

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

CARE LEAVERS GUIDE



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WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

This guide has been created by young people who are either living in care or are now care leavers. It is full of information that we think you will need when moving on from care or even if you stay with your foster carers past the age of 18. You will also find different contact details in case of an emergency and who to contact for extra support.

The Local Authority has a duty towards eligible and relevant and former relevant care leavers:

Eligible

are those **Young People still in care aged 16 and 17** who have been looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14.

Relevant

are **Young People aged 16 or 17 who have already left care, and who were looked after** for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14, and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17.

Former Relevant

are **Young People aged 18-21 who have been eligible and/or relevant Children in Care - Young People** who are looked after by a Local Authority either through a compulsory Care Order or remanded or accommodated by voluntary agreement including accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act.

The Charter for Care Leavers...

was redesigned by Care Leavers in 2015. The Charter contains a number of promises that Halton Borough Council has made to make sure that all children and young people receive all the help and support they need when leaving care and beyond.



You can find a copy of the Charter on the Children in Care Council website:

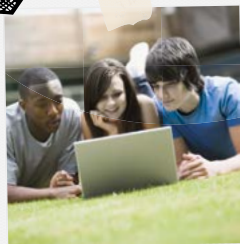
<http://www.haltoncicc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Care-Leavers-Charter.pdf>

If you feel that a promise is not being kept, you can speak to your worker or get in touch with an advocate or the Children in Care Council.

Pathway Plan



Your pathway plan is a document that looks at your ambitions and hopes for the future looking at where you want to live, your education, training, employment and your health. Your Social Worker will develop this with you around the age of 16 years. It is important that you are involved in writing your plan and that your views and wishes are listened to before



any decisions are made about your future. In the pathway plan, there should be clear information about your health, education training and employment, contact with family and friends and managing money and who is going to help you to achieve the things you want. The plan will be updated every six months or more frequently if required.



Personal Advisor

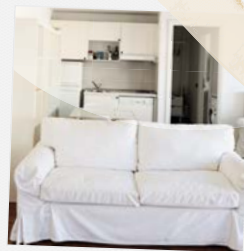


As you start the leaving care process, you will be allocated a Personal Advisor (PA). This person will take over from your Social Worker when you leave care. They will support and advise you and be your main contact at the Local Authority until you're 21 or 25 if you remain in education or if you still need ongoing support.



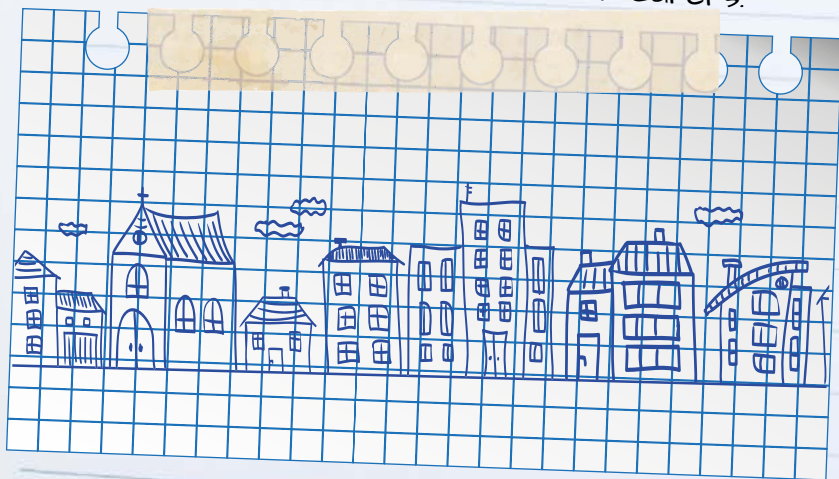
Housing

The Local Authority is responsible for your accommodation needs until you're 18, even if you have moved to a different area. When moving into your accommodation, your PA will make sure that it is somewhere safe for you to live but also fits in with your needs as found in your pathway plan. Your PA will visit you to review your pathway plan and make sure that your home remains suitable for you.



My new pad

You should get help with your housing until you are 21, either from the local authority or through the benefits system. If you are in full time education, you can get help until you are 25. However this may not be always the case as some young people decide to 'stay put' with their foster carers.



Here are some options when thinking about where you are going to live:

Staying put -

if you are settled in a foster placement, you can ask to stay living there until your 21st birthday, as long as the foster carer agrees. It means that you will no longer be in care, However, would be responsible for paying rent for household bills, your room and a contribution to your foster carer to cover your living costs.

Lead tenancy -

own house/flat, you will have a tenancy agreement which is a contract between you and the landlord of the property, which gives you and your landlord certain rights. You will be responsible for paying the rent to your landlord and paying utility bills, such as gas, electric, water, TV license and food

Group/supported living -

living in a house with other young people, there maybe a team of professional staff within the house to offer support. You may have your own room or flat within the house, but there is the support of adults and other young people.

Universal housing

hostel accommodation which is available in most local authority areas.

Education & Employment

Whether you are thinking about continuing in education, this could be college, university or even apprenticeship training, you need to think about what is best for you. But to do this you may need extra support for transport, so the local authority can support you with this. They may offer incentive money, which can cover transport costs and any supplies needed for your chosen path. Some colleges may also offer bursaries to care leavers, it may be worth enquiring at your college. If you are thinking about doing an apprenticeship, there are opportunities already set in place for young people 16+.

The Virtual School will help with all aspects of education when you are a Care Leaver. If you want to go to university, we will try and arrange visits and help with advice and guidance about the support that each university and the Government will provide for you. Halton Childrens social care will give you a bursary paid in instalments. In addition Halton will cover the cost of your student accommodation and can also provide financial support for resources, on an individual basis. The law around what Social Care has to provide is always being updated, we will give you the most current advice of what you are entitled to.

You can find out more from Halton's Virtual School website: www.myvirtualschool.org

You can also find out further information <http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/are-you-care-leaver>

Money

When leaving care and moving into your own place, money will be an issue but there are many ways to sort this problem out. **When you first move into your own place you are entitled to a setting up home grant,** which will help to get you the furniture and decorating equipment you require to help to make your house feel like a home. What can be purchased with your setting up allowance:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV | <input type="checkbox"/> TV stand | <input type="checkbox"/> Washing machine | <input type="checkbox"/> Fridge/freezer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plates/dishes | <input type="checkbox"/> Chopping boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry basket | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea, coffee, sugar pots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring jug | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron and ironing board | <input type="checkbox"/> Bin | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking utensils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooker | <input type="checkbox"/> Microwave | <input type="checkbox"/> Toaster | <input type="checkbox"/> Kettle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table and chairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Toaster | <input type="checkbox"/> Pans | <input type="checkbox"/> Cups and glasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cutlery | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea towels | <input type="checkbox"/> Washing up bowl | <input type="checkbox"/> Sofa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lamps | <input type="checkbox"/> Carpet | <input type="checkbox"/> Mirror | <input type="checkbox"/> Clock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curtains | <input type="checkbox"/> Bed and mattress | <input type="checkbox"/> Bedding, pillows and duvet | <input type="checkbox"/> Bedroom furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Towels | <input type="checkbox"/> Shower curtain | <input type="checkbox"/> Bath mat | <input type="checkbox"/> Soap holder |



You will also get your incentive money from social services if you are in full time education. There may be other times when this is granted as well. If full time education is not an option, you will be supported to get a job. This may start by claiming benefits. If you are a parent, there is additional support available and your Personal Advisor would be able to help you apply for the appropriate benefits.

When you are 18, you will be responsible for paying your own bills. How much you pay depends on whether you are in education, employment or looking for work.



Hints and tips

- you will have to think about how you will pay your bills.

You will have to think about rent, council tax, gas and/or electricity, TV License, water and food.

You will need to look at how much each cost and look at what income you have.

Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to benefits to help you out with the cost.

Health

Most people think of health as just keeping healthy, for example, by eating healthily or even taking regular exercise. But that is not always the case, it also relates to someone's mental health, sexual health and any issues with alcohol or substance misuse. If you feel as though you need help in any of these areas, there is support on offer. You can find useful websites on the back of this guide, but can always talk to your GP or PA.

Don't forget you can get free prescriptions, glasses and dental treatment until the age of 18.

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL



SELF CARE
AT HOME

LOCAL
PHARMACY

GP
SURGERY

WALK IN
CENTRE

NHS 111
SERVICE

A&E
OR 999

**999 IS ONLY FOR
LIFE THREATENING
EMERGENCIES.**

For health advice visit [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk),
a pharmacist, GP, urgent care /
walk in centre, or call NHS 111.

You can contact the NHS on 111 with any query about your health. In an emergency always call 999 and non-emergencies on 111.

Having your say

We want to make sure you achieve the best when you leave care and it is important we listen to what you have to say about the services you receive from us. There are many ways you can get involved, you can join the children in care council or care leavers group, you can contact us with your views (contact details can be found on www.haltoncicc.co.uk), you can tell your Social Worker or Personal Adviser, you can complete a compliment and complaints form (available from www.haltoncicc.co.uk)

Personal Development

There are many things to do when leaving care, for example helping in the community by volunteering for local charities and youth clubs.

You can find out more information about different opportunities and organisations that offer services, including leisure and youth provision on the Local Offer website

www.localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk

21 Plus

When you turn 21 support can still be given depending on a young person's needs and if required, this can continue until you are 25. If you are in full time higher education you will have support from the local authority until you are 25.

Advocacy Support

An advocate is someone who can help you address problems you may have.

They can:

- ➡ Help you if you're not being listened to
- ➡ Help if you need some advice
- ➡ Help if you feel you are not being treated fairly
- ➡ Help you stay where you want to
- ➡ Can talk to your social worker or personal adviser for you
- ➡ Help you if you are getting bullied
- ➡ Can come and see you and talk about your life
- ➡ Help to change things
- ➡ You can tell them anything you want
- ➡ Help you when your sad

Advocates work for NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service). If you want an Advocate to help you, ask your social worker or personal adviser and they can arrange one for you.

Key words

PA- personal advisor

Staying put- staying with foster carers/carer past 18 years of age

Pathway plan- a plan for your future which is regularly reviewed

Tenancy- legal document between you and the owner of the house/flat

Useful websites

Money

<https://www.gov.uk/leaving-foster-or-local-authority-care>

Care Leavers organisations

www.careleavers.com

<http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/>

www.leavingcare.org

<http://www.catch-22.org.uk/expertise/care-leavers/>

<http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/>

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

<http://www.ncb.org.uk/>

Advice

www.communitycare.co.uk/2011/01/13/interactive-website-helps-care-leavers-learn-to-live-independently/

www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.nyas.net/>

www.lawstuff.org.uk/

www.haltoncab.org.uk/

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.gov.uk

www.shelter.org.uk

www.turn2us.org.uk

www.voiceyp.org

www.mybnk.org

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

www.moneysavingexpert.com

www.getconnected.org.uk

Sexual Health

<http://www.brook.org.uk/>

Drugs and alcohol

<http://www.talktofrank.com/>

<http://kidshealth.org/teen>

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

www.mind.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

<http://www.healthtalk.org/young-peoples-experiences>

www.samaritans.org

www.kooth.com

Education, Employment and Training

<http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

<http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/individual-needs/care-leavers>

www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage

www.vinspired.com

www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk

www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/hehandbook

