- Access to the care leavers hub.
- Access to a stocked food pantry.
- Transport support to stay in touch with important people.
- A number of commissioned providers offer care leavers support.
- Access to Creative Solutions Board & transitional steering groups.
- Access to the new South West Regional Care Leavers App.



Housing

- Band 1 priority housing on Homes 4 Wiltshire.
- Dedicated housing officer for care experienced young people.
- All housing staff are appropriately trained.
- Shared Housing Protocol in place.
- Dedicated housing PA.
- Council Tax exemption up to age 25.
- Support from the Staying Close team for those leaving residential care.
- The offer of Staying Put supported by the Fostering team.
- The involvement of the Shared Lives team where appropriate.



Comments from our care leavers

- *“I just wanted to send my thank you to the entire team who have helped me to attend university. The support has not gone unnoticed. Please let them know how grateful I am to have access higher education; this would not have been possible without you and them. You guys were acknowledged in my dissertation. "Thank you to my corporate parents (Wiltshire Council) for funding my degree, without you this would not be possible. I express my gratitude for the endless support". I don't have much to say but thank you for everything, I know I can never repay you guys, but you have truly changed my life for the better. I am blessed to have had you guys with me on my education and personal journey” KR*
- *“ I hope you and the whole team know how much I truly appreciate it!! It means so much to be and I can't thank you enough for all your support with everything. Like, I just can't express it. Thank you so much!!” EH*
- *It's good that courses are running at the hub. For someone like me, I don't want to be in college so I'm glad I'll have the chance” EB*

Ofsted inspection Sept 2023 – Graded Outstanding

Quotes from Ofsted report:

- *The quality of support to care leavers is a standout strength.*
- *The care leaver local offer, known as the ‘care leaver promise’, is comprehensive and easy to understand. Care leavers receive a range of ongoing support as well as one-off support.*
- *Care leavers are supported exceptionally well by caring and compassionate personal advisers who are determined in their efforts to provide the right support to help them to achieve their ambitions.*
- *Care leavers are supported well in their education, training, apprenticeships and employment. They are helped to pursue further and higher education and benefit from support packages to help them achieve further qualifications.*



Any
questions?

Welcome

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1. Our Journey/History
2. Introducing the survival guide
3. How it happened
4. Where is it now?
5. The future

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Family

Interview

Lemn Sissay: 'Everything in life is connected, and everything is connected to family'

Joanna Moorhead

The poet grew up in children's homes and never knew a real Christmas. Now, he makes sure hundreds of care leavers feast in style each year. How - and why - does he do it?



Sat 30 Dec 2016 06:00 GMT



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Poet Lemn Sissay with care leavers Chantelle Chamberlain (left) and Megan Macleod. Photograph: Tom Hinton/The Guardian

Christmas, says the poet **Lemn Sissay**, divides the world into two sorts of people. One group gathers around the domestic hearth: all jocularly and teasing, memories and traditions. The other group is, as in the Victorian cliché, outside the window looking in. They have never felt the warmth of the homely festive glow.

Most of us have families who, even if it's with some reservation, we join for **Christmas**. We roll our eyes and sigh, we anticipate the annoyances; we steel ourselves for the nuances that only we could ever understand.

Sissay, though, is a member of the second group. He was raised in care, first in a **foster family** and then, from the age of 12, in a string of children's homes. Christmas came with the tree and the fairy lights, the baubles and the presents, but all those other unseen ingredients - the real flavours of the season - were absent; all those essentials that, as the Grinch finally realised, can't be bought from a shop.

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Who are we?



Megan

- ✓ Degree in Social Science – 2:1
- ✓ Teaching qualification
- ✓ A mother to two girls aged 6 and 12
- ✓ Mental Health First Aider
- ✓ Independent panel member on fostering panel
- ✓ Scout Leader
- ✓ Trustee for a charity
- ✓ Managing director of OCLA
- ✓ FORMER CHILD IN CARE

Chantelle

- ✓ Degree in psychology – 2:1
- ✓ Currently studying a masters in Senior HR at Exeter University.
- ✓ Completed at HR Apprenticeship @ Oxford Brookes
- ✓ In full-time employment as HR Manager.
- ✓ A mother to a 3-year-old.
- ✓ Trustee for a Childrens Charity, ButtleUK
- ✓ Director of OCLA
- ✓ FORMER CHILD IN CARE



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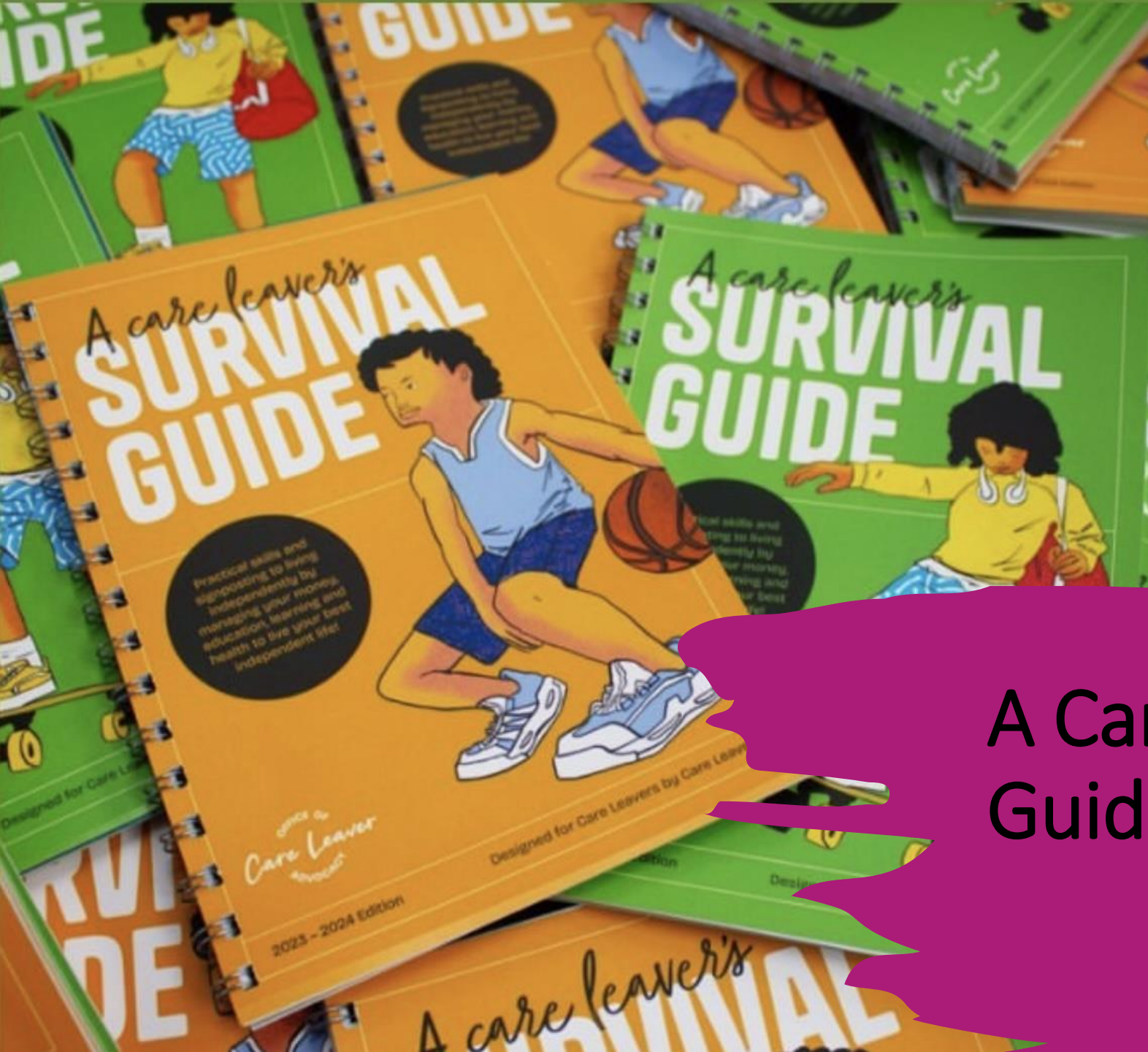


Care leaver Career
Christmas

Our mission and purpose has always been....

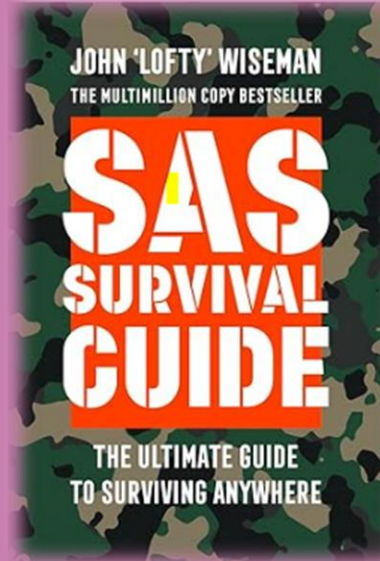
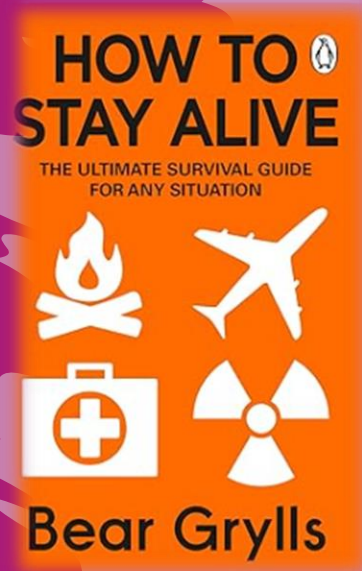
We can't change what happened to us or our experience of leaving care, but we aim to change the future for the next care leavers behind us.





A Care Leaver's Survival Guide

How did it happen?

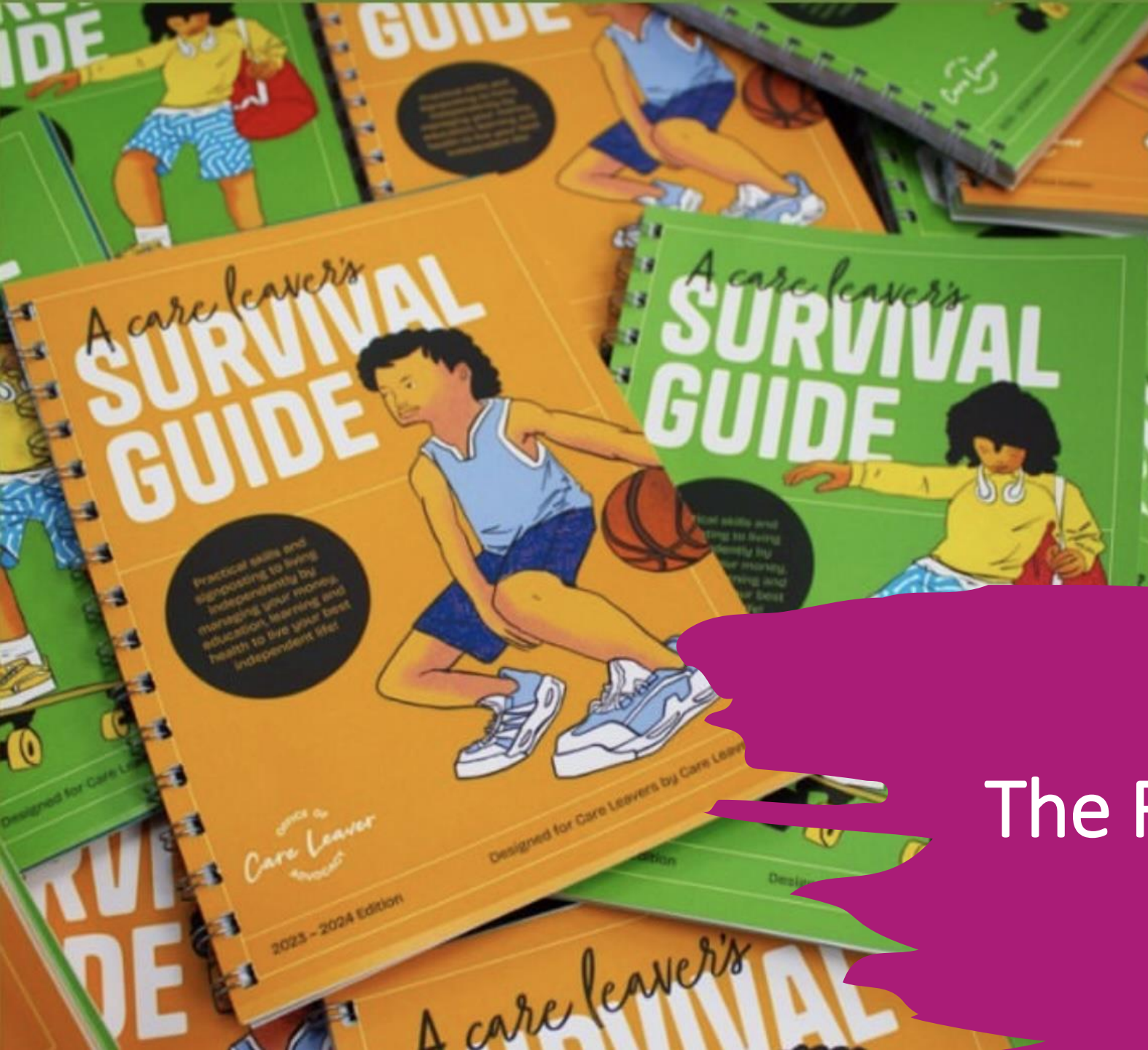




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Workers/ PAs**



The Future

Questions?



THANK YOU

Megan Macleod

Chantelle Chamberlin

Q&A

- **Chair: Councillor Abi Brown OBE**
- **Michael Cullen** - Chief Executive, Stockport Council and, Chief Executive Portfolio Holder, Children and Young People, GMCA
- **Sarah Sanderson** - Head of Children Looked After and Care Leavers, Hammersmith & Fulham Council
- **Cllr Laura Mayes** - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Wiltshire Council
- **Megan MacLeod** - Director, Office of Care Leaver Advocacy