



The Local Offer for Care Leavers in Derbyshire

2018/2019



Introduction

The aim of Derbyshire's Local Offer to care leavers is to tell you about the support available to you as a care leaver. We know that it is a big step for you when you turn 18 years old and when you become an adult, or when you move out of care and live on your own or with friends.

Just because you will soon be leaving care, or have already left care, we do not stop caring about you. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and you know where and who to go to for any help or advice you may need.

To be able to get the support set out in this leaflet, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16th birthday) or for 13 weeks after your 16th birthday. If you are not sure whether you qualify for support, then ask your social worker or Personal Adviser. Your Personal Adviser will talk with you about the information in this leaflet.

If you are a 'Relevant' care leaver, aged 16 or 17, and you have returned home to live with your family, we will continue to support you for up to six months, review your pathway plan and depending on need, will offer a personal allowance to support with any decoration, equipment or furniture that you might require to help you settle back into home life. An assessment which you contribute to will determine what needs you have and this will be discussed with your Personal Adviser.

If you are a 'Qualifying' care leaver, having been in care and returned home, or deemed 'qualifying' as a result of being looked after prior to becoming subject to a Special Guardianship Order or private fostering arrangement, and are over 18 years, you can still obtain support from the leaving care service.



Corporate Parenting across the council and its partners

Chief Officer Pledges

Since 2015 Council Departments have provided Care Leavers with opportunities such as work tasters and work experience to provide you with the opportunity to experience the world of work and develop employability skills in a supported environment. The council continues to work hard to increase the number of opportunities available.

Chief Officer Individual Support to Care Leavers

The future life-chances of Care Leavers are dramatically improved if you can be supported to move into education, employment or training. We recognise that young people in care can be disadvantaged and may require assistance to catch up and maintain progress. We have recognised the importance of improving young people's life chances, and have therefore developed a scheme whereby the Council's four Strategic Directors and their senior managers take on a role to advocate, champion and challenge on behalf of, and enable Care Leavers to more easily access a range of Employment, Education and Training opportunities.

Support to you – Personal Adviser

A Personal Adviser will work with you from the age of 16 years. A Personal Adviser will work with you, up to 21 years old or longer if you need this.

Following changes introduced through The Children and Social Work Act 2017, you can also request support from a Personal Adviser up to the age of 25. This is to try to make sure care leavers receive similar support to young adults who live with their families. Your Personal Adviser is there to help you prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. Personal advisers get involved in discussions with you about how best to meet your needs and write this in your pathway plan.

The aim would be for you to keep the same Personal Adviser from 16 through your transition to adulthood. We recognise this may not always be possible. The amount of support that you receive from your Personal Adviser will depend on what you want and your circumstances.

You might, for example, need extra support because:

- You are a young parent; or
- You are going through a difficult time in your personal life
- You are an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC)
- You are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system;
- You have special educational needs or a disability.

Pathway Plan

Your pathway plan is written in consultation with you and the important people in your life. This happens once you reach 16 and it sets out your needs, views and future goals. We review your pathway plan with you regularly so that it is kept up-to-date. We need to do this twice a year as a minimum, or if you have had a significant change of circumstances, you might find an earlier review helpful so you have the right support to assist you.

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your future and plans for leaving care. You have a right to support from an independent advocate if you are thinking about challenging decisions about the care we give you. Advocates offer independent advice which can inform you about your rights and help you voice your views about decisions that affect you.

As well as support from an independent advocate or from a Personal Adviser, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, or help you stay in touch with key people in your life who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers or social workers.

Health

If you are 16 and above we will support you with a leaving care Personal Adviser and their focus will be to ensure you enjoy good health and have the right access to all the services you require.

Free leisure pass are available for some Derbyshire gyms and leisure facilities so you can enjoy exercise and keep healthy. Further information will be available from your Personal Adviser or Social Worker.

We will support you in many ways to access universal health services including registering with a GP, a dentist, having regular optical checks and supporting your attendance if you ever need to see your GP for a health matter or attend counselling services.

We will give you practical support to transport you to health appointments or/and your Personal Adviser will aim to accompany you to these for support if you require this.

We will also want to make sure that when you turn 18 and become an adult that you have the right information about your health to make the best decisions.

We will want to make sure you are knowledgeable about local services to support your emotional well-being, physical health or sexual health. A nurse from our health team will support you up to the age of 19 to work with you to gain all the support and advice you need about adult services and complete a 'health passport' so that you have all the information you require about your childhood and key medical information from your childhood.

If you are a young parent or pregnant with your first child, we will take an interest in your children and support you to do the best for them. We will arrange for specialist support from the Family Nurse Partnership worker to work with you and your child, if this is what you want. We will want to make sure that you and your baby's father or partner have a good understanding about your baby's needs.

For young people who are detained in hospital, in custody, UASC or are a disabled young person, your Personal Adviser will support you, review your pathway plan with you and guide you to specific financial policies which reflect your circumstances, if appropriate.

Education and Training

Derbyshire wants to promote high aspirations and seeks to secure the best outcomes for all children in care and care leavers. This is underpinned by a 100% EET (education, employment and training) Strategy.

We want to make sure that when you leave care you have the support to achieve your goals in life.

The law says we must provide you with assistance with expenses linked with employment, education and training. We do this in many ways. The Virtual School, Multi Agency Team Personal Advisers (MAT PA's) and the Care Leavers Employment Project (CLEP) can all assist in supporting training, employment or higher or further education and help you make the right decisions that fit with your ambitions and goals.

Personal Education Plans - post 16

Regular reviewing of your current education plan will take place to ensure you are gaining the support you require to achieve your education goals or to support the transition from Further Education to Higher Education. You will have a Personal Education and Training Plan until you reach 18 years old and your continuing Pathway Planning up to 21 years will cover all your educational options, attainment and aspiration.



Thinking about going to University?

The Virtual School offers support to you if you wish to pursue Higher Education. There is a designated Virtual School HE adviser. The HE adviser will meet with you in Year 13 and your carers and aftercare workers if you wish to go to university. You would need to complete the DCC HE application form for the statutory bursary and support with accommodation costs. The Virtual School adviser will also support you to liaise with your designated widening participation officer at your chosen university.

The Virtual School also provides advice on university accommodation bursaries. The UNITE Foundation offer a fantastic accommodation scholarship for care leavers. If you are successful with the scholarship UNITE will pay all accommodation costs for the duration of your university course (3 years). Approximately 72 universities are part of the Unite accommodation scholarship across the UK.

You can find out more details about the accommodation scholarship at www.unitefoundation.co.uk

University Open days/Visits

The Virtual School will support with tailored/ specific university visits for you in Year 11, 12 and 13, working in partnership with widening participation officers at the University of Derby, University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent and Sheffield Hallam University.

University Open days/Interviews

You will be offered support from your Social Worker, or from your leaving care Personal Adviser should you wish to attend Open days to Higher Education establishments, if you have expressed an interest. During these visits as a care leaver we will encourage you to introduce yourself to welfare services and care leaver support teams if available within the establishment as most Universities now offer a care leaver bursary award which can be up to the value of £1500.

UCAS application

Your Social worker if under 18 / PA will monitor the progress of applications and ensure the appropriate support with this task is identified, you should be introduced to tools such as Propel website which provides details of support offered from Higher Education establishments for care leavers, young people should be encouraged to tick the care leaver box on application to make establishments aware of care leaver status to ensure extra support is offered.

University Accommodation

Your Social Worker / Personal Adviser will discuss accommodation options during your pathway planning process and support you to secure accommodation. Staying Put could be one option if you lived in foster care and wish to return to your carers during holiday periods. This would need to be included in your pathway plan.

Many Higher Education establishments will offer Care leavers guaranteed halls of residence and 52 week a year contracts. Derbyshire provides up to £5000 living allowance to support you with rent and living costs over the 52 weeks. This includes Vacation costs for any holiday periods and this is usually paid directly to the landlord.



Higher Education bursary

Derbyshire would offer you a bursary for attending University. This amounts to £2000 per course, £1000 payable in the first year and subsequent payments of £500 each subsequent year of an undergraduate course.

Most universities now give a bursary award if you are a care leaver and your Personal Adviser will support you when you enrol to make enquiries about this.



Support during university

Your Personal Adviser will continue to support you in all dimensions of your pathway planning process and continue to maintain support visits, the visit pattern should remain at least one home visit every 8 weeks. However it is recognised that some may prefer not to have regular visits to your student accommodation by your Personal Adviser. Where this is identified by the young person, alternative arrangements will be made to stay in touch and be agreed within the pathway planning process.

Often universities provide additional funding to care leavers and award a bursary. You may need to sign information sharing agreements with their Higher Education establishment to access the bursary and to support communication between support services however as an adult this will remain your choice.

Employment

It is expected that every care leaver will have an up to date CV and your Personal Adviser will support you with completing or revising one with you.

There is a wide range of services on offer to support you and it is important you get the right support to gain necessary skills, experience, training or qualifications to meet your ambitions and aspirations. Some of the support on offer to include:

Care Leavers' Employment Project (CLEP)

The Council runs an apprenticeship offer to all our Care Leavers which will ensure priority is given to them in a variety of service areas.

The Care Leavers Employment Project (CLEP Team) offer expert advice and guidance to care leavers, when completing application forms and attending interviews.

CLEP aims to secure employment, education and training for young people leaving care, with particular emphasis on the 19 – 21 year old age group.

The offer from CLEP is intensive support to young people to gain training and employment. As part of this support CLEP offers:

- A tailored work experience placement within Derbyshire County Council
- Supported Internship placements within Derbyshire County Council for up to 1 year
- Supported Apprenticeship placements in the voluntary and private sector
- Bespoke traineeship programmes
- Financial help with driving lessons, links to the Wheels to Work scheme, grants for workwear, equipment and tools.

National Careers Service for Adults (NCS)

The Adult Careers Team work with 18+ care leavers offering a variety of impartial careers Information, Advice and Guidance. A typical session can include face to face advice in a setting nearby to where you live.



Building Better Opportunities

The Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme is running until September 2019 and aims to tackle poverty, promote social inclusion, and remove barriers to employment. It has 3 areas of focus:

Money Sorted - Financial Management and Inclusion Support. Outcomes are to gain financial stability and management, training and job search.

Opportunity and Change - Support to overcome multiple and complex needs (such as substance misuse, ex or offending behaviour, domestic violence, mental health). Outcomes are to overcome these multiple and complex needs/barriers.

Towards Work - For individuals furthest away from the labour market (can include mental health, disabilities and complex needs) to support participants to gain training or employment. This is most relevant to you if you are not in Education, Employment or Training. You can get further information from your Personal Adviser or Social Worker. This offers between 12-18 months of bespoke 1:1 support.



Disability Employment Service

The Disability Employment Service is based within Derbyshire County Council, supporting disabled people to find training, work experience, voluntary work and paid employment. The team work with anyone aged 16+ who have either a disability or long term health condition. Many young disabled people want to go to work, but may feel there is no support for them.

The service can help you with work experience, training, voluntary work that could lead to paid work, looking for jobs, applying for jobs, mock Interviews, support at interviews and in work support. The Disability Employment Service can help with this by working alongside you to address your concerns and support you to talk to your employer if necessary.

Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (DACES)

A Traineeships Programme offers an education and training programme with work experience. The programme can last between six weeks and six months with at least 100 hours work experience. All young people undertaking a traineeship are required to study English and Maths. Traineeships are available for young people 16 to 24 qualified below Level 3.

Mentors support young people on their learning programmes.

The 16 - 19 Full Time Study Programme is 540 guided learning hours per year built around a programme to meet your individual needs. This includes a main vocational qualification, employability skills and confidence building. English, Maths and IT are included, as are enrichment activities to enhance social integration; work experience and social/personal development.

The 16-19 Part Time Study Programme offers learners a flexible start in learning and through the 'Making Choices' initial assessment course it identifies Maths, English, ICT and employability aspirations. You can join existing adult and young people's classes, to develop core skills, supported by a learning mentor. You can access other qualifications and non-qualification provision on offer from DACES and take part in enrichment and employability activities.



Financial Management

We will try to help you financially, in a similar way to how parents would support their own children. This support to you includes:

- Providing a leaving care (setting up home allowance) grant when moving into your own home up to the value of £2000 to help towards rent, deposit, furniture, contents insurance, TV licence.
- Providing or telling you about relevant money management courses or budgeting support
- Information on how to access your Junior ISA or any criminal injuries compensation claim
- Support to open a bank account and any savings plan
- Support to gain important identification documents, such as a Passport, a provisional driving licence, before your 18th birthday so you are work ready.
- Support to get your National Insurance number.
- Exceptional financial support in emergency situations
- Providing a financial gift at birthdays and festivity in line with the finance policy.

Derbyshire County Council and housing districts are currently exploring support for all Derbyshire's care leavers with a policy to exempt you from paying council tax up to 25 years old. The details of this are in progress so your Personal Adviser would be able to advise you further on when this will commence.

Derbyshire has produced a Financial Entitlements leaflet which contains all the details of your rights and entitlements as a Derbyshire care leaver and details of which should be written in your pathway plan. Please discuss further with your Personal Adviser.

Transition Planning

To prepare young people for adulthood and independent living all 16+ children in care will be allocated a leaving care Personal Adviser. Their role will be to support you to gain the independent skills to enable you to live independently, where possible. For those who may need additional support from adult services, a leaving care Personal Adviser can support or assist in accompanying you to key



Accommodation

We will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18. Most young people still live at home with their families at this age. If you choose to leave voluntary care before age 18, the law says we would need to check if your accommodation is suitable and what other help you may need. The law also says we must do this.

There are a range of accommodation options for young people who are developing their independent living skills and who would wish to eventually take on their own tenancy. These include self-contained flats or shared houses with varying support tailored to meet your needs.

Your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will be able to discuss the range of options available and help you to access these. They will support your next steps towards independent living and talk to you about how they will give you practical and financial support with any new move of accommodation.

Personal Living Allowance

If you are aged 16/17 year old and are in residential care you will receive a personal living allowance and a clothing and cultural needs allowance.

If you live semi-independently or in an independent living setting we will support you with an income maintenance allowance of £60.00 per week. As a 16/17 year old living in semi or independent settings you will also be entitled to £500.00 per annum of personal living allowance to support your needs to purchase clothing, social activity, outings, and any cultural or religious festivity payment.

Accommodation options post 18 years

Before your 18th birthday, your Personal Adviser will help you to find suitable accommodation. All Derbyshire care leavers are given high priority status. The leaving care service works closely with the district and borough councils to prioritise care leavers housing needs.

We know it can be very hard having your own place for the first time. We will do whatever we can to ease the pressures on you and your Personal Adviser will give you support. This might involve:

- Working with Housing Services to come up with suitable housing options for you, including supported accommodation if you are not ready or do not want to have your own tenancy.
- If this is what you and your foster carers want, supporting you to remain with your foster carers under what's called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last until you are 21 or possibly longer.
- Support to access different housing options including social housing (this is accommodation managed by us or a housing association).
- Advice about holding down a tenancy, including avoiding rent or Council Tax arrears, paying bills and budgeting.
- Derbyshire intends to implement a council tax exemption policy to care leavers up to 25 years. Your Personal Adviser will tell you when this will happen and will write this into your pathway plan.
- Helping you to claim housing benefit/universal credit if you are unable to support yourself.
- Practical support with moving into and furnishing your new home.
- Supporting you if you have a housing crisis, including helping if you are threatened with or lose a tenancy. [NB: care leavers aged 18-20 are treated as a priority need group in homelessness legislation].
- Storage of furniture will be considered on an individual needs basis.

Lodgings Scheme

The Lodgings Scheme provides accommodation for 16-21 year old Care Leavers within a home environment. The aim is to offer a supportive, safe environment to help you develop your self-confidence and independent living skills and prepare for your future.

Each household is different and for this reason we carry out introductory home visits and a matching process takes place to allow you and the host to get to know one another and so both are clear about the expectations within the placement.

Living in the local community

We want our care leavers to be active in their community, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have.

We can help you participate in society in the following ways:

- Providing information on groups and clubs you may wish to join
- Informing you about relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests
- Encouraging and helping you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in elections
- Offering work experience within the council
- Informing you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in
- Giving you advice and helping you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver
- Help to access your care records once you are an adult
- Help you make a complaint or support you with an independent advocate.

Compliments, Complaints and Comments

Please tell us if you think something has gone wrong so we can put it right. If you're a young person who wants to make a complaint we will arrange an advocate for you. This is someone who will support you in making your complaint. Advocates may also be available for adults who need help.

There is a statutory procedure for handling complaints about services provided under Part III of the Children Act 1989 which sets out who can make a complaint and what can be complained about. You can find further information in the information on other websites section of this page. Where a complaint falls outside this statutory remit it will be dealt with under our Corporate Complaints procedure.

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/complaints/childrens-social-care/complaints-about-childrens-services.aspx>

Your first step is to speak to your worker or their manager. Or you can Call Derbyshire Tel: 01629 533190 if you would like to speak to someone else.

Further Useful Contacts

Barnardo's Leaving Care Service Derbyshire

Chesterfield (North office)

Heanor (South office)

01773 717212

Derbyshire YouthInc

A one stop place for young people to find more information about somewhere to go, something to learn, something to do, someone to talk to and something to say.

www.derbyshireyouthinc.com

Childline - online, on the phone, anytime.

To help anyone under 19 with any issue they are going through. Free confidential chat with a trained counsellor 24/7, on the phone, online or through our app.

www.childline.org.uk or call 0800 1111

T3 Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Service

Help or support around drugs or alcohol for free, confidential information, advice and support call 01773 417 560.

Derbyshire Alcohol Advice Service

For anyone in Derbyshire who needs information, support or advice about an alcohol problem.

Call 0845 308 4010 or if calling from mobile 01246 206514.

First Gear

Pre-driving training for 15-17 year olds. Small cost involved. Email: First.Gear@derbyshire.gov.uk

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/road-safety/young-drivers/pre-driver-training/first-gear-pre-driver-training.aspx>

LGBT

Derbyshire Friend is open to anyone who identifies as LGBT and their families. For those wishing to find out more about the services on offer. One to one support, sexual health advice, confidential switchboard 01332 349 333

<https://www.derbyshirelgbt.org.uk>

Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF)

The Derbyshire discretionary Fund (DDF) can provide grants or emergency cash payments if you are in urgent need of financial help following a crisis or disaster.

You can apply by phone, Tel: 01629 533399

The Elm Foundation

The Elm Foundation offers a safe, non-judgmental place which will always be there for people who need it most. <https://theelmfoundation.org.uk> or call 01246 540464

Derbyshire Law Centre

Providing legal services in social welfare law in the Derbyshire area.

<http://derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk>