

Leaving Care in Germany and other European Countries

Key issues and problems

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Supporting young people from care to adulthood

Key issues in Germany
and other European countries

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Structure

- Pathways to adulthood: the placements from which young people leave care
- Residential and foster care in Germany
- Pathways to adulthood – the age of leaving care
- Supporting the transition from care to adulthood / professional approaches in Germany
- Challenges in Germany: leaving care and alone?
- Care Leaver Projects IGfH (Fice Germany)/University of Hildesheim
- Leaving care law and policy: international experiences
- Central claims to youth care an social policy



Pathways to adulthood in Europe: the placements from which young people leave care

- Family foster care
- Semi-professional / “social pedagogy” foster families
- Kinship care – with family relatives and friends
- Small children’s homes
- Larger children’s homes and centres for young people (including treatment approaches)
- Institutional care (process of deinstitutionalisation)
- Semi-independent and supported accommodation



Residential and foster care in Germany

31.12.2015, total of cases

Foster care (§ 33 SGB VIII):

0-27:	71.501
15-18:	12.352
18-21:	3.771
Above 21:	608

Residential care/supported accommodation (§ 34 SGB VIII):

0-27:	81.310
15-18:	33.005
18-21:	11.744
Above 21:	1.457



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Quelle: www.destatis.de

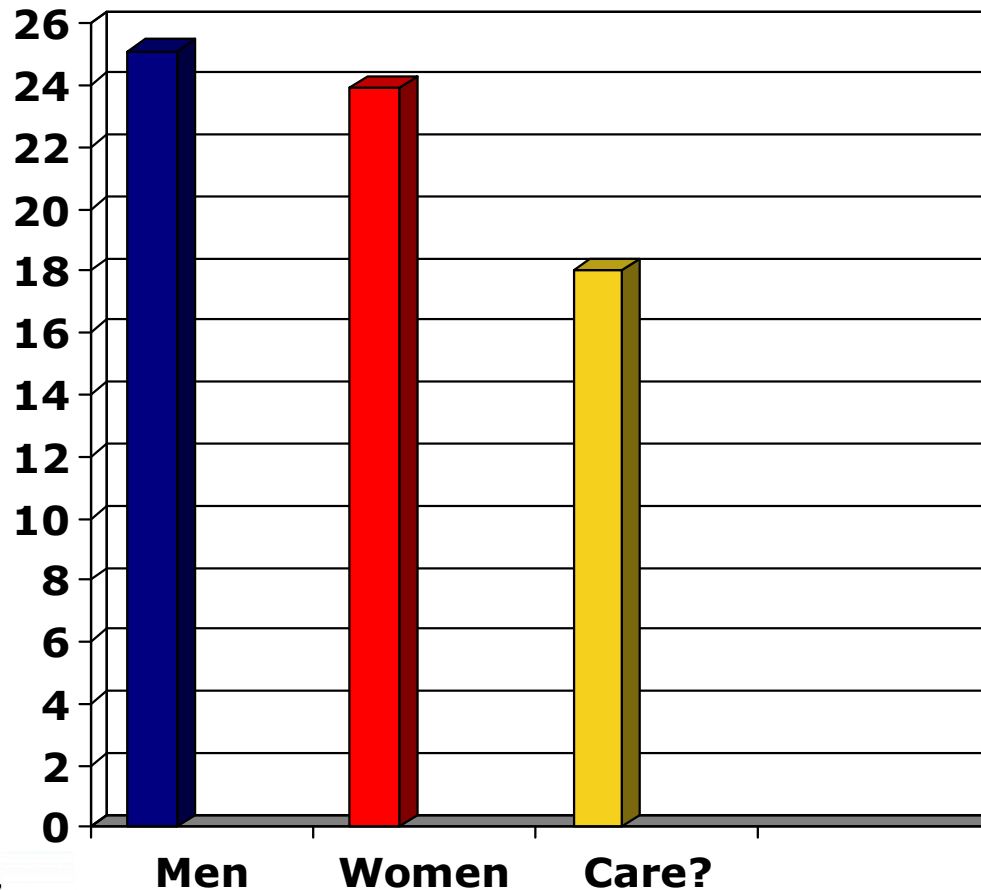


Pathways to adulthood: the age of leaving care

- In Europe and 'western' societies most young people leave care between 16-18 years of age, although there is a large variation
- In comparison with young people in the general population, most young people leave care at a younger age and have to cope with major changes in their lives in a far shorter time
- Their journey to adulthood is more accelerated and compressed
- The pathway from care to adulthood is also less supported and more linear – where as in the general population most young people 'yo-yo' between birth families and independence



Average age when leaving home in Germany (2007)



After termination of care:

- no return to residential care
- little family support
- lacking emotional support
- missing social network
- insufficient financial support
- little support when bringing up own children



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Source: Eurostat

<http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/73631/umfrage/durchschnittliches-alter-beim-auszug-aus-dem-elternhaus/>



Supporting the transition from care to adulthood

Current professional approaches in Germany

- The prevailing type of support in transition from residential care to adulthood is assisted housing, e.g.:
 - “training flat” in the residential care facility
 - social work support in an apartment that has been rented by or for the care leaver
- Skills trainings focus strongly on functional, practical skills covering a range of issues such as finances, household, managing a budget, health, contact with authorities (labour office, police etc.)
- There is less focus on social skills like the ability to form and maintain relationships



Challenges in Germany: Leaving Care – and alone?

- After termination (or the dropping-out) of care it is mainly up to the individual young person to manage and cope with the transition process.
- Social policy, grant systems and the employment administration do neither perceive nor consider the typical disadvantage of coming of age without family support.
- Young people who grew up in care in Germany are disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes:
 - „double discrimination“ on the labour market due to their biographical background and the lower level of qualification (social & formal discrimination)



Care Leaver Projects

IGfH (Fice Germany)/University of Hildesheim

- Project I „What happens after out of home care?“
(2012 - 2014)
- Project II „Rights in the Transition Process - support and participation of Care Leavers “
(2014 - 2016)
- Project III „Well supported into adulthood. Transition management during and after residential care. Development & transfer
(2016 – 2019)



Workshops with care leavers: The care leavers' perspective / some issues

- Many care leavers do not feel well prepared for living independently
- Even care leavers who are doing well sometimes feel left alone or rejected in the process of transition
- Care Leavers experience a feeling of extreme change or even disruption when leaving the tightly controlled setting of residential care to live on their own
- The experience of detachment and farewell from foster parents and care workers has little room
- Emotional aspects regarding the ending of care are not adequately addressed by professionals
- Continuity in their relations, scope / freedom and economical security are described as key factors in the transition process



Hearing with policy makers on 12th May 2016

Important issues raised by the young people:

- Participation, e.g. in decision on the end of care
- Education, e.g. free choice of profession / training
- Free development of ones individual personality, e.g.: continued support after the end of care
- Economical stability, e.g.: secure economic basis after the end of care



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Brochure for care leavers

Durchblick

Infos für deinen Weg
aus der Jugendhilfe
ins Erwachsenenleben



Topics:

- End of care
- Coming of age: rights and duties
- Accomodation
- Money matters
- Insurances
- School / education
- Education / trainings / studies
- Support after end of care
- My life as a care leaver
- Care leaver network



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Homepage: www.careleaver-online.de

CARE LEAVER ONLINE Erwachsene werden ▾ Endlich 18! ▾ Wohnen ▾ Geld ▾ Schule / Ausbildung ▾ Weitere Hilfen ▾ Mein Leben ▾

Care Leaver sind junge Menschen, die in Wohngruppen, Pflegefamilien oder Kinderdörfern gelebt haben und sich auf dem Weg in ein eigenständiges Leben befinden.

Willkommen auf www.careleaver-online.de

Nicht alle Kinder und Jugendlichen wachsen bei ihren Eltern auf. Einige leben aus verschiedenen Gründen ...

- in einer Jugendwohngruppe oder einem Heim



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Leaving care law and policy: international experiences

- In the UK specialist leaving care legislation combining ‘duties’ and ‘powers’ has contributed to the development of specialist leaving care workers -‘personal advisers’, teams and projects supporting young people on their main pathways to adulthood up to 25
- The legal and policy framework in England provides powers for the involvement of young people at every stage from care to adulthood: the making of care plans, the needs assessment and pathway planning process, preparation for leaving care and choice of accommodation.
- There is a legal responsibility to ensure young people are ‘prepared and ready’ before they leave care – an Independent Reviewing Officer has this responsibility.
- “Staying-Put-Arrangements” offer a formal framework for care leavers to remain living with the foster cares after they have turned 18



Leaving care law and policy: international experiences

- In Norway local authorities have a duty to provide aftercare services to young people aged 18-23 – if it is denied young people can complain to the County Governor
- Local authorities have a duty to report if services are exceptionally ended before the age of 23
- If assistance ends earlier the authority has the duty to stay in touch with the care leaver and ask once a year and if the situation has changed and he / she would like to receive help again



Central claims to youth care and social policy in Germany

- The entitlement in the German law (§ 41 SGB VIII) to receive youth care also after turning 18 must be taken seriously.
- Lobbying for care leavers needs to be politically supported. Structures of self organization of care leavers on all levels need to be supported.
- After care terminates, care leavers have to turn to different authorities in order to claim benefits. There are often long delays. Therefore, young people need advance payments to ensure that there is no gap and to provide for a secure financial basis.
- To support care leavers to find their way through the complex social system in Germany, support and advice structures for young people aged 16 to 25 years have to be set up on the local level.

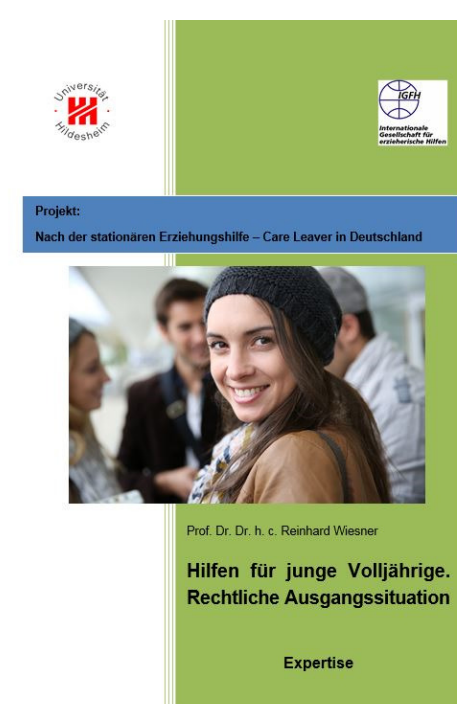
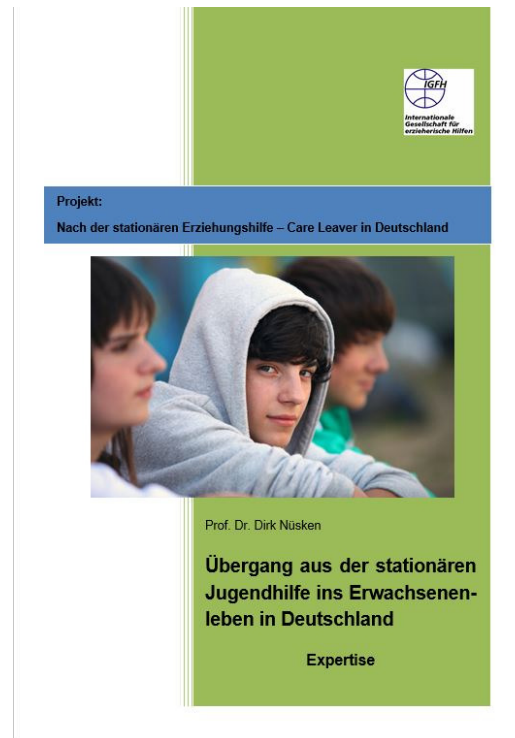


Central claims to youth care and social policy

- Child and youth care must promote educational ambitions of young people. Children and youths in care have to be supported in order to reach the highest possible educational degree.
- Today, most young people receive a wide variety of support up to their mid-twenties. Care Leavers are entitled to a similar support.
- Youth care cannot be finally terminated at the age of 18. Youth welfare must continue to be a central point of contact for care leavers to which they feel invited to return in case of problems.



Results / Publications:



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Thank You !

Further information:

www.igfh.de under „Projekte“

www.uni-hildesheim.de/careleaver

forschungsnetzwerk-erziehungshilfen.de

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